MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF VIETNAM	THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM Independence - Freedom – Happiness
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CIRCULAR

REGULATIONS ON ACCREDITATION OF QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Pursuant to the Law on Education No. 43/2019/QH14 (amended by the Law No. 123/2025/QH15);

Pursuant to the Law on Higher Education No. 125/2025/QH15;

Pursuant to Decree No. 37/2025/ND-CP dated February 26, 2025 of the Government on functions, tasks, powers and organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam;

At the request of the head of Vietnam Education Quality Management Agency;

The Minister of Education and Training promulgates the Circular on accreditation of quality of higher education institutions.

Chapter I

GENERAL REGULATIONS

Article 1. Scope and regulated entities

1. This Circular regulates the accreditation of quality of higher education institutions including the set of standards for assessing the quality of higher education institutions; and procedures and cycle for accrediting the quality of higher education institutions.

2. This Circular applies to the following entities:

a) Parent universities, academies, and universities (hereinafter referred to as “education institutions”) within the national education system including foreign-invested higher education institutions operating in Vietnam;

b) Domestic education accreditation organizations established, permitted to be established, and permitted to operate by the Minister of Education and Training (hereinafter referred to as “education accreditation organizations”);

c) Other organizations and individuals involved in accreditation of quality of higher education institutions.

3. In cases where a higher education institution selects a foreign education accreditation organization that has been recognized by the Ministry of Education and Training to operate in Vietnam, the set of quality assessment standards, procedures, and cycle for accrediting the quality of that higher education institution shall comply with the application for registration of operation of that foreign education accreditation organization.

Article 2. Definitions

For the purposes of this Circular, the terms below shall be construed as follows:

1. *Quality of a higher education institution* is the compliance with objectives that the institution has set for itself, and the requirements prescribed by the laws on higher education; and assurance and continuous improvement of the quality of its operations in order to effectively serve the human resource development of the local area and the country.

2. *Assessment of the quality of a higher education institution* is the process of collecting and analyzing information for assessment according to standards for education quality assessment in order to comprehensively assess the operations of the higher education institution including the leadership and strategic management, the core functions of the institution, the quality control system, results, and impact.

3. *Quality accreditation of a higher education institution* is an activity of assessing and recognizing the level of compliance with quality standards of the higher education institution according to the set of standards issued by a competent authority or recognized by a state competent authority.

4. *Self-assessment of a higher education institution* is the process where the higher education institution, based on quality standards, independently collects and analyzes information and evidence in order to assess the level of compliance with criteria, and comprehensively assess operations and the functioning of internal quality control system of the institution. This process involves the participation of stakeholders. The results of self-assessment are used for adjusting resources, perfecting operational procedures, improving quality, disclosing information, and fulfilling accountability.

5. *External assessment* is the process where an education accreditation organization conducts surveys and assessments according to standards for education quality assessment to determine the level of compliance with those standards of the higher education institution.

6. *External assessment* is the process where an education accreditation organization conducts surveys and assessments according to standards for education quality assessment to determine the compliance with those standards of the higher education institution. Each standard may include more than one criterion.

7. *Criteria for assessing the quality of a higher education institution* refers to requirements and conditions that must be satisfied with respect to a specific content of each standard.

8. *Information* refers to news and data contained in documents, dossiers, and materials that are available in the form of written documents, printed documents, electronic documents, drawings, photographs, sketches, tapes, discs, video or audio recordings, or other forms. Information is collected from various sources to ensure accuracy, and is used for supporting and illustrating the assessments in the self-assessment report and the external assessment report.

9. *Evidence* refers to printed documents, digitized materials, records, objects, phenomena, and witness statements cited to confirm an activity or event in order to serve as the basis for determining the level of compliance with criteria.

10. *Quality benchmarking* is the activity of comparing operations of a higher education institution with the set of standards for education quality assessment, or with a selected higher education institution for improving the quality of the institution conducting the benchmarking.

11. *Stakeholders of a higher education institution* include internal stakeholders and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include learners, lecturers, researchers (if any), technicians, specialists, staff, the leadership and management team, relevant organizations and individuals of the higher education institution. External stakeholders include alumni, prospective learners, learners' families, employers, professional associations, experts, enterprises, partners, sponsors, investors, the institution's managing authority, state management authorities responsible for education, relevant organizations and individuals.

12. *Educational philosophy* is a set of core viewpoints that guide educational objectives, teaching content and methods, and the roles of lecturers and learners in educational activities.

13. *Community* refers to subjects and partners involved in training, research, and development activities, as well as authorities, organizations, enterprises, employers, authorities at all levels, and other stakeholders within the scope of the activities that are carried out by the higher education institution.

14. *Community engagement and service* refers to the activities of a higher education institution that contribute to the resolution of specific community issues, and provide benefits to the society and the community.

15. *Internal quality control system of a higher education institution* refers to the overall set of organizational components, policies, procedures, tools, resources, and operating mechanisms that the higher education institution establishes, implements, supervises, and develops in order to maintain and promote a quality culture, ensure continuous quality improvement, ensure transparent and public information, and enhance accountability throughout all higher education activities in accordance with domestic or international quality standards.

Article 3. Purposes of using the set of standards for assessing the quality of higher education institutions and using the accreditation results of the quality of higher education institutions

1. Higher education institutions shall use the set of standards for assessing the quality of higher education institutions and the results of quality accreditation to build, operate, develop, and improve their internal quality control system, and to guide and control all activities related to the institution; to conduct self-assessment, disclose information, fulfill accountability, and ensure the improvement of training quality.

2. Education accreditation organizations shall use the set of standards for assessing the quality of higher education institutions to develop assessment guidelines for higher education institutions; to appraise self-assessment dossiers; to conduct external assessments, provide guidelines on improving the internal quality control system and improving the methods of operating that system; and to grant or deny recognition of a higher education institution as satisfying education quality standards.

3. Other organizations and individuals shall use the set of standards for assessing the quality of higher education institutions and the results of quality accreditation as a basis for conducting assessments, and participating in social oversight and feedback regarding the higher education institutions in which they are interested.

Chapter II

SET OF STANDARDS FOR ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Section 1. LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Article 4. Standard 1: Vision, mission, culture, and administration

1. Criteria 1.1: Leaders of the higher education institution (hereinafter referred to as “training institutions”) publicly announce the vision and mission of the training institution to satisfy the needs of stakeholders.

2. Criteria 1.2: The training institution has an administration system comprising the university council/school council (if any), the board of directors/board of rectors, organizations and mass organizations of the Communist Party of Vietnam (if any), the science and training council, advisory councils, and other administration bodies that provide overall direction and ensure accountability, transparency, sustainability, and risk mitigation.

3. Criteria 1.3: Leaders of the training institution promote cultural values that uphold academic integrity and standards of conduct in conformity with the vision and mission of the training institution, and progress toward achieving objectives of the training institution.

4. Criteria 1.4: The vision, mission, and cultural values of the training institution are clearly communicated and implemented among personnel at all levels of the training institution.

5. Criteria 1.5: Decisions of administration bodies are translated into concrete action plans and policies that reflect the social responsibility of the training institution in protecting the interests of stakeholders, the community, and the environment.

6. Criteria 1.6: The administration system of the training institution is continuously improved to enhance the effectiveness of operations and risk management.

Article 5. Standard 2: Leadership and strategies

1. Criteria 2.1: The training institution has a management organizational structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to ensure smooth and multi-directional information flow.

2. Criteria 2.2: The management organizational structure is periodically reviewed in order to improve the operational effectiveness and performance outcomes of the training institution.

3. Criteria 2.3: Short-, medium-, and long-term strategic plans are implemented to satisfy the needs related to training, scientific research, and community service. The planning process takes into account both internal capacity, and external opportunities and challenges.

4. Criteria 2.4: Key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets are established to measure the extent to which strategic objectives of the training institution are achieved.

5. Criteria 2.5: The strategic plan is disseminated and implemented at all levels throughout the training institution, and is linked to individual objectives of each staff member.

Article 6. Standard 3: Human resources

1.Criteria 3.1: Human resource planning for lecturers, researchers, specialists, staff, and technicians (including transfer, rotation, appointment, re-appointment, relief of duties, dismissal, resignation, and retirement) shall be carried out in accordance with the needs of training, scientific research, and community connection and service.

2. Criteria 3.2: The system for the promotion and appointment of academic titles for lecturers is established and operated effectively.

3. Criteria 3.3: The competencies of lecturers, researchers, specialists, staff, and technicians including leadership skills shall be defined, standardized, and implemented.

4. Criteria 3.4: The needs for training and development for lecturers, researchers, specialists, staff, and technicians shall be identified, and activities shall be implemented to satisfy these needs.

5. Criteria 3.5: A performance management system including reward and recognition schemes, and staff training and development plans shall be implemented to promote and support training, scientific research, and community connection and service.

Article 7. Standard 4: Financial and physical resources

1. Criteria 4.1: The financial management system operates effectively in planning, implementing, auditing, and improving the use of financial resources in order to support the training institution in fulfilling its vision, mission, and strategic objectives, while complying with the laws.

2. Criteria 4.2: The planning, maintenance, upgrading, and expansion of facilities and infrastructure are carried out effectively to satisfy the current and future needs of the training institution regarding training, scientific research, and community connection and service.

3. Criteria 4.3: The training institution has an effective operating system for planning, maintaining, evaluating, and upgrading information technology infrastructure and network connectivity in accordance with the current needs of the training institution and anticipated needs for training, scientific research, and community connection and service.

4. Criteria 4.4: The training institution has an effective operating system for planning, maintaining, evaluating, and upgrading information technology infrastructure and network connectivity in accordance with the current needs of the training institution, and anticipated needs for training, scientific research, and community connection and service.

5. Criteria 4.5: The system for planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving environmental conditions, health conditions, safety, and accessibility for persons with special needs is operated effectively in accordance with the laws.

Article 8. Standard 5: External networks and relations

1. Criteria 5.1: The training institution has policies, strategic plans, and procedures to strengthen external relations, and develop networks and partnerships with enterprises, professional associations, alumni, and domestic and foreign governmental and non-governmental organizations.

2. Criteria 5.2: The external relations plans of the training institution are implemented in accordance with its vision, mission, and strategic objectives.

Section 2. MAIN FUNCTIONS OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Article 9. Standard 6: Training policies

1. Criteria 6.1: Plans, policies, and criteria for selecting learners for each training program are developed, implemented, supervised, and improved in an appropriate and effective manner.

2. Criteria 6.2: The training institution has a process for designing and developing training programs of which expected learning outcomes are systematically developed, implemented, reviewed, and updated in accordance with the needs of stakeholders.

3. Criteria 6.3: The training institution has a system for selecting teaching and learning activities that are consistent with its educational philosophy and that achieve the expected learning outcomes.

4. Criteria 6.4: Teaching and learning activities are supervised and evaluated to improve quality.

5. Criteria 6.5: Teaching and learning activities promote self-directed learning, lifelong learning, creative thinking, and entrepreneurial spirit; and are designed to be appropriate for the achievement of expected learning outcomes.

6. Criteria 6.6: The training institution has a system for selecting appropriate forms of learner assessment that are consistent with the expected learning outcomes.

7. Criteria 6.7: Appropriate learner support services and activities are implemented and supervised in accordance the needs of stakeholders.

Article 10. Standard 7: Policies for scientific research

1. Criteria 7.1: The training institution has an effective system to orient and supervise its scientific research activities at all levels.

2. Criteria 7.2: KPIs (such as funding levels, number of scientific research projects, scientific journals, patents, copyrights, inventions, etc.) are used for comprehensively evaluating inputs, outputs, results, and impact of scientific research activities.

3. Criteria 7.3: The training institution has mechanisms to systematically encourage and manage excellence in research, particularly with respect to innovation and entrepreneurial spirit.

4. Criteria 7.4: The training institution has an appropriate and effective big-data system for recording, archiving, and analyzing all of its intellectual assets.

5. Criteria 7.5: The training institution has a system for establishing, maintaining, promoting, and developing the cooperation regarding scientific research with government organizations, other training institutions, domestic and international enterprises across multiple areas of expertise.

Article 11. Standard 8: Policies for community connection and service

1. Criteria 8.1: Policies, plans, and guidelines on community connection and service are developed, implemented, reviewed, and improved to satisfy the needs and satisfaction of stakeholders.

2. Criteria 8.2: Policies, plans, and guidelines on community connection and service are aligned with national development orientations; and are implemented, reviewed, and improved.

3. Criteria 8.3: Policies, plans, and guidelines on community connection and service demonstrate a contribution to a more sustainable and mutually beneficial global future, while also contributing to environmental protection.

Section 3. QUALITY CONTROL AND SUPPORT SYSTEM

Article 12. Standard 9: Quality control system

1. Criteria 9.1: The training institution has a dedicated unit with the role and responsibility of coordinating and supervising internal and external quality control activities. These activities are effective and aligned with its strategic objectives.

2. Criteria 9.2: The training institution develops a quality control plan that clearly reflects the commitment and involvement of stakeholders to achieve a higher level of quality control.

3. Criteria 9.3: The quality control plan is thoroughly disseminated and translated into short-term and long-term action plans for implementation at all levels of the training institution.

4. Criteria 9.4: The training institution clearly establishes KPIs and targets to measure the effectiveness of quality control activities. Measurement results are promptly disclosed to stakeholders to support feedback and improvement.

Article 13. Standard 10: Internal quality control information system

1. Criteria 10.1: The training institution has an effective information management system for collecting, processing, and reporting KPIs, as well as strategic and quality control targets. This system supports training, scientific research, and community connection and service in accordance with the mission of the training institution.

2. Criteria 10.2: The quality control information system is capable of analyzing the data, and granting stakeholders easy access to make decisions, while ensuring the integrity and usefulness of the information.

Article 14. Standard 11: Quality improvement

1. Criteria 11.1: The training institution has a plan for continuously strengthening its quality control system including benchmarking activities and comparative studies to identify good practices in training, scientific research, and community connection and service.

2. Criteria 11.2: The training institution establishes benchmarking and comparative indicators from multiple sources and uses these indicators in self-assessment and in improving quality control activities.

Section 4. RESULTS AND IMPACTS

Article 15. Standard 12: Training results

1. Criteria 12.1: Output indicators such as graduation rate, dropout rate, average time to graduation, and the level of achievement of expected learning outcomes of all training programs are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

2. Criteria 12.2: Graduates' employment status, entrepreneurship, and career aspirations are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

3. Criteria 12.3: Indicators of outputs and long-term impact such as the level of contribution to national development and sustainable development targets are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

4. Criteria 12.4: Graduates' employment status, entrepreneurship, and career aspirations are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

Article 16. Standard 13: Results of scientific research

1. Criteria 13.1: Funding sources and funding allocation for scientific research activities of the training institution are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

2. Criteria 13.2: Types and quantities of scientific research outputs and other intellectual assets produced by lecturers, researchers, and learners are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

3. Criteria 13.3: Results of scientific research and business innovation including entrepreneurship, startup incubation, and commercialization are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

4. Criteria 13.4: Scientific research activities of the training institution contribute to national development and are aligned with sustainable development targets.

Article 17. Standard 14: Results of community connection and service

1. Criteria 14.1: Types and number of community connection, service, and social contribution activities are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

2. Criteria 14.2: The social impact and results of community connection, service, and social contribution activities, and their alignment with sustainable development targets are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

3. Criteria 14.3: The impact on learners, lecturers, and staff of community connection, service, and social contribution activities, and their alignment with sustainable development targets are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

4. Criteria 14.4: Stakeholders' level of satisfaction with community connection, service, and social contribution activities, and with sustainable development targets are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

Article 18. Standard 15: Results regarding finance and market

1. Criteria 15.1: Financial performance indicators for training, scientific research, and community connection and service activities are established, supervised, and benchmarked for improvement.

2. Criteria 15.2: Indicators of market results and position with respect to training, scientific research, and community connection and service activities are established, supervised, and benchmarked for quality improvement.

Chapter III

PROCEDURES AND CYCLES FOR ACCREDITING THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Section 1. PROCEDURES, CYCLES, AND METHODS FOR ASSESSMENT

Article 19. Procedures and cycles

1. The procedures for accrediting the quality of a higher education institution are carried out in four steps:

a) Self-assessment;

b) External assessment;

c) Appraisal of assessment results;

d) Recognition of compliance with education quality standards.

2. The accreditation of the quality of a higher education institution shall be conducted every 05 years.

Article 20. Methods for assessment

1. Higher education institutions shall conduct self-assessment and undergo external assessment according to the standards and criteria in the set of standards for assessing the quality of higher education institutions prescribed in Chapter II of this Circular.

2. Criteria shall be assessed on 02 levels as follows:

a) Satisfied: A criteria is assessed as “satisfied” when the higher education institution has a formal approach to quality control, has established an appropriate system, and has implemented quality control activities in a clear and rigorous manner in accordance with relevant policies and procedures in order to satisfy requirements of the criteria, and has proofs showing that regular and systematic quality improvement has been carried out;

b) Not satisfied: A criteria is assessed as “not satisfied” when the higher education institution lacks a formal approach to quality assurance; lacks an appropriate system of policies, regulations, and procedures to satisfy the requirements of the criteria; has such policies, regulations, or procedures but they have not been validly issued or have not been applied consistently and formally; or lacks credible proofs of quality improvement.

3. Standards shall be assessed on 02 levels as follows:

a) A standard is assessed as “satisfied” when less than 01 criterion is assessed as “not satisfied”. A standard comprising 06 or more criteria is assessed as “satisfied” when less than 02 criteria are assessed as “not satisfied”;

b) A standard is assessed as “not satisfied” when the number of “not satisfied” criteria exceeds the limits prescribed in point a of this clause.

4. Higher education institutions shall be assessed on 3 levels as follows:

a) A higher education institution is assessed as "satisfied" when all standards are assessed as “satisfied”;

b) A higher education institution is assessed as “satisfied with conditions” when less than 04 standards are assessed as “not satisfied”. In this case, the higher education institution shall develop and implement a quality improvement plan to ensure that “not satisfied” items are remedied within 24 months from the date of recognition as “satisfied with conditions” in order to become “satisfied” as prescribed in point a of this clause;

c) A higher education institution is assessed as “not satisfied” if it fails to satisfy requirements prescribed in points a and b of this clause.

5. Requirements for higher education institutions to be recognized as satisfying education quality standards:

a) The higher education institution shall have at least one course with graduates by the time the self-assessment report is completed;

b) The higher education institution shall be assessed by an education accreditation organization as “satisfied” or “not satisfied” as prescribed by laws; and shall submit a written request to the accreditation organization for consideration and issuance of a decision on recognition of satisfying education quality standards.

6. Responsibility of higher education institutions for quality improvement:

a) The higher education institution is responsible for maintaining and enhancing quality of “satisfied” criteria, and for continuously improving quality of "not satisfied” criteria. Immediately upon being recognized as “satisfied” or “satisfied with conditions”, the higher education institution must issue a specific quality improvement plan for “not satisfied” criteria; in the case of “satisfied with conditions”, the higher education institution is responsible for implementing remedial measures for “not satisfied” criteria and satisfying all requirements within 24 months from the date of recognition as a basis for consideration of recognition as “satisfied”;

b) The higher education institution shall submit annual progress reports on quality improvement for “not satisfied” criteria to the education accreditation organization as prescribed by laws, and provide proofs of implemented improvement measures.

7. Responsibility of education accreditation organizations toward higher education institutions after external assessment:

a) Supervision of quality improvement: Education accreditation organizations are responsible for supervising the progress of quality improvement for higher education institutions that have 01 to 04 “not satisfied” criteria. Education accreditation organizations shall request higher education institutions to report and provide proofs of improvement process;

b) Re-assessment after 12 to 24 months: For higher education institutions with 01 to 04 “not satisfied” standards, education accreditation organizations shall carry out a re-assessment after 12 to 24 months to confirm whether higher education institutions have implemented improvement measures and have satisfied requirements in point a, clause 4 of this Article.

Section 2. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Article 21. Procedures for self-assessment

The procedures for self-assessment of the quality of higher education institutions are carried out as follows:

1. Establishing the self-assessment council (Form 01).

2. Developing the self-assessment plan (Form 02).

3. Collecting, analyzing, and processing information and proofs (Form 03).

4. Self-assessing the level of compliance with criteria (Form 04).

5. Preparing the self-assessment report (Form 05 and Form 12).

6. Archiving and using the self-assessment report.

7. Carrying out activities following completion of the self-assessment report.

Article 22. Self-assessment councils of higher education institutions

1. The self-assessment council of a higher education institution shall be established by decision of the rector or director of the higher education institution (hereinafter collectively to as "rector"), and shall include an odd number of members and at least 09 members.

2. The self-assessment council of a higher education institution shall include:

a) The President of the self-assessment council is the rector; the Deputy President is a vice rector. Other members include representatives of the school council (if any), the science and training Council, the organization of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and the organization representing employees as prescribed by laws within the higher education institution; the dedicated quality control unit and a number of departments, offices, faculties, and academic units; representatives of lecturers and learners.

b) The self-assessment council shall have a secretariat comprising personnel from the dedicated quality control unit and from relevant units. The head of the dedicated quality control unit shall be the head of the secretariat. Specific tasks of the self-assessment council are assigned to dedicated groups including members of the self-assessment council and the secretariat. Each group has at least 03 members responsible for one or several standards, and is led by a member of the self-assessment council;

3. The self-assessment council shall assist the rector in directing the implementation of the self-assessment of the higher education institution in accordance with this Circular. The self-assessment council shall operate on the principle of democratic centralism, and discuss matters to reach consensus.

4. Responsibilities of the self-assessment council:

a) Disseminate guidelines on self-assessment; introduce self-assessment procedures; research and exchange experience on self-assessment of higher education institutions; and request relevant units and individuals to cooperate in implementing the self-assessment;

b) Organize the implementation of the steps of self-assessment.

5. Responsibilities of members of the self-assessment council:

a) The President of the council is responsible for the council's activities and the self-assessment results; shall assign specific tasks to each member including the work corresponding to each standard, the start and end times, the person in charge, and coordinating members; shall convene and chair the council's meetings; shall approve the self-assessment plan; shall direct the collection, processing, analysis of information and proofs, assessment of the level of compliance with each criteria, and drafting of the self-assessment report; shall resolve issues arising during the implementation of self-assessment; and shall approve the self-assessment report;

b) The Deputy President of the council shall carry out tasks assigned by the President. When authorized by the President, the Deputy President is responsible for chairing the council and is accountable for authorized tasks;

c) Other members of the council are responsible for carrying out tasks assigned by the President, and are accountable for such tasks.

6. Members of the council shall be trained in self-assessment operations for higher education institutions including the following content: the education quality control system; procedures and cycle of education quality accreditation; self-assessment guidelines; domestic and international self-assessment experience; and skills in document research, interviewing, observation, group discussion, surveying, and drafting of the self-assessment report.

Article 23. Development of self-assessment plans

1. The self-assessment council shall develop the self-assessment plan. The President of the self-assessment council shall approve and sign for issuance of the self-assessment plan.

2. The self-assessment plan shall include the following content:

a) The purpose and scope of the self-assessment including information on self-assessing the level of compliance with standards for the quality of the higher education institution as prescribed by laws;

b) The composition of the self-assessment council;

c) Specific tasks of each member of the self-assessment council;

d) Self-assessment tools;

dd) Anticipated facilities and financial resources, and the time for mobilizing such resources during the self-assessment;

e) The timetable including the period for implementation and the schedule for carrying out specific activities during the self-assessment.

Article 24. Collection, analysis, and processing of information and proofs

1. Information and proofs may be collected from archived records of the higher education institution, professional units of the institution being assessed, and relevant units; and from the results of surveys, investigations, interviews, and observations of the institution's activities. Proofs must have a clear origin and must be accurate.

2. Information and proofs shall be used for assessing the level of compliance with each criterion in order to describe the current status of the higher education institution's activities.

3. Proofs included in the self-assessment report shall be coded and digitized that facilitates the checking, updating, archive, and benchmarking when necessary.

4. Based on the criteria in the set of standards for assessing the quality of higher education institutions, the self-assessment council shall specifically assign members of the council to collect, analyze, and process information and proofs, and draft the assessment forms before drafting the self-assessment report.

Article 25. Self-assessment of the level of compliance with criteria

1. Self-assessment of the level of compliance with criteria shall be carried out by using an assessment form including the following content: description, strengths, shortcomings, action plan, and self-assessment of the level of compliance with criteria.

2. The self-assessment form shall be drafted by an individual or working group, and shall be submitted for the opinion of the self-assessment council. Each self-assessment form shall be used for only one criterion.

Article 26. Preparation of self-assessment reports

1. The self-assessment report shall present the information concisely, clearly, accurately, and objectively, and fully cover the information of the criteria according to each standard for assessing the quality of the higher education institution.

2. The draft self-assessment report shall be published internally within the higher education institution for at least 10 working days so that managers, lecturers, researchers, specialists, staff, learners, and relevant individuals may read it and provide feedback on relevant content.

3. The self-assessment report shall be finalized by the self-assessment council after obtaining feedback as prescribed in clause 2 of this Article. The President of the self-assessment council shall determine the method in which the self-assessment council finalizes the self-assessment report; and shall approve, sign, and issue the self-assessment report.

Article 27. Archive and use of self-assessment reports

1. Higher education institutions shall archive self-assessment reports and relevant records including:

a) Decisions on establishment of the self-assessment council;

b) Self-assessment plans;

c) Approved self-assessment reports;

d) Proofs;

dd) Relevant documents and records.

2. The archiving period for self-assessment reports and relevant records shall comply with the Law on Archive and applicable laws.

3. The self-assessment report shall be published on the website of higher education institutions so that it is accessible to organizations and individuals. The publication of self-assessment reports containing information classified as state secrets or information shall comply with applicable laws.

Article 28. Implementation of activities following completion of self-assessment reports

1. Higher education institutions shall:

a) Send documents and self-assessment reports to their managing authorities for supervision and support in the implementation of improvements and quality enhancement in accordance with action plans prescribed in self-assessment reports;

b) Implement quality improvement plans prescribed in self-assessment reports in order to improve and enhance education quality; review, evaluate, supplement, and adjust quality improvement plans in an appropriate manner;

c) Except for self-assessment reports containing information classified as state secrets or information that cannot be disclosed as prescribed by laws, higher education institutions shall update self-assessment reports on their website; archive them; and update them in the management software for higher education quality control and accreditation of the Ministry of Education and Training.

2. The managing authorities of higher education institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of National Defense are responsible for updating the list of higher education institutions that have completed their self-assessment reports in the management software for higher education quality control and accreditation, and for sending notification to the Ministry of Education and Training (via the Vietnam Education Quality Management Agency) for general supervision.

Section 3. EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Article 29. Selection of education accreditation organizations and implementation of external assessment

1. After completing the self-assessment and disclosing the self-assessment report that is signed and issued by the rector within the higher education institution, the institution shall select a domestic education accreditation organization holding a valid operating license that is granted by the Ministry of Education and Training to implement the external assessment. The self-assessment report shall be publicly disclosed for at least 20 working days. For higher education institutions with information classified as state secrets or information that cannot be disclosed as

prescribed by laws, the institution shall send the self-assessment report to its managing authority as prescribed by laws which shall serve as a basis for selecting the accreditation organization to implement the external assessment.

2. Based on the expiry date in the quality standard certificate that is issued to the higher education institution, other laws on accreditation of quality of higher education institutions; or at the request of state management authorities responsible for education, the higher education institution is responsible for preparing a self-assessment report and registering for external assessment for assessment, consideration, and recognition as satisfying education quality standards. For higher education institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of National Defense, self-assessment and external assessment shall comply with regulations of the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of National Defense.

Article 30. Appraisal of dossiers on self-assessment and external assessment

1. On the basis of the contract signed with the education accreditation organization, the higher education institution shall send the self-assessment report and related documents to the accreditation organization for appraisal. At the request of the higher education institution, the accreditation organization shall appraise the dossier on self-assessment.

2. Within 20 working days from the effective date of the contract, the education accreditation organization shall appraise the self-assessment report (Form 06) and return the appraisal result to the higher education institution at one of the following levels:

a) The self-assessment report does not satisfy requirements regarding form and content; the higher education institution needs to further revise it;

b) The self-assessment report partially satisfies requirements regarding form and content; the higher education institution needs to revise it before the external assessment is carried out;

c) The self-assessment report satisfies the requirements, and the external assessment may proceed.

3. In the event that the dossier on self-assessment satisfies the requirements, the higher education institution shall send a written request to the education accreditation organization for carrying out the external assessment.

4. The conclusion of the contract for appraisal of the dossier on self-assessment and external assessment between the higher education institution and the education accreditation organization shall comply with the laws.

Article 31. Establishment of external assessment teams

1. The Director of the education accreditation organization shall issue a decision on establishment of the external assessment team, and ensure that team members are eligible for participating in the team as prescribed by laws. For higher education institutions affiliated to the

Ministry of Public Security or the Ministry of National Defense, the list of external assessment team members shall be nominated by the managing authority.

2. Number and composition of the external assessment team: the external assessment team for a higher education institution shall have at least 05 members. Members of the external assessment team shall be higher education accreditors including:

a) The team leader and deputy team leader (if any) who has been or is currently a leader of a higher education institution, or holds another equivalent or higher position with experience in carrying out self-assessment and external assessment for higher education institutions. The team leader is responsible for directing the team's activities;

b) The secretary of the external assessment team who must be a full-time accreditor of the education accreditation organization with experience in carrying out external assessment activities. The secretary shall assist the team leader in preparing and carrying out external assessment and drafting the team's documents;

c) Other members who are persons from higher education institutions, education accreditation organizations, state management authorities responsible for education and training, socio-professional organizations, or employers; and are capable of providing comments, assessment, and advice to the higher education institution being assessed. Members are responsible for carrying out the tasks assigned by the team leader.

Article 32. Responsibilities and powers of members of external assessment teams

1. The team leader shall:

a) Be responsible for developing the external assessment plan (Form 07) and submitting it to the director of the education accreditation organization for approval;

b) Implement the external assessment plan; assigns tasks to members of the external assessment team;

c) Represent the external assessment team to notify and discuss the survey results, findings and recommendations regarding the institution of the external assessment team with the higher education institution;

d) Bear overall responsibility for preparing the report on the results of the study of the self-assessment report, the report on the results of the on-site survey at the higher education institution, and the assessment report of the external assessment team;

dd) Compile documents and proofs related to activities and assessment results of the external assessment team; and transfer them to the education accreditation organization for archive after the conclusion of the external assessment;

e) Prepare documents to make responses to complaints or queries related to activities of the external assessment team; represent the external assessment team to present a summary report of the external assessment results to the higher education institution at the meeting of the education accreditation council;

g) Other responsibilities and powers as required by the external assessment.

2. The deputy team leader (if any) shall:

a) Handle work and organize the implementation of the external assessment plan on behalf of the team leader when being authorized;

b) Perform other tasks as assigned by the team leader.

3. Secretary shall:

a) Assist the team leader in developing and organizing the implementation of the external assessment plan;

b) Check whether documents and forms are used correctly as prescribed by laws during the external assessment process;

c) Record minutes of the team's meetings; advise the team leader in preparing dossiers and documents to make responses to complaints or queries related to activities of the external assessment team (if any); and carry out tasks assigned by the team leader.

4. Other members shall carry out tasks assigned by the team leader; take responsibility and may reserve their opinions on the content that they are assigned to handle; cooperate with the team leader and secretary in making responses to complaints or queries regarding the assessment content.

Article 33. Observers and trainees

1. An observer is a leader or full-time staff member of the education accreditation organization who is authorized by the director of the accreditation organization to supervise the external assessment team in order to ensure that the external assessment activities comply with regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training and of the accreditation organization; and is an authorized person for promptly reporting to the accreditation organization on the activities of the external assessment team. The observer may participate in all activities of the external assessment process but may not intervene in a way that affects the external assessment results, and shall comply with regulations on information confidentiality of the education accreditation organization.

2. A trainee is a person who is currently attending a training course for higher education and pedagogical college accreditors, or who has been issued a certificate of completion of such training program, or who has been issued an accreditor card, and arranged by the education

accreditation organization and the higher education institution to observe and undertake practical training in external assessment activities. The trainee may attend the working sessions of the external assessment team but may not intervene in a way that affects the external assessment results, and shall comply with regulations on information confidentiality of the education accreditation organization.

Article 34. Working principles of external assessment teams

1. The external assessment team shall operate on the principle of democratic centralism.

2. For professional matters on which agreement is not reached by at least two-thirds of the members of the external assessment team, the team leader is responsible for organizing a team meeting to hold direct discussions and reach a final decision. Such meeting shall be recorded in minutes and archived in the dossier of the external assessment team.

3. In cases where internal conflict arises within the external assessment team or procedural errors occur, the team leader shall report to the education accreditation organization for consideration in accordance with the laws and codes of conduct in order to ensure the independence and objectivity of assessment activities.

4. Members of the external assessment team, observers, and trainees shall comply with principles of education quality accreditation; have a written commitment or agreement with the education accreditation organization regarding professional ethics; be responsible for keeping confidential information related to external assessment activities; and respect interviewees, the higher education institution, and other members of the team.

Article 35. Procedures for external assessment

1. Study of dossier on self-assessment

a) The external assessment team shall study the self-assessment report and relevant documents of the higher education institution being assessed that is sent by the education accreditation organization; and shall collect, analyze, and process information and proofs relevant to standards for assessing the quality of the higher education institution;

b) Members of the external assessment team shall discuss and reach agreement on the following content: the form, structure, and content of the self-assessment report; criteria that have not been assessed, have been incorrectly assessed, or have not been fully analyzed and assessed; the list of criteria requiring re-examination, re-appraisal, or supplementary information and proofs; the list of materials and documents requiring examination or that need to be supplemented; the anticipated interviewees and interview content; the anticipated locations, facilities, equipment, and activities to be surveyed; and anticipated situations that may arise;

c) Finalize the draft report on the results of the study of the dossier on self-assessment. The draft must be circulated for comments among the members of the external assessment team, and ratified with the agreement of at least two-thirds of the team's members.

2. Preliminary survey

a) Duration: 01 working day, conducted either in person or online;

b) Composition: the team leader, secretary, and representative members of the external assessment team (if necessary); the self-assessment council of the higher education institution; and a representative of the education accreditation organization;

c) Content: announcement of the results of the study of the self-assessment dossier; guidelines and requirements for the higher education institution to prepare for the official survey, and other matters (if any); agreement on the time of official survey; and ratification of the minutes of the preliminary survey;

d) After the working session, the parties shall sign the minutes of the preliminary survey (Form 08).

3. Official on-site survey at the higher education institution

a) On-site working period: 03 to 05 days.

b) Main activities of the external assessment team: studying the proofs and documents provided by the higher education institution; visiting, surveying, interviewing, observing curricular and extracurricular activities, and holding discussions at the institution; drafting the report on the results of the official survey; discussing the draft report on the results of the official survey, which must be ratified with the agreement of at least two-thirds of the team's members. Before concluding the survey period, the external assessment team shall meet with the self-assessment council of the higher education institution to report on the work completed and discuss the findings. The parties shall sign the minutes of completion of the official survey (Form 09);

c) Depending on the context and practical circumstances, the external assessment team may combine in-person interviews with online interviews. Interviewees shall include leaders and managers of the higher education institution, lecturers, researchers, specialists, staff, technicians, learners, graduates, and employers connected to that institution. The selection of interviewees shall ensure an adequate composition in terms of age, length of service, and gender with a reasonable and representative distribution of stakeholders. The content of interviews shall be recorded in writing and archived at the education accreditation organization.

4. Draft external assessment report (Form 10 and Form 12)

a) Members of the external assessment team shall draft the external assessment report for their assigned criteria, and submit it to the team leader and secretary for compilation (Form 11). The team leader and secretary shall compile, edit, and finalize the draft external assessment report and send it back to the team's members for comments (the content of the draft external assessment report must be ratified with the agreement of at least two-thirds of the team's members). All such meetings shall be recorded in minutes and archived in dossiers of the external assessment team;

b) Through the education accreditation organization, the external assessment team shall send the draft external assessment report to the higher education institution for opinions within 10 working days.

5. Finalization of the external assessment report

a) Within 10 working days from the receipt of the draft external assessment report, the higher education institution is responsible for sending a written response to the external assessment team, through the education accreditation organization, clearly stating its agreement or disagreement with the draft report. In case of disagreement, the higher education institution shall clearly state the reasons and proofs. If the higher education institution does not respond within the above time limit, it shall be deemed to agree with the draft external assessment report;

b) Within 10 working days from the receipt of the higher education institution's feedback, or from the expiry of the time limit for the institution to respond to the draft external assessment report, the external assessment team, through the education accreditation organization, shall send a written notification to the institution indicating which comments have been accepted or refused (if any). Where a comment is refused, the reasons must be provided;

c) The external assessment team shall finalize the external assessment report, and submit the report and relevant documents to the director of the education accreditation organization, so that the accreditation organization may send the official external assessment report to the higher education institution;

d) Within 10 working days from the receipt of the external assessment report, the education accreditation organization shall update the information in the management software for higher education quality control and accreditation;

dd) Members of the external assessment team and relevant individuals (observers, trainees, staff supporting the team) may not voluntarily disclose information related to the team's work and assessment results without the permission of the team leader, the education accreditation organization, or a competent state authority.

Article 36. Responsibilities of higher education institutions regarding external assessment

1. Fully prepare and take responsible for the legal validity of documents and data related to operations of the higher education institution, as well as other conditions necessary for external assessment.

2. Assign one leader of the higher education institution and one dedicated staff member to serve as the conduit for working with the external assessment team.

3. Cooperate, exchange views, and discuss the results of the study of the dossier on self-assessment and the results of the on-site survey at the higher education institution with the external assessment team.

4. After reaching agreement on external assessment results, within 30 working days from the receipt of the official written notification and the external assessment report, the higher education institution shall send a written request for consideration and recognition of compliance with education quality standards to the education accreditation organization; and shall concurrently sign the contract for appraisal of the assessment results and consideration of recognition of compliance with quality standards.

5. Receive trainees to observe and undertake practical training in external assessment activities, and agree with the education accreditation organization on the number of trainees that can be accepted.

Section 4. APPRAISAL OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS OF THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Article 37. Education accreditation council

1. The education accreditation council shall be established in accordance with the decision of the director of the education accreditation organization to appraise the results of education quality assessment, and to propose the director of the accreditation organization that a higher education institution is recognized, or is not recognized as satisfying education quality standards. The council may use the seal of the education accreditation organization when performing its duties as prescribed by laws. The accreditation organization shall review, supplement, and adjust the council's personnel in accordance with requirements and regulations.

2. The council shall have an odd number of members with at least 09 members, of whom less than 50% are full-time members of the education accreditation organization.

3. The council includes:

a) The President and Deputy President of the council shall be leaders of the education accreditation organization. In specific cases as prescribed by relevant laws where leaders of the accreditation organization may not serve as the President or Deputy President of the council, the director of the accreditation organization shall assign these role to an accreditor who has served as team leader of at least 10 external assessment teams, or an accreditor who has been a leader at the level of a higher education institution or equivalent or higher and has experience in quality control and accreditation;

b) Members of the council shall be persons who have been or are currently leaders of a higher education institution or equivalent or higher; leaders of organizations who are graduates from the higher education institution (encouraged to participate in the council); and accreditors who have served as team leader or secretary in at least 05 external assessment teams. The council's members must be accreditors;

c) The council shall have a secretariat established in accordance with the decision of the director of the education accreditation organization at the proposal of the President of the council. The head of the secretariat shall be one member of the council. The secretariat shall carry out tasks

related to the appraisal of education quality assessment results, and the recognition of higher education institutions as satisfying education quality standards;

d) The leader of the external assessment team for a given higher education institution may not participate in the council as the President or secretary, and may not vote for the higher education institution that they were involved in external assessment.

4. Working procedures of the education accreditation council.

a) The council shall operate on a collective basis and decide matters within its remit by majority vote. Where necessary, the education accreditation organization may invite additional experts in the field of education quality control and accreditation to attend the council's meetings; in such cases, invited members may participate in discussions but may not vote;

b) The council shall hold a meeting (in person or online) at least once a year to discuss professional matters including trends in education quality control and accreditation, and to make recommendations regarding policy and quality improvement to the accreditation organization and to state management authorities (if any). The council shall also hold meetings to appraise education quality assessment results as convened by the President of the council with no more than 03 dossiers of external assessment teams appraised per meeting;

c) At least 10 working days before the meeting date, council members and any invited members (if any) shall receive dossiers for advance study;

d) At least 05 working days before the meeting date, each member shall send written comments on the dossiers to the President (Form 13);

dd) At least 02 working days before the meeting date, the council's secretary shall send the draft resolution on appraisal of results on assessment of the higher education institution to members for study before discussion at the meeting;

e) Based on appraisal dossiers, the council shall review and vote on whether to recognize or not recognize the external assessment results for the higher education institution, or to change the external assessment results for criteria or standards that are not satisfied in accordance with requirements;

g) The council's resolution (Form 14) is valid only when it is ratified by secret ballot with the agreement of at least two-thirds of the council's members. The minutes of the meeting shall be ratified by all present members and signed by the President and the secretary of the council;

5. The education accreditation council is responsible for the results of appraisal of the education quality assessment results of higher education institutions.

Article 38. Deadline and dossiers on appraisal of assessment results of the quality of higher education institutions

1. Within 90 working days from the receipt of the written request of the higher education institution for consideration and recognition of compliance with education quality standards, the education accreditation organization shall organize a meeting of the education accreditation council to appraise the education quality assessment results. Where the council's meeting is held online, the accreditation organization shall satisfy minimum technical requirements for the online meeting platform. The entire meeting shall be recorded and archived together with the appraisal dossier on the assessment results.

2. The dossier on appraisal of education quality assessment results includes:

a) The self-assessment report;

b) The external assessment report;

c) The document of the education accreditation organization that sent the draft external assessment report of the external assessment team to the higher education institution;

d) The higher education institution's written response to the draft external assessment report;

dd) The document regarding accepted or refused comments that the external assessment team, through the education accreditation organization, sent to the higher education institution;

e) The higher education institution's written request for consideration and recognition of compliance with education quality standards.

3. The secretariat shall assist the education accreditation council in developing the plan for appraising the assessment results of the quality of the higher education institution, preparing the appraisal dossier, and sending the appraisal dossier to council members.

Article 39. Procedures for appraisal of assessment results of the quality of higher education institutions

The appraisal of assessment results of the quality of higher education institutions of the education quality accreditation council shall be carried out as follows:

1. A meeting of the council chaired by the President or an authorized Deputy President shall carry out the following tasks:

a) Listen to a summary report on self-assessment results of the higher education institution from a representative of the institution, and discuss issues for clarification;

b) Listen to a summary report on external assessment results from a representative of the external assessment team, and discuss issues for clarification;

c) Discuss the following issues: self-assessment results; external assessment results; any adjustment of assessment results for criteria or standards (if any); and the draft resolution of the

council on the appraisal of quality assessment results of the higher education institution including the council's recommendations requesting the institution to remedy shortcomings, improve and enhance education quality;

d) The council shall vote by secret ballot to ratify the resolution on appraisal of the quality assessment results. Where the council meeting is held online, council members shall vote in an appropriate manner that ensures the secrecy of the ballot and archive results as prescribed by laws.

2. Within 10 working days from the issuance of the appraisal result, the education accreditation organization is responsible for sending the resolution on appraisal of quality assessment results to the assessed higher education institution attached with the council's recommendations requesting the institution to remedy shortcomings, improve and enhance quality.

3. Within 20 working days from the receipt of documents prescribed in clause 2 of this Article, the higher education institution shall send a written response to the education accreditation organization in one of the following three cases:

a) Agreeing with the resolution and recommendations of the council, and requesting the accreditation organization to recognize the institution as satisfying education quality standards and to issue the certificate of education accreditation for the higher education institution;

b) Agreeing with the resolution and recommendations of the council, with the higher education institution having a plan to remedy the shortcomings, improve and enhance education quality;

c) Disagreeing with part or all of the content of the resolution and recommendations of the council, and requesting the accreditation organization to reconsider;

4. If the higher education institution fails to respond in writing within the deadline prescribed in clause 3 of this Article, it shall be deemed to agree with the content of the resolution and recommendations of the council.

5. For cases prescribed in point a, clause 3 of this Article:

a) Within 10 working days from the receipt of the higher education institution's document, the education accreditation organization shall disclose external assessment results, and the resolution and recommendations of the council on the website of the accreditation organization;

b) After 15 days of disclosure, if there are no complaints or denunciations, the education accreditation organization shall issue the certificate of education accreditation for the higher education institution. If there are complaints or denunciations, the accreditation organization shall review the entire process and dossier on appraisal of assessment results before issuing the certificate, and shall be accountable for its explanation;

c) For higher education institutions requiring information confidentiality as prescribed in regulations of the State, the institution shall send the external assessment results, the resolution

and recommendations of the council to its managing authority within 15 working days before the accreditation organization considers recognition.

6. For cases prescribed in point c, clause 3 of this Article, the education accreditation organization shall plan to reconsider the resolution of the council at its nearest meeting in accordance with procedures prescribed in clause 1 of this Article. Where the accreditation organization has carried out the reconsideration as prescribed by laws and the higher education institution still disagrees with the result, the conclusion following reconsideration of the accreditation organization shall be used as the basis for further action in accordance with the laws.

Section 5. RECOGNITION OF COMPLIANCE WITH EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS

Article 40. Requirements and recognition of higher education institutions as satisfying education quality standards

1. Based on the resolution on appraisal of the assessment results issued by the education accreditation council, the education accreditation organization shall consider and decide on recognizing a higher education institution as satisfying education quality standards when the institution satisfies the following requirements:

a) It has had at least one intake with graduates by the time the self-assessment council is established;

b) The institution's assessment result satisfies the requirements prescribed in clause 5, Article 20 of this Circular.

2. Recognition of compliance with education quality standards

a) The higher education institution that satisfies requirements in points a and b, clause 1 of this Article, and satisfies requirements in point a, clause 4, Article 20 of this Circular shall be recognized by the education accreditation organization as satisfying education quality standards, and shall be granted the certificate of education accreditation for the higher education institution which is valid for 05 years from the date of issuance;

b) The higher education institution that satisfies the requirements in points a and b, clause 1 of this Article, and satisfies requirements in point b, clause 4, Article 20 of this Circular shall be recognized by the education accreditation organization as “satisfied with conditions”, and shall be granted the certificate of education accreditation for the higher education institution which is valid for 02 years from the date of issuance;

c) Within 02 years (24 months) from the date on which the higher education institution is recognized as “satisfied with conditions”, the institution shall carry out quality improvement in accordance with assessment conclusions. Where re-assessment results show that the institution satisfies the requirements, the institution shall send a written request to the education

accreditation organization for consideration and recognition of compliance with education quality standards;

d) Within 09 months before the expiry of the certificate of education accreditation for the higher education institution, the institution shall carry out self-assessment for the next cycle, clarify quality improvements compared to the preceding cycle, and register with the education accreditation organization for accreditation of the next cycle.

Article 41. Certificates of education accreditation for the higher education institution

1. Based on the recommendation of the education accreditation council, the director of the education accreditation organization shall issue a decision on recognition of the higher education institution as satisfying education quality standards, and shall grant certificate to the institution.

2. The certificate shall state the number of satisfied standards out of the total number of standards, and the percentage of satisfied standards out of the total.

3. The certificate shall be designed and printed by the education accreditation organization. The accreditation organization shall send a sample of the certificate to the Ministry of Education and Training (via the Vietnam Education Quality Management Agency) before use.

Article 42. Revocation of certificates of education accreditation for higher education institutions

1. A valid certificate shall be revoked upon violation of one of the following cases:

a) The recognition of assessment results, and issuance of the certificate where the higher education institution does not satisfy requirements prescribed in clause 5, Article 20, or Article 41 of this Circular;

b) The recognition of assessment results and issuance of the certificate is inconsistent with the laws, or does not accurately reflect the institution’s compliance with requirements of the set of standards for assessing the quality of higher education institutions.

2. For higher education institutions that have been issued the certificate and show signs of violating clause 1 of this Article:

a) The Ministry of Education and Training shall decide to establish an accreditation appraisal council, or an inspection team in accordance with inspection regulations;

b) The establishment of the council, and the appraisal of accreditation of the quality of higher education institutions shall be carried out as follows:

- The Ministry of Education and Training shall decide to establish the accreditation appraisal council. The council shall have 05 or 07 members in which the President is a leader of the Vietnam Education Quality Management Agency; the secretary is an civil servant of the Vietnam

Education Quality Management Agency; other members are representatives of relevant units of the Ministry of Education and Training (if necessary), and experts who are experienced and reputable accreditors;

- The council shall appraise the external assessment dossier; the dossier on appraisal of quality assessment results; and the recognition and issuance of certificates by education accreditation organizations;

- The council shall operate through independent study and appraisal meetings. The appraisal result shall be ratified only at a meeting where more than 50% of the council members' votes including the vote of experts agree on one of the following outcomes: the appraisal result shows the dossier has no sign of violating clause 1 of this Article, or the appraisal result shows a violation as prescribed in points a and b, clause 1 of this Article;

- Where the appraisal result shows the dossier does not satisfy requirements, the Ministry of Education and Training shall organize a meeting between representatives of the appraisal council, the education accreditation organization and a representative of the external assessment team. The results of this meeting shall be recorded in minutes and used as the basis for conclusion. Where the meeting fails to reach agreement on the appraisal result, the appraisal council shall submit a written report, relevant documents, and a written proposal (through the Vietnam Education Quality Management Agency) to leaders of the Ministry of Education and Training for decision.

c) Education accreditation organizations and higher education institutions are responsible for providing relevant dossiers and facilitating the performance of tasks of the accreditation quality appraisal council.

3. The revocation of certificates of education accreditation for higher education institutions shall be carried out as follows:

a) The Ministry of Education and Training shall send a written request and relevant documents to the director of the education accreditation organization for revocation of the certificate;

b) The director of the education accreditation organization is responsible for reviewing the matter according to clause 1 of this Article, and issuing a decision on revocation of the certificate within 15 working days from the receipt of the written request of the Ministry of Education and Training.

4. The decision on revocation of the certificate shall be published on the website of the education accreditation organization and the portal of the Ministry of Education and Training, and be updated in the management software for higher education quality control and accreditation.

Article 43. Improvement of quality of higher education institutions

1. Higher education institutions shall maintain and develop their quality; maintain and build upon recognized quality accreditation results during the validity period of the certificate of education accreditation for higher education institution.

2. Annually, higher education institutions shall implement quality improvement plans in accordance with recommendations of the education accreditation council, and shall report to their managing authority on the results of quality improvement and the remediation of shortcomings prescribed in the external assessment report. Where a higher education institution fails to implement, or inadequately implements the improvement plan; or fails to fulfill its reporting obligations as prescribed by laws, it shall be handled in accordance with Article 42 of this Circular.

3. After being recognized as satisfying quality standards, higher education institutions shall carry out a mid-cycle self-assessment focusing on evaluating the results of quality improvement. They shall send the mid-cycle assessment report (Form 15) to the Ministry of Education and Training, their managing authority, and the education accreditation organization; and shall update it in the management software for higher education quality control and accreditation. The education accreditation organization shall use this report as a basis for subsequent assessment activities as prescribed in this Circular.

4. Higher education institutions shall carry out self-assessment for the next cycle in accordance with Article 21 of this Circular.

Article 44. Archived dossiers on assessment and recognition of higher education institutions as satisfying quality standards

1. The education accreditation organization shall archive the dossier on assessment and recognition of higher education institutions as satisfying education quality standards. The period for preservation, archive, and use of the dossier at the accreditation organization shall comply with the Law on Archive and applicable regulations.

2. The archived dossier shall include:

a) Contracts between the education accreditation organization and the higher education institution for carrying out appraisal of the self-assessment report, external assessment, and appraisal and recognition of compliance with quality standards of the higher education institution;

b) Documents on the appraisal of the self-assessment report: the accreditation organization's result on appraising the self-assessment report of the higher education institution; the institution's self-assessment dossier as finalized after the accreditation organization's appraisal;

c) Documents on external assessment activities: the decision on establishment of the external assessment team; the external assessment plan; the external assessment team's report on the results of studying the self-assessment dossier; the minutes of the preliminary survey; the in-depth study results for the standards and criteria assigned to each member of the external

assessment team; the external assessment report (Form 10); the minutes of the official survey; the higher education institution's written response to the draft external assessment report (if any); the document by which the external assessment team, through the accreditation organization, informed the institution of accepted or refused comments (if any);

d) Documents on the appraisal and recognition of the higher education institution's compliance with quality standards: the council meeting plan; the appraisal dossier; the comments of each council member on the appraisal dossier on the education quality assessment results; the minutes of the meeting of the education accreditation council; the council's resolution; the finalized external assessment report following appraisal (if any); and the decision on recognition of compliance with education quality standards.

Section 6. HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS ASSESSED AS "SATISFIED WITH CONDITIONS"

Article 45. Self-assessment and request for re-assessment

1. Within 24 months from the date on which the higher education institution is recognized by the education accreditation organization as "satisfied with conditions", the institution shall carry out the following tasks:

a) Improve quality and conduct self-assessment for the criteria and standards assessed as "not satisfied" after the accreditation organization appraises the assessment results;

b) Where the self-assessment results satisfy requirements in point a, clause 4, Article 20 of this Circular, the higher education institution shall send a written request for re-assessment of "not satisfied" standards and criteria to the accreditation organization that carried out the assessment;

c) Where the deadline prescribed in this clause expires and the higher education institution still does not satisfy requirements in point a, clause 4, Article 20 of this Circular, the certificate for "satisfied with conditions" shall become invalid, and the institution must undergo re-accreditation from the beginning in accordance with procedures for education quality accreditation.

2. The application for re-assessment shall include the higher education institution's written request for re-assessment sent to the accreditation organization that conducted the assessment; the self-assessment report with updated content and results of improvements regarding standards and criteria assessed as "not satisfied" in the prior external assessment report; and relevant proofs demonstrating quality improvements.

Article 46. Re-assessment, appraisal of assessment results, and recognition of compliance with education quality standards

1. Re-assessment:

a) The education accreditation organization shall establish a re-assessment team of at least 03 members including a team leader, a secretary, and a member. At least 01 person must be a member of the previous external assessment team with priority given to a member who directly assessed “not satisfied” standards and criteria. The re-assessment team shall study the proofs and relevant documents concerning “not satisfied” standards and criteria that are provided by the higher education institution, and shall conduct an official on-site survey at the institution within 02 days with the following activities: studying the proofs and documents related to the assessment criteria; conducting surveys, interviews, and observations of curricular and extracurricular activities (if necessary) at the institution; completing assessment forms; and drafting the report on the official survey results. Before concluding the survey, members of the re-assessment team shall meet with the self-assessment council to report on completed tasks and the findings from the survey, and the two parties shall sign the minutes of the official survey;

b) Through the education accreditation organization, the re-assessment team shall send the draft assessment report on relevant criteria and standards to the higher education institution for consultation within 05 working days from the date on which the institution receives the draft report;

c) Within 05 working days from the receipt of the draft re-assessment report, the higher education institution is responsible for sending a written response stating its agreement or disagreement with the draft assessment report to the re-assessment team through the accreditation organization. In case of disagreement, the institution must clearly state the reasons and proofs. If the institution fails to respond within the above deadline, it shall be deemed to agree with the draft re-assessment report;

d) Within 05 working days from the receipt of the higher education institution's feedback, or from the expiry of the deadline for the institution to respond to the draft re-assessment report, the re-assessment team, through the education accreditation organization, shall send a written notification to the institution indicating which comments have been accepted or refused. Where a comment is refused, the reasons must be provided;

dd) The re-assessment team shall finalize the re-assessment report, and submit it to education accreditation organization for updating the previous assessment report accordingly and officially send the re-assessment report to the higher education institution.

2. Appraisal of re-assessment results:

a) Where the re-assessment results satisfy requirements in point a, clause 4, Article 20 of this Circular, such results shall be appraised by the education accreditation organization;

b) The appraisal of the re-assessment results shall comply with regulations on appraisal of external assessment results in this Circular.

3. Recognition and issuance of certificates:

a) The recognition of a higher education institution as satisfying education quality standards shall comply with Article 40 of this Circular;

b) The certificate of education accreditation for higher education institution issued after re-assessment shall for 05 years counted from the issuance of the certificate for “satisfied with conditions”, and shall replace the certificate for “satisfied with conditions”;

c) After being recognized as satisfying education quality standards, the higher education institution shall continue to carry out quality improvement in accordance with this Circular.

Chapter IV

IMPLEMENTATION

Article 47. Responsibilities of the Vietnam Education Quality Management Agency

1. Publish the list of domestic education accreditation organizations, foreign education accreditation organizations, and higher education institutions recognized as satisfying quality standards on the portal of the Ministry of Education and Training.

2. Organize the implementation and the consistent application of this Circular.

3. Organize the inspection and supervision of education quality accreditation; take charge and cooperate with competent authorities in resolving petitions, complaints, and denunciations on relevant matters as prescribed by laws.

Article 48. Responsibilities of the Science, Technology and Information Department

1. Organize the use of the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) database; share and provide information on quality control and accreditation within procedures for accreditation of quality of higher education institutions at the request of relevant parties.

2. Take charge and cooperate with relevant units in upgrading the HEMIS software as required for management purposes.

Article 49. Responsibilities of higher education institutions

1. Develop the quality self-assessment plan for the higher education institution in accordance with quality standards by stage.

2. Update information on the higher education institution's self-assessment results in the management software for higher education quality control and accreditation; report the results of the quality accreditation of the higher education institution, and the plan for quality improvement after being recognized as satisfying quality standards to the Ministry of Education and Training as prescribed by laws.

3. Disclose external assessment results, the quality improvement plan, and the certificate of education accreditation for higher education institution on the institution's website within 05 working days after the certificate is issued (this does not apply to higher education institutions requiring information confidentiality as prescribed by the State).

4. Annually report to the managing authority and the Ministry of Education and Training on the results of implementing the quality improvement plan after receiving the certificate of education accreditation for higher education institution.

5. Conduct self-assessment and be responsible for ensuring that the higher education institution satisfies standards for higher education institutions, and requirements for maintaining quality as prescribed by applicable regulations before registering for external assessment with the education accreditation organization.

6. Be subject to inspection; provide documents, evidence, and reports to support the inspection and supervision of education quality accreditation by competent authorities.

7. Comply with relevant laws.

Article 50. Responsibilities of education accreditation organizations

1. Report to the Ministry of Education and Training, and disclose information and education accreditation results as prescribed in this Circular and relevant laws.

2. Update the management software for higher education quality control and accreditation, and disclose the external assessment report and the resolution of the education accreditation council on the accreditation organization's website within 15 days before issuing certificate of education accreditation for higher education institution (this does not apply to higher education institutions requiring information confidentiality as prescribed by the State).

3. Update the management software for higher education quality control and accreditation, and disclose the certificate of education accreditation for higher education institution on the accreditation organization's website within 05 working days after the issuance; disclose the list of higher education institutions that have been issued the certificate.

4. Monthly update the activities and results of education quality accreditation in the management software for higher education quality control and accreditation.

5. Develop a plan for the development of full-time and associate accreditors.

6. Disclose the method of calculation and fee levels for the following activities: appraisal of the self-assessment report, external assessment, and appraisal and recognition of a higher education institution as satisfying quality standards on the accreditation organization's website.

7. Develop professional documents and operational handbooks for accreditors for consistent implementation. In cases where new criteria and guidelines related to the implementation of

accreditation standards are added, the education accreditation organization shall submit a report to the Ministry of Education and Training via the Vietnam Education Quality Management Agency before issuing professional documents and operational handbooks.

8. After issuing the certificate of education accreditation for higher education institution, supervise and provide feedback on the higher education institution's quality improvement reports.

9. Be subject to inspection; provide documents, proofs, and reports to support the inspection and supervision of education quality accreditation by competent authorities; and cooperate with the Vietnam Education Quality Management Agency in providing relevant information and dossiers when complaints or denunciations arise as prescribed by laws.

10. Comply with relevant laws.

Chapter V

IMPLEMENTATION CLAUSE

Article 51. Transitional provision

Higher education institutions and education accreditation organizations that have carried out self-assessment and registered for external assessment of higher education institutions before the effective date of this Circular shall comply with Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BGDDT dated May 19, 2017 of the Minister of Education and Training on accreditation of quality of higher education institutions, and shall complete the education quality accreditation by December 31, 2026.

Article 52. Effect

1. This Circular comes into force from May 15, 2026.

2. This Circular replaces Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BGDDT dated May 19, 2017 of the Minister of Education and Training on accreditation of quality of higher education institutions. This Circular abolishes regulations on the education accreditation council in Circular No. 61/2012/TT-BGDDT dated December 28, 2012 of the Minister of Education and Training on requirements for establishment, dissolution, tasks, and powers of education accreditation organizations.

Article 53. Responsibilities for implementation

The Chief of Office; the head of Vietnam Education Quality Management Agency; heads of units affiliated to the Ministry of Education and Training; directors of parent universities and academies; rectors of universities; directors of research institutes offering doctoral training; rectors or presidents of other educational institutions allowed to provide doctoral training; relevant organizations and individuals are responsible for implementing this Circular./.

ACTING MINISTER

Hoang Minh Son

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