Internal regulation
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
38/2021

Directive on the External Assessment of the UCM Internal Quality System

§ 1
Introductory provisions

1) The Directive on External Assessment of the UCM Internal Quality System (hereinafter referred to as the "Directive") is issued according to § 15 par. 1 letter m) of Act no. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education Institutions and on amendments and additions to certain acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Higher Education Institutions Act"), § 48 par. 2 of the Statute of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava and 15 par. 1 letter c) Organizational Rules of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
2) This Directive is part of the Internal Quality Assurance System for Higher Education at UCM and contains rules according to a special regulation[1].
3) This Directive regulates the basic procedures of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (hereinafter referred to as "UCM") for regular external quality assurance in accordance with Article 11 of the Standards for the Internal Quality Assurance System for Higher Education of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as "SAAVS" or "Agency").
4) This Directive regulates specific procedures for the periodic external assessment of UCM's internal quality system based on an independent and periodic assessment of its internal quality system by organisations accredited or established for the purpose of assessing quality systems.
5) This Directive regulates specific procedures for the regular external assessment of UCM's internal quality system based on an independent and regular assessment of its internal quality system by persons who are independent of UCM and are experts in quality assurance, primarily in the field of higher education and creative activity.
6) The procedures set out in this Directive establish the basic prerequisites for the continuous and sustainable development of UCM's internal quality system, based on the identification of critical points and areas for improvement of the internal quality system by organisations and persons independent of UCM.
7) UCM undergoes regular external quality assurance assessments to ensure that its internal quality system is developed and implemented in accordance with the SAAVS Standards for the Internal Quality Assurance System for Higher Education.

§ 2
Basic concepts

1) The Catalogue of Good Practice is a continuously updated database of examples of good practice relating to the fulfilment of individual standards and criteria and is maintained by the secretary of the UCM Internal Quality Evaluation Board (hereinafter referred to as the "RVHK") on the basis of the results of the external assessment of UCM's internal quality system.
2) The internationally recognised level of creative activity according to the Methodology for the Evaluation of SAAVS Standards is the third highest level of quality of creative activity results and does not apply to the nature or geographical scope, the place of realisation,

[1] Act No. 269/2018 Coll. on ensuring the quality of higher education and amending Act no. 343/2015 Coll. on public procurement and on amendments to certain laws as amended (hereinafter referred to as "Act No. 269/2018 Coll.")

or the place of dissemination of the results of the creative activity.

3) The Nationally Recognised Level of Creative Activity is the fourth highest level of quality of the results of creative activities and does not relate to the nature or geographical scope, nor the place of realisation or dissemination of the results of creative activities.
4) The internal quality assurance system policies are a deliberately designed set of principles and procedures that guide the processes of the higher education institution, its staff, students, and external stakeholders in fulfilling the mission and continuously ensuring and developing the quality of higher education and related activities.
5) Internal system processes are the rules, regulations, codes, formalised procedures, and sequences of steps through which the quality assurance and development of higher education and related activities are carried out.
6) The assessment programme is a list of all internal and external periodic and non-periodic assessments of the compliance of UCM's internal quality system with the SAAVS standards and UCM's internal regulations related to the internal system. The assessment programme shall be maintained by the secretary of the RVHK.
7) International excellence is the highest level of quality of the results of creative activities and does not refer to the nature or geographical scope, nor the place of realisation or dissemination of the results of creative activities.
8) Creative activity is research activity, development activity, artistic activity, or other creative activity of the college that is relevant to the fulfilment of the mission of the higher education institution, especially in relation to the goals and outcomes of education.
9) The internal quality assurance system of higher education is a consistently interrelated set of policies, structures, and processes through which the higher education institution ensures and develops the quality of the fulfilment of its mission in the field of higher education, creative activities, and other related activities.
10) A significant international level of creative activity is the second highest level of quality of the results of creative activities and does not refer to the nature or geographical scope, nor the place of realisation or dissemination of the results of the creative activity.
11) Stakeholders are higher education institution persons, communities, or organisations that can influence or be influenced by the learning and creative process. A distinction is made between internal stakeholders (students and staff of the higher education institution) and external stakeholders (employers and other representatives of relevant sectors of the economy and social practice, alumni of the higher education institution, domestic and international partners of the higher education institution, etc.).

§ 3
External assessment of the internal quality system by SAAVS

1) UCM ensures regular and irregular external assessment of its internal quality system by requesting such assessment by SAAVS or allowing SAAVS to carry out regular or extraordinary supervision of the fulfilment of the standards issued by SAAVS.
2) Based on the regular or irregular assessment and supervision of UCM's internal quality system, SAAVS shall decide in accordance with a specific regulation[2] on:

[2] Act No 269/2018 Coll.

a) compliance of the UCM internal quality system and its implementation with the standards for the internal system,
b) granting or not granting accreditation of the study programme,
c) the granting of accreditation of the habilitation proceedings and inauguration proceedings, its non-granting or withdrawal,
d) the imposition of a corrective measure.

3) The procedure for the evaluation of standards is determined by SAAVS in accordance with a specific regulation (Part II of the Methodology for the Evaluation of SAAVS Standards).
4) UCM, through the persons responsible for the internal quality system, shall provide the SAAVS Working Group and its staff with assistance in order to:
   a) evidence of compliance with the internal system (rules set-up, policies, structures, and processes) as described in the application documents and the applicable internal rules published on the UCM website has been provided;
   b) the Agency's working group could examine the fulfilment of each standard and the references to the corresponding evidence (specific procedures, records, systems, list and description of premises, databases, etc.) in the application documents, in particular in the internal evaluation report,
   c) specific evidence is provided to the Agency's working group or Agency staff by reference to publicly available electronic documents, possibly as an attachment, or physically during the on-site assessment;
   d) evidence of the compliance of the implementation of the internal system with the standards could be verified by the agency's working group, in particular through UCM's registry records, a visit to UCM, interviews with stakeholder representatives, and other procedures;
   e) the on-site assessment has identified the persons from UCM who will participate in the opening and closing meetings of the Agency's working group,
   f) representatives of the management of the institution under review, those responsible for internal system processes, those responsible for the quality of the study programmes and the field of habilitation proceedings and inauguration proceedings, teachers, students, support and administrative staff, persons representing external stakeholders, in particular alumni and employers, practice partners and other participants in the assessment are present during the on-site assessment, according to the on-site assessment plan;
   g) during the on-site assessment, access to the premises of the site was ensured for members of the Agency's working group and Agency staff, as access to UCM records, including student, staff, faculty, research and artistic staff files and education records, and access to information systems and databases in use;
   h) during the on-site assessment, the participation of the members of the Agency's working group in the ongoing educational activities of the higher education insitution was ensured;
   i) during the on-site assessment, access to the written parts of the knowledge assessment (examinations), assignments, and the completion of final papers, etc., is ensured;
   j) suitable facilities are provided for the working group to work on-site during the on-site assessment and to conduct interviews with the participants in the assessment;

k) accompanying persons of the working group were provided during the on-site assessment.

5) If the UCM does not provide the necessary cooperation to the working group or the agency's employees according to letters a) to k) of paragraph 4 of this section, this may be considered a failure to fulfill the obligation according to § 20 par. 1 letter e) of the Higher Education Institutions Act

§ 4

External assessment of the internal quality system by organisations for quality system assessment and certification

1) UCM may also provide an external assessment of the internal quality system through accredited certification bodies for management systems or organisations that are members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
2) An accredited certification body for management systems is an organisation that has been granted a valid accreditation by the Slovak National Accreditation Service for the area of Quality Management or by a national accreditation body of another European Union country at the time of the external assessment.
3) A member organisation of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education is an organisation that is listed in the official membership list of the Association at the time of the external assessment on its website www.enqa.eu.
4) The external assessment by the organisations referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this section is non-binding for UCM and is of a recommendatory nature. The results of such assessments shall form the basis for the improvement of UCM's internal quality system and shall not replace the assessment by SAAVS.
5) The request for an offer to be sent by an organisation according to paragraphs 2 and 3 must be approved by the RVHK. The evaluation of tenders for the external assessment of the internal quality system shall be carried out in accordance with the special regulation[3] and UCM's internal procurement regulations.
6) The results of external assessments from external organisations are discussed by the RVHK and decisions on their implementation or rejection are made in accordance with the Statute of the RVHK.
7) Any external assessment, periodic or non-periodic, in relation to any subject of assessment (study programmes, habilitation proceedings and inauguration proceedings, internal quality system) shall be recorded in the assessment programme by the secretary of the RVHK.
8) Documented information, including the final report of the external assessment, shall be provided by the external organisation that carried out the assessment, and such report shall make clear what standards and criteria of the SAAVS UCM do not meet or what examples of good practice in higher education may be potential for UCM to improve its internal quality system.

[3] Act No. 343/2015 Coll. on Public Procurement and on amendments and additions to certain acts, as amended

§ 5
External assessment of the internal quality system by independent quality assurance experts

1) UCM also provides an external assessment of its internal system through persons who are independent quality assurance experts. Such assessment is of a recommendatory nature and is a potential for the continuous development of UCM's internal quality system.
2) A person who is independent of UCM and who is a quality assurance expert may be considered to be a quality assurance expert only if he or she (hereinafter referred to as a "Quality Expert" or just "Expert"):
   a) is not in an employment relationship with UCM,
   b) does not act or has not acted as a member of the SAAVS working group in assessing the compliance of the internal quality system with the SAAVS standards at UCM,
   c) is not a member of self-governing, academic, decision-making, and advisory bodies at UCM,
   d) has been working at a domestic or foreign university for at least 10 years and has management experience of at least 3 years or is a practitioner who has worked or is working in the field of quality assurance for at least 5 years.
3) The proposal for quality experts referred to in paragraph 2 of this section shall be submitted to the chairperson of the RVHK by its members. The proposal shall be accompanied by documentation from the Expert confirming that the criteria have been met.
4) A list of persons who are independent quality assurance experts is maintained by the secretary of the RVHK.
5) The RVHK may request one or more quality experts to conduct periodic or non-periodic assessments of the internal quality system, study programmes, and habilitation proceedings and inauguration proceedings.
6) During the assessment, the Expert follows the assessment principles set out in the Directive on the Internal Quality Assurance System for Higher Education at UCM and submits an assessment report to the RVHK. In the creation of the assessment report, he/she may make appropriate use of the annexes to the UCM Internal Quality Assurance System for Higher Education Directive or create his/her report, which shall make clear what standards and criteria of the SAAVS the UCM does not meet or what examples of good practice in the field of higher education may be of potential for UCM to improve its internal quality system.
7) The results of the assessment of the internal quality system provided by the quality experts shall be discussed by the RVHK and their implementation or rejection shall be decided in accordance with the Statute of the RVHK.

§ 6
Final provision

1) This directive was discussed in the UCM Rector's Board on 15 June 2021.
2) This Directive shall enter into force on the date of signing by the rector of UCM and shall take effect on 1 July 2021.

3) This Directive is binding for all UCM divisions at which study programmes, the field of habilitation proceedings and inauguration proceedings are carried out and which ensure the fulfilment of the standards for the internal quality assurance system in higher education.

In the university town of Trnava, on 15 June 2021

prof. Ing. Roman Boča, DrSc. Rector of UCM

Directive on the External Assessment of the UCM Internal Quality System, including amendments and supplements, is published in the Slovak language and in other languages in which the UCM conducts its programmes, with the Slovak language text being considered the authentic text.