



UNIVERSITY  
OF ŽILINA

## **FULL TEXT OF DIRECTIVE NO. 223**

elaborated on 18 December 2023

### **Monitoring and Periodic Review of the Study Programmes**

## **Article 1**

### **Basic Provisions**

1. This Directive is a part of the internal regulations of the University of Žilina (hereinafter referred to as "UNIZA") and has been formulated in accordance with Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education and the Change and Supplement to Some Acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Higher Education Act") and in accordance with the Internal Quality Assurance System of UNIZA (hereinafter referred to as the "IQAS UNIZA") developed in accordance with Act No. 269/2018 Coll. on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and on Amendment of Act No. 343/2015 Coll. on Public Procurement and Amendment of Certain Acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Quality Assurance of Higher Education Act"), as well as in accordance with the standards of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the "SAAHE").
2. The process of monitoring and periodic evaluation of study programmes is important in order to internally and externally review the quality of study programmes, focusing on opportunities for improvement and obtaining relevant feedback from all stakeholders. Stakeholders are involved in the collection and evaluation of relevant feedback.
3. The process of monitoring and periodic review of study programmes is carried out at UNIZA at three levels:
  - a) at the level of the Board of the Study Programme;
  - b) at the level of faculties and institutes of UNIZA;
  - c) at the level of the UNIZA Accreditation Board.

## **Article 2**

### **Purpose of Monitoring and Periodic Review**

1. Monitoring of a study programme under UNIZA conditions includes continuous supervision and review of the process of education in the relevant study programme (hereinafter referred to as "SP"), implementation of planned activities aimed at improving the quality of education, achievement of learning outcomes and objectives, compliance with relevant legislation and other legal regulations and guidelines.
2. The evaluation of the SP, based on data obtained from its monitoring, is carried out periodically in order to systematically improve the quality of the SP and to effectively achieve its objectives and learning outcomes. It is part of UNIZA's quality culture and offers an objective perspective for further discussion on the quality of education at UNIZA.
3. Monitoring and periodic review of the SPs involves:
  - a) internal stakeholders:
    - i. UNIZA students through feedback at the subject level and the level of study programmes implemented annually;
    - ii. teachers through regular annual subject evaluation and feedback reflecting their perceptions of the teaching process on a three-year basis;
  - b) external stakeholders:
    - i. UNIZA graduates through feedback reflecting their entry into the labour market and integration in employment, carried out on a three-year basis;
    - ii. employers through feedback reflecting the suitability of graduates for practice, carried out on a three-year basis.

4. Individual faculties/institutes of UNIZA carry out monitoring and periodic review at least to the extent and at the frequency specified in this Directive and the university-wide methodological guidance to this Directive. The methodological guideline establishes in particular:
  - a) system of quality indicators of education at UNIZA;
  - b) the frequency of indicators evaluation;
  - c) a monitoring and periodic review plan;
  - d) a list of common issues for monitoring;
  - e) recommended periodic review forms.

Faculties/institutes can supplement the defined system of quality indicators of education at UNIZA with additional indicators of their own which monitor the uniqueness and specificity of study programmes.

### Article 3

#### Tools for Monitoring and Periodic Review of Study Programmes and Responsibilities

1. Monitoring and periodic review of the SP is based on a set of indicative parameters of the quality of education at UNIZA in accordance with the standards of SAAHE and IQAS UNIZA. These parameters are primarily used for:
  - a) evaluation of the development of indicators over time in the context of UNIZA mission and goals – comparison of the current situation in the relevant area with the standards of SAAHE and IQAS UNIZA;
  - b) achieving learning objectives and outcomes aligned with stakeholders needs;
  - c) demonstration of continuous improvement;
  - d) implementing SP into practice while incorporating current knowledge and technological or non-technical requirements in the relevant field of study;
  - e) monitoring the effectiveness of the SP modifications made based on previous periodic monitoring and regular evaluation of the SP;
  - f) monitoring the effectiveness of the measures imposed by the previous evaluation of the study programme, in order to ensure continued compliance with the standards for the internal quality assurance system for education set by SAAHE.
2. The quality indicators of the study programme are divided according to the stage of the educational process they cover as follows:
  - a) **Indicators of entry to education** illustrating the compliance of the offer and interest in studying UNIZA study programmes;
  - b) **Education indicators:**
    - i) **Admission procedure, course and completion of studies** used to monitor the suitability of selection methods and assessment of eligibility for studies; evaluation of the state and development of student's educational progress and drop-out rates;
    - ii) **Student-centred learning, teaching, and evaluation**, assessing the status and perceptions of student-centred learning and student support;
    - iii) **Teachers**, monitoring teaching staff structures with a focus on qualifications, age and teacher attrition rate;
    - iv) **Creative activities, habilitation and inauguration proceedings** for the assessment of creative activities in connection with the implementation of education in individual stages and fields of education, or in the assessment of the fulfilment of standards for habilitation and inauguration proceedings.
  - c) **Learning outcomes indicators** reflecting the compliance of achieved education with labour market requirements and employers' perceptions of learning outcomes, as well as related trends.

3. UNIZA obtains data to monitor both quantitative and qualitative indicators of study programme quality via:
  - a) data collection from information systems for collecting and processing information from education at UNIZA (AIVS, IS admissions, PowerBI, IS Sofia – SAP HR ...),
  - b) direct measurement describing student performance, providing direct evidence of both the teaching and learning process. Direct evidence is tangible, visible and measurable. It provides clear evidence of what students have learned and what they have not learned (examples: grading scale, passing tests and exams, observation of progress – scores (number of points) before and after measurement (testing), assessment of performance concerning the subject of study (presentations, discussions...), assessment of final/dissertation papers, etc.);
  - c) indirect measurement depicting stakeholders' perceptions of education, learning experiences, satisfaction levels, and attitudes, linking learning outcomes and practice needs (examples: feedback, student surveys including subject evaluation questionnaires, focus groups, surveys of university teachers, graduates and employers, external review processes).
4. The process of collecting data from information systems is carried out in cooperation with the vice-dean for education, the study programme guarantor, and the Department for Education with the support of the Information and Communication Technologies Centre. In the case of university-wide study programmes, data collection is carried out in cooperation with the director of the institute providing the university-wide SP, the guarantor of the university-wide study programme, and the Department for Education with the support of the Information and Communication Technologies Centre.
5. The process of preparation, implementation and statistical processing of direct measurements describing the performance of students is the responsibility of individual teachers in coordination with the study programme guarantors.
6. The process of preparing and exporting data from indirect measures capturing stakeholders' perceptions of education is coordinated from the level of the UNIZA Department for Education. The person responsible for the preparation of indirect measurements of the quality of education at the level of UNIZA and further statistical processing of the obtained data is the vice-rector for education in cooperation with the vice-deans for education and directors of institutes, together with the quality manager with support of Information and Communication Technologies Centre.
7. The person responsible for communication with stakeholders regarding monitoring and periodic review is the guarantor of the study programme in coordination with the dean of the faculty/director of the institute.
8. The person responsible for the implementation of monitoring at the faculties is the vice-dean for education coordinated by the dean of the faculty, in the case of university-wide study programmes the director of the institute that provides education.
9. The person responsible for the periodic review of study programmes at the level of the Board of the Study Programme (Board of the SP) is the guarantor of the study programme, at the level of the faculty, the dean/director of the institute providing education and at the level of the UNIZA Accreditation Board, the rector.
10. The reason for a consistent university-wide approach to monitoring in the process of developing, implementing and statistically processing indirect measures capturing stakeholders' perceptions of education is:

- a) coordination of each step (design of questionnaire content, data collection, data evaluation), which is carried out in the same manner by all faculties and units of UNIZA;
- b) creation of a database of common (identical) questions covering the quality of education at UNIZA, which allows mutual internal comparison of the SPs;
- c) unified data processing, comparison and evaluation based on a single norm.

#### **Article 4**

##### **Design of Questionnaires and Processing of Education Feedback Data**

1. Monitoring that captures stakeholders' perceptions of education is primarily carried out through questionnaires. They consist of two groups of items – shared items common to all faculties and institutes related to the objective of the survey and specific items addressing other unique needs of UNIZA faculties and institutes.
2. The items in the shared section of the questionnaires are given by university-wide methodological guidelines. According to the schedule set out in the monitoring and periodic review plan, the questionnaires are provided to the faculties and institutes to add questions for their own monitoring and periodic review. After that, the questionnaires are enclosed and made available to the students for completion.
3. The data from the questionnaires are exported by the quality manager in cooperation with the Information and Communication Technologies Centre and disclosed to the responsible persons.

#### **Article 5**

##### **Feedback from UNIZA Students**

1. **Feedback on the admission procedure** and the process of adaptation to university studies is collected through an anonymous questionnaire aimed at all first-year students at all levels of study. The general set of questions shall consist of items arranged into at least the following themes:
  - a) Satisfaction with the information provided to applicants for studies at UNIZA;
  - b) Adaptation to higher education and support in higher education;
  - c) Admission procedure.
2. **Feedback on individual subjects** is obtained through a regular semestral anonymous questionnaire addressed to all students at all levels of education. It outlines the educational process at the level of the teacher/subject, the teacher's approach, the ability to achieve learning outcomes and their link to teaching and assessment methods, and the specifics of the subject. The general set of questions shall consist of items arranged into at least the following themes:
  - a) Content and organisation of education (fulfilment of set learning outcomes, suitability and availability of learning materials);
  - b) Teaching process and its dynamics (teaching methods, SCL approach);
  - c) Evaluation of teaching (assessment rules, link to defined learning outcomes);
  - d) University teacher (approach, way of communication...);
  - e) Other items according to the needs of UNIZA and its faculties.

In the case of several teachers providing the subject (e.g. lecture, seminar...), one questionnaire per subject is constructed with separate evaluations of each teacher.

3. **Feedback at the level of a study programme** is obtained through a regular anonymous questionnaire intended for students in the final years of all levels of education. It serves to outline

the entire study programme. The general set of questions shall consist of items arranged into at least the following themes:

- a) Content of education (fulfilment of specified learning outcomes of the SP, interconnectedness of subjects, identification of possible duplications...);
  - b) Organisation of education (workload, involvement in the activities of the faculty, solving professional tasks at the faculty/department/workplace, level of internationalisation, internships and compulsory traineeships...);
  - c) Access to counselling and other services during the studies;
  - d) Supervision and support in the process of preparing a bachelor's, master's or dissertation thesis.
4. As part of the feedback at the study programme level, feedback is also provided on the individual subjects taken by students in the summer term of the relevant academic year.
  5. Teachers ask the students to complete questionnaires in the Admission Procedure Feedback and Individual Subject Feedback, or, at the level of the study programme, they are asked to do so by professional study programme guarantors. The request for completion shall include information on the place of publication of previous monitoring and periodic review results.
  6. At the admission procedure level, the vice dean for education analyses the feedback received, and identifies opportunities and suggestions for enhancing strengths, eliminating identified weaknesses and potential threats. This analysis shall be one of the inputs for the periodic review of study programmes at the level of faculties/institutes providing education.
  7. At the subject level, by 15 October of the relevant calendar year, the teacher analyses feedback on his/her teaching, evaluates the success of the learning outcomes achieved and prepares a short evaluation. The teacher identifies suggestions for improvement and elimination of identified weaknesses and potential threats, which are approved by the person responsible for the subject, the guarantor of the study programme and the superior. If necessary, additional monitoring is set up outside of the regular timetable using e.g. co-teaching, peer assessment, supervision, etc.
  8. At the level of study programmes, the study programme guarantor analyses the feedback received, and identifies opportunities and suggestions for enhancing strengths, eliminating identified weaknesses and potential threats.
  9. The results of feedback on the provided education and the identified opportunities for improvement are subsequently analysed, evaluated and become the basis for the preparation of the Study Programme Evaluation Report as part of the periodic review of the study programme by the Board of the Study Programme.

## **Article 6**

### **Feedback from Graduates**

1. **Feedback from graduates of study programmes** covers the effect and impact of the higher education completed at the relevant level. The anonymous questionnaire is addressed to all graduates who have completed their studies in a given study programme in the last three years. The general set of questions shall consist of items arranged into at least the following themes:
  - a) The field of application;
  - b) Transition to employment;
  - c) Relevance of study concerning employment, subject composition, comparison of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by study and required by practice;
  - d) The need for further education.

2. Through the Board of the Study Programme in cooperation with the dean of the faculty (in the case of university-wide study programmes the Board of the Study Programme in cooperation with the director of the relevant institute providing the study programme), the graduates are asked to complete a questionnaire. The request shall include information on the place of publication of previous monitoring and periodic review results.
3. The study programme guarantor analyses the data from the feedback received, identifies opportunities and suggestions for enhancing strengths, and eliminates identified weaknesses and possible threats.
4. The results of feedback on the provided education and the identified opportunities for improvement are subsequently analysed and evaluated by the Board of the Study Programme and become the basis for the preparation of the Study Programme Evaluation Report as part of the periodic review of the study programme by the Board of the Study Programme.

### **Article 7 Feedback from Teachers**

1. **Teachers' feedback** covers their perceptions of the teaching process and offers inputs for comparing the perceptions of the teaching process by teachers and other stakeholders and surveys the staffing capacity of the study programme. The anonymous questionnaire is addressed to all university teachers and researchers joining the teaching in a given study programme. The general set of questions shall consist of items arranged into at least the following themes:
  - a) Students' approach and their level of readiness for university studies;
  - b) The position of the teacher and the support of the teaching process;
  - c) Organisation and infrastructure of education;
  - d) Internationalisation of education;
  - e) The definition of authority, competencies and responsibilities of the various structures, employees and other stakeholders involved in ensuring the quality of the study programmes;
  - f) Opportunities for professional growth.
2. UNIZA management shall ask university teachers to complete the questionnaires.
3. The study programme guarantor or senior employee shall analyse the data from the relevant part of the feedback received, identify opportunities and suggestions for enhancing strengths, eliminate identified weaknesses and possible threats, and propose measures for improving the quality of education.
4. The results of feedback on the provided education and the identified opportunities for improvement are subsequently analysed and evaluated by the Board of the Study Programme and become the basis for the preparation of the Study Programme Evaluation Report as part of the periodic review of the study programme by the Board of the Study Programme.

### **Article 8 Feedback from Employers**

1. **Feedback from employers** primarily reflects the readiness of graduates of the study programme for the labour market. The anonymous questionnaire is addressed to key employers of the given study programme. The general set of questions shall consist of items arranged into at least the following themes:
  - a) Readiness of graduates for the labour market;

- b) Effectiveness of education (structure of subjects, comparison of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by study and required by practice);
  - c) Trends and perspectives of development in the field;
  - d) Opportunities to bridge education and practice.
2. Through cooperating faculties and departments, employers are asked to complete questionnaires.
  3. The study programme guarantor, faculty management and UNIZA shall analyse the data from the feedback received, identify opportunities and suggestions for enhancing strengths, eliminate identified weaknesses and possible threats, and prepare proposals for measures to improve the quality of education.
  4. The results of feedback on the provided education and the identified opportunities for improvement of quality are subsequently analysed, evaluated and become the basis for the preparation of the Study Programme Evaluation Report as part of the periodic review of the study programme by the Board of the Study Programme.

## **Article 9**

### **Periodic Review of Study Programmes at the Level of the Board of the Study Programme**

1. The process of periodic review of the study programme is coordinated by the study programme guarantor as the person bearing the main responsibility for the implementation, development and quality assurance of the study programme in accordance with Section 6 (4) of the SAAHE Standards for the study programmes as well as in accordance with Article 3 of Directive No. 205 Rules for Assigning Teachers to Provision of Study Programmes at the University of Žilina.
2. The evaluation of the study programme shall be carried out by the Board of the Study Programme annually for the relevant academic year by 31 December of the following academic year by drawing up a Study Programme Evaluation Report. Its recommended format is set out in university-wide methodological guidelines. The report also includes the specification of measures to increase the success of the SP, identifying the persons who will carry out the control of the measures taken to increase the quality and improvement of the SP within a specified timeframe.
3. The periodic review of the quality of SP education uses the following inputs:
  - a) the accredited SP and its requirements, including proposed measures for improving the quality of education from the previous periodic review;
  - b) the current values of the study programme quality indicators as a result of the monitoring process in the observed period;
  - c) the results of direct measurement describing student performance according to defined inputs in the course information sheets (learning outcomes – teaching methods – evaluation methods) analysing the appropriateness of the teaching and evaluation methods used;
  - d) the results of indirect measurement capturing stakeholders' perceptions of education conducted at the UNIZA level, supplemented by data from self-monitoring of indicators;
  - e) suggestions for measures to improve the quality of education of relevant stakeholders on the conclusions of the feedback;
  - f) Long-term Plan of UNIZA and individual faculties/institutes;
  - g) IQAS UNIZA.
4. The output of this procedure, the Study Programme Evaluation Report, is processed following the monitoring and periodic review of the SP. The Study Programme Evaluation Report, together with the proposed measures for improving the quality of education, the persons responsible, the



deadlines for implementation and the expected values, is approved by the Board of the Study Programme. Conclusions and adopted measures relevant to external parties are made public.

5. The results of the monitoring and periodic review of the SP presented in the Study Programme Evaluation Report together with the measures are approved by the Board of the SP. They can be used to modify the SP in accordance with the rules for modification of the SP, which are set out in Directive No. 204 Rules for the Creation, Modification, Approval and Cancellation of Study Programmes at the University of Žilina.

#### **Article 10**

##### **Periodic Review of Study Programmes at the Level of Faculties/Institutes Providing Education**

1. Periodic review of study programmes at the level of faculties/institutes is part of the report on the evaluation of educational activities at UNIZA faculties and institutes.
2. The process of comprehensive periodic review of the quality of study programmes at the faculties and institutes of UNIZA is coordinated by the Faculty Board of Guarantors or the University Board of Guarantors. It is carried out every academic year by the end of February of the following academic year and it is based on:
  - a) Study Programme Evaluation Reports prepared by the Boards of Study Programmes;
  - b) approved measures to improve the quality of education based on suggestions from relevant stakeholders on the conclusions from the feedback;
  - c) proposed measures for improving the quality of education from the previous periodic review;
  - d) current values of study programme quality indicators resulting from the monitoring processes in the observed period, summarized at the faculty/institute level;
  - e) results of direct measurement describing students' performance and indirect measurement capturing stakeholders' perceptions of education conducted at the UNIZA level, supplemented by data from self-monitoring indicators summarized at the faculty/institute level;
  - f) Long-term Plan of UNIZA and faculty/institute;
  - g) IQAS UNIZA.
3. The chairman of the Board of Guarantors or a person authorised by him/her prepares a SWOT analysis of the quality of education at the faculty. Its recommended format is set out in the university-wide methodological guidelines. He/she shall describe trends and identify the next steps to enhance educational strengths by utilizing the opportunities. He/she shall propose measures to improve the quality of education eliminating weaknesses and threats. In both cases, the responsible persons, deadlines and expected values shall be proposed.
4. The results of the monitoring and periodic review of the SP at the faculty level are approved by the Faculty Board of Guarantors/University Board of Guarantors and presented to the academic community of the faculty. Conclusions and adopted measures relevant to external parties are made public.

#### **Article 11**

##### **Periodic Review of Study Programmes by UNIZA Accreditation Board**

1. UNIZA Accreditation Board systematically analyses the level of quality assurance of higher education and carries out its periodic review with emphasis on the level of quality of UNIZA study programmes. The annual periodic review of study programmes verifies and ensures that study programmes are carried out in accordance with the SAAHE standards for the internal quality assurance system of higher education, the standards for the study programme and the rules of the IQAS UNIZA (VSK UNIZA).
2. The UNIZA Accreditation Board evaluates the quality of UNIZA study programmes annually, each academic year by 30 April of the following academic year based on:
  - a) SWOT analysis of education at individual faculties/institutes of UNIZA;
  - b) approved measures to improve the quality of education based on the suggestions of relevant stakeholders to the conclusions of the SWOT analysis;
  - c) proposed measures for improving the quality of education from the previous periodic review;
  - d) current values of study programme quality indicators resulting from the monitoring processes in the observed period at UNIZA level;
  - e) results of direct measurement describing students' performance and indirect measurement capturing stakeholders' perceptions of education conducted at the UNIZA level;
  - f) Long-term Plan of UNIZA;
  - g) IQAS UNIZA.
3. The chairman of the UNIZA Accreditation Board or a person authorized by him/her shall prepare a SWOT analysis of the quality of education at UNIZA and identify further steps to enhance the strengths of education by utilizing the opportunities. On the other hand, he/she shall also propose measures to improve the quality of education and to eliminate weaknesses and threats. In both cases, the responsible persons, deadlines and expected values shall be proposed.
4. The analysis together with the proposed measures are approved by the UNIZA Accreditation Board. The results of monitoring and periodic review of the SP at the level of UNIZA are presented to the academic community. Conclusions and adopted measures relevant to external parties are made public.

#### **Article 12**

#### **Responsibility for the Implementation of Measures for the Quality of Education Improvement**

1. The guarantor of the study programme is responsible for the implementation of the measures taken to improve the quality of education for individual study programmes set by the Board of the Study Programme. The dean/director of the institute is responsible for the implementation of the measures taken to improve the quality of education at the faculty/institute. The rector is responsible for the implementation of the measures taken to improve the quality of education at the university.

#### **Article 13**

#### **Statistical Evaluation of the Data Obtained by Survey Activities**

1. When evaluating data obtained by quantitative and qualitative research using the method of inquiry, it is necessary to work with a statistically significant sample of respondents.

#### **Article 14**

#### **Ethical Principles for the Collection of Feedback from UNIZA Internal Stakeholders**

1. In relation to the individual articles of this Directive, it is necessary to comply with Directive No. 207 – Code of Ethics of the University of Žilina, particularly the principles of truthfulness, honesty, reliability and deliberate non-misrepresentation of the feedback provided by internal stakeholders must be observed. When providing feedback, these stakeholders are to act in a way that does not disrupt the relationship between those being evaluated and the evaluators. In collecting feedback, stakeholders also express their views freely and truthfully, respect freedom of speech and critical thinking, and the free exchange of ideas and information.

### **Article 15** **Final Provisions**

1. This Directive was discussed by the UNIZA Academic Senate on 22 November 2021.
2. This Directive was approved by the UNIZA Scientific Board on 25 November 2021.
3. This Directive shall enter into force and effect on the date of its approval.
4. Amendment No. 1 was discussed by the UNIZA Academic Senate on 25 April 2022.
5. Amendment No. 1 was approved by the UNIZA Scientific Board on 5 May 2022.
6. Amendment No. 1 shall enter into force and effect on the date of its approval.
7. Amendment No. 2 was discussed by the UNIZA Scientific Board on 14 December 2023.
8. Amendment. No. 2 was approved by the UNIZA Accreditation Board on 18 December 2023.
9. Amendment No. 2 enters into force and effect on the day of its approval by the UNIZA Accreditation Board.

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