



**INDEPENDENT AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN
EDUCATION (IQAA)**

**REGULATIONS ON THE PROCEDURE OF CONSIDERING
COMPLAINTS**



1. General provisions

Independent Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (hereinafter – IQAA or the Agency) acts in accordance with principles of transparency and accountability, outlined in the IQAA Strategy. It suggests the presence of clear and published procedures of reacting to complaints of educational institutions, which do not agree with remarks and recommendations of external expert groups. A complaint means expression of dissatisfaction of education institutions, which have undertaken institutional or program accreditation, with the quality of service or actions of an IQAA coordinator or IQAA external expert group members.

The Agency has a separate complaints procedure. Considering complaints of educational institutions helps to detect violations made during an external review and suggest recommendations for their elimination. Considering complaints allows controlling and evaluating the efficiency of procedures used, maintaining openness and responsibility of the Agency staff, and constitutes a part of the Strategy aimed at improving quality of work of IQAA and its expert groups.

2. The Complaints Commission

2.1 The Complaints Commission (hereinafter - Commission) consists of 5 members.

2.2 The Complaints Commission is formed on the basis of proposals from universities and the Agency, and is formed by the order of the IQAA President.

2.3 The Commission can consider complaints after the external review was performed.

2.4 The commission consisting of 3 people from 5 members for consideration of the complaint is formed by the order of the President of IQAA. The Chairman of the Commission is elected at a meeting of the Complaints Commission.

2.5 The Complaints Commission is elected for a three-year term.

3. Grounds for submitting a complaint

3.1 An educational institution, which has undertaken institutional or program accreditation, has the right to refer to the Complaints Commission within two weeks after the end of the accreditation procedure by the expert group based on the following grounds:

- complaints on the work or behavior of a Chairman, a member of an IQAA external expert group or an IQAA coordinator;
- complaints on the inaccuracy of information, which is presented by IQAA;
- complaints on “factological errors” - this means that the information provided by an educational institution was used by the external review group incorrectly and it led to a negative conclusion of an external expert group;
- injustice of the expert group, violation of the Code of Ethics or fraud.

If the incorrect information was provided by the educational institution itself, a



complaint is not accepted.

4. Documents for the Complaints Commission

4.1 The Complaints Commission considers the following documents:

A **complaint** in a free format (indicating the name of the educational institution, its location, accurate post address, reference number and date of the complaint, content of the complaint, clearly identified claims, signed by the head of the educational institution or his/her deputy) on:

- an external review report;
- an answer of a Chairman of the expert group or a coordinator/an expert group member;
- comments received from a coordinator or a Chairman of the expert group;
- violation of the Code of Ethics by a Chairman or a member of the expert group.

Explanation respond of the person, against whom a complaint was submitted.

4.2 The Commission shall not consider any documents, which are not listed in the Regulations on the procedure of considering complaints, and is not submitted to the Commission in due time.

4.3 Complaints submitted anonymously, without indication of a full name, signature, and the essence of the matter, are not subject to review; or if conditions leading to the complaint are subsequently eliminated.

5. Procedure of considering complaints

5.1 First of all, if an educational organization is not satisfied with the IQAA service, it shall inform about it a coordinator or an expert group Chairman, who conduct an external review in this institution, for explanation.

5.2. If an educational institution has not managed to solve the problem on site, it has the right to submit a complaint to the Complaints Commission.

5.3 A complaint is registered and addressed to the IQAA President, who forwards it to the Chairman of the Complaints Commission. IQAA President sends a written confirmation on the complaint receipt to the educational institution.

5.4 Complaints, which are classified by the Chairman of the Commission as “serious”, are thoroughly reviewed by the Commission. Examples of the “serious” complaints are as following: claims of inappropriate behavior, cheating or unfairness of the expert group or any of its members. Deadlines of submission of such complaints may go beyond the time constraints indicated below.

5.5 While considering a complaint the Commission takes measures for maintaining confidentiality of data, representing a commercial secret or personal data. If necessary, the Commission discusses the issue with any party involved. The meetings of the Commission are recorded in protocol, which shall be signed by all Commission members. The decision on the complaint is made by a vote.

6. Standards of service



6.1 The Commission strives to investigate complaints quickly and thoroughly.

6.2 The Commission is responsible for complaints in front of the IQAA President, who shall report at the meeting of the Accreditation Council about investigations of complaints according to the deadlines:

- by the end of week 1 – if a complaint is accepted, its receipt is confirmed in written form to the educational institution;

- no later than week 3 - IQAA President shall either reply on the complaint or inform that investigation is still ongoing;

- no later than week 4 - if necessary, by the decision of the Complaints Commission and in agreement with the educational institution IQAA President can form an expert group to verify the complaint with the visit to the organization of education;

- no later than week 6 – after agreement with the organization of education on the composition of the expert group, the review of the complained program takes place within 1-2 days at the expense of the organization of education;

- no later than week 8 – IQAA President shall inform the educational institution on the results of the continued investigation (in exceptional cases it may take longer period, if so, the educational institution shall be informed about it in a written form).

7. Decisions and consequences

7.1 The Commission makes a decision to either accept or decline a complaint, if it is considered unacceptable or ungrounded. The educational institution that submitted a complaint should be informed on the decision of the Complaints Commission.

7.2 If a complaint is accepted, the Commission considers it within the periods and sequence indicated in Section 6.

7.3 The Complaints Commission gives recommendations on creation of an external expert group to conduct a review or rejects the second review.

7.4 The Commission can make its decision on the basis of the available materials.

7.5 If a complaint is declined, the decision of the Commission is considered final.

7.6 At the meeting of the Accreditation Council for consideration shall be accepted materials of the external expert group and the Complaints Commission.

7.7 In case of confirmation of reasonableness of the complaint, those experts, whose actions the complaint was filed on, are excluded from the common database of IQAA's experts (added to the "blacklist") and are not involved in the accreditation procedures henceforth.