



## **Rules for the selection of review committees' members**

Towards the Quality Assurance Agency

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## 1. General

The teams in charge of an external evaluation are called “review committees” (in French “*Comités d’évaluation*”)

- a. The members of the review committees are called “reviewers” (in French “*évaluateurs*”).
- b. Members of each review committee are chosen from a pool of reviewers.
- c. Nominations to the pool of reviewers may be proposed by Lebanese higher education institutions or by the Agency or following public calls for volunteers.
- d. The Board of the Agency will select individuals to join the pool of reviewers on the basis of the criteria set out in Annex A. During the TLQAA Tempus project decisions will be made by members of the consortium.
- e. An ad hoc committee of the Agency will submit to the Board of the Agency for approval individuals from the pool of reviewers for each review committee on the basis of the criteria set out in Annex B.
- f. The pool of reviewers and each review committee will reflect equal opportunity dimensions to ensure, for example, gender balance.
- g. Review committees and individual reviewers will conduct all reviews in a collegiate and professional manner.

## 2. Composition of the review committees

- a. Review committees may include academic and professional staff working in Lebanese higher education institutions, retirees of these institutions, appropriately experienced and qualified professionals from the labour market and students.
- b. Each review committee should include a member of staff from the Agency to facilitate the work of the review committee and to assure that the methods and procedures of the Agency are applied consistently.
- c. Each review committee should include an international reviewer with peer-acknowledged experience in academic management outside Lebanon and experience in external evaluation lead by a trustworthy quality assurance agency.
- d. The number of reviewers assigned to each review committee will vary depending on range of competences of individual members and of the complexity and the size of the entity under scrutiny.
- e. Review committees are chaired by one of their academic reviewers nominated by the Agency.

### **3. Criteria for the selection of individuals to join the pool of reviewers and for the selection of reviewers to review committees**

- a. An ad hoc internal committee of the agency will design and update explicit and publicly available criteria to select individuals to join the pool of reviewers (See annex A for what is proposed by TLQAA) and for the selection of reviewers to review committees (see annex B for what is proposed by TLQAA). The decision-making processes and procedures for the different choices are explicit and public. During the TLQAA Tempus project decisions are made by the members of the consortium.
- b. The academic review committees’ members should fairly be able to review aspects related to teaching, research and services.
- c. All reviewers will be required to undertake training organised by the Agency to ensure a full and consistent understanding of the review methodology, the systems and procedures of the institution or programme being reviewed and the Lebanese higher education system more generally.
- d. During the TLQAA Tempus project, reviewer training will be offered in France and Spain to candidates proposed by members of the consortium. The opportunity to propose names will be offered to all recognised (Licensed) higher education institutions in the country. A panel of members of the TLQAA consortium will select individuals to be trained on the basis of the criteria set out in Annex A and their availability to attend the training in France or Spain and all necessary criteria (see Annex C) useful to make a decision.
- e. The review committees’ members are chosen according to the specificities of institutions or programmes under scrutiny and following an explicit procedure run by the agency.
- f. Higher education institutions under scrutiny are given the opportunity to comment on the membership of each review committee to identify any potential conflict of interest.

### **4. Work of the review committees, decision making-processes, reporting**

- a. Review committee members must be committed to treat all materials and exchanges as strictly confidential.
- b. The outcome of each review will be a report to the Agency setting out the committee’s findings, decisions and any recommendations made.
- c. The findings, decisions and any recommendations made during a review will be evidence-based and will be the collective decisions of the review committee. The chair of the review committee is in charge of facilitating the dialogue within the review committee.
- d. The chair of the review committee and the Agency representative should act as facilitators to ensure consistency in the judgment making process.
- e. The chair of the review committee will oversee the production of the review report. Each reviewer will be allocated responsibility for writing a specific report section according to their

individual background and experience. A member of the agency permanent staff should support the review committees during the writing process. During the TLQAA Tempus project, the chair of the review committee will be in charge of preparing the report that will be finalized by the members of the consortium.

## **5. Points that would need further thinking, clarification and decision**

The relationships between the review committee and the agency would have to be organised in order to clarify the responsibilities of both entities with regards to decision making, recommendations and publishing.

How to assure consistent judgment among the review committees? This is often a contentious topic as it brings to the fore the clash between academic autonomy and subjective criterion-based judgment. Clear definitions need to be developed for any judgment to be made. Workshops during the reviewer training should focus on the judgments to be made and the process for reaching such judgments would have to be organized by the Agency. The chair of the review committee and the Agency representative should act as facilitators to ensure consistency in the judgment making process.

What would be the role of the Agency in this domain? During the TLQAA Tempus project Consortium members would have to develop and agree clear definitions for any judgments to be made during the process.

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## **Annex A. Wished characteristics of candidate reviewers and needed information for their integration in the pool of reviewers**

### **1. National academic reviewers**

#### **Criteria**

- Lebanese nationality
- Academic position in a higher education institution
- Doctorate
- Appropriate academic qualifications and recognized expertise in relevant areas

#### **Desired experience in:**

- Higher education institution management (university, faculty...)
- Project design
- Project steering
- Reports writing
- Group management
- Interviews

#### **Information**

- HE institution
- Discipline
- Teaching activities (types and level of programmes)
- Leadership/Management activities (responsibilities...)
- Research (field, publications...)
- Experience in the field of evaluation, review, accreditation...

#### **Code of ethics - Reviewers should notably accept to commit with regards to:**

- Non conflict of interest statement
- Confidentiality agreement
- Support of agency’s objectives, standards, ethics and methods

### **2. Foreign academic reviewers**

#### **Criteria**

- Higher education institution management (university, faculty...)
- Academic position in a higher education institution
- Doctorate
- Languages (depending of the working language of the review)

#### **Desired experience in:**

- Project design
- Project steering
- Reports writing
- Group management
- Interviews

### **Information**

HE institution  
Discipline  
Teaching activities (types and level of programmes)  
Leadership activities (responsibilities...)  
Research (field, publications...)  
Experience in the field of evaluation, review and/or accreditation

### **Code of ethics - reviewers should notably accept to commit with regards to:**

Non conflict of interest statement  
Confidentiality agreement  
Support of agency’s objectives, standards, ethics and methods

## **3. Professionals**

### **Information**

HE institution, organisation or company  
Field of activities  
Proximity to higher education  
Teaching activities (types and level of programmes)  
Leadership activities (responsibilities...)  
Research (field, publications...)  
Experience in the field of evaluation, review and/or accreditation  
Languages (depending of the working language of the review)

### **Desired experience in:**

Management  
Project design  
Project steering  
Reports writing  
Group management  
Interviews

### **Code of ethics - Reviewers should notably accept to commit with regards to:**

Non conflict of interest statement  
Confidentiality agreement  
Support of agency’s objectives, standards, ethics and methods

## **4. Students**

### **Information**

HE institution  
Discipline  
Degrees  
Studies (field, level...)  
Teaching activities (types and level of programmes)  
Leadership activities (responsibilities...)  
Research (field, publications...)

Experience in the field of evaluation, review and/or accreditation  
Languages (depending of the working language of the review)

**Code of ethics - Reviewers should notably accept to commit with regards to:**

Non conflict of interest statement  
Confidentiality agreement  
Support of agency’s objectives, standards, values and methods

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## **Annex B. Criteria and information for the choice of review committees’ members**

The composition of the review committees will be decided accordingly to the information gathered during the application process. However, the review committee should fairly cover the following mix of expertise for institutional review:

- Quality Assurance in Higher Education
- Institutional Governance
- Appropriate leadership experience in research
- Appropriate leadership experience in academic management
- Good knowledge of teaching and learning methods
- International experience
- Experience in developing new programmes
- Knowledge of the higher education system adopted by the applicant

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## **Annex C. Participation to training**

During the TLQAA project there is training in Europe for a limited number of reviewers. These reviewers will then be in charge of the training of reviewers in Lebanon.

These first generation reviewers will be proposed by the TLQAA members. The selection criteria are:

- The selection criteria designed for the integration in the pool of reviewers of academics and students (see Annex A);
- Proficiency in Spanish or French and English;
- Commitment to the participation to the dissemination and trainings activities organised by the TLQAA project and then by the agency.

The consortium members will make the final choice. They will take into account the gender issue and to promote gender balance and the best diversity of discipline, review strengths within the group (diversity in review strengths in teaching, research and service), knowledge of the background systems (American, European, French, German, Egyptian...) and institutions of origin.

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