

APPROVED

By Order No V-1593 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of 2 September 2021
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DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPARATIVE EXPERT ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Description of the Comparative Expert Assessment of Research and Development Activities by Universities and Research Institutes (hereinafter – the Description) defines the process of a comparative expert assessment (hereinafter – the comparative assessment) of research and development (hereinafter – R&D) activities carried out by Lithuanian universities and research institutes (hereinafter – the Institutions) at the national and international levels, the data analysed during the assessment, the formation of units of assessment and the determination of aggregate scores for the units of assessment and the Institutions.

2. Comparative assessment shall be organised by the Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter – the Council) within time limits set by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – the Minister). For the purpose of the comparative assessments, the Institutions or parts thereof (hereinafter – the units of assessment) shall be assessed.

3. For the purposes of this Description, it shall be considered that:

3.1. the share of the work attributed to the author is the figure equal to the unit divided by the number of the co-authors;

3.2. the cooperation agreement between research and economic entities is an agreement on cooperation in the R&D area by and between the Institution(s) and economic entity (-ies) whereby the common objective is agreed, the cooperation project area is defined, the works to be performed, financial, technological, research and other risks, as well as results are shared, when the economic entity (-ies) finance at least 30 % of the value of the agreement. Agreements on the provision of R&D services shall not be deemed to be cooperation agreements;

3.3. the employee full-time equivalent (hereinafter – the FTE) is the number of working hours worked during the year by a certain group of employees divided by a number of working hours in the 12 months of that year, as set by the Minister of Social Security and Labour (with a 5-working-day week). For the FTE calculation purposes, it shall be considered that during the periods when the employee was on an annual leave, pregnancy and childbirth leave, paternity leave, extended or additional leave when the employee was granted the additional day(s)-off due to temporary incapacity for work, the employee worked according to the normal working schedule. The FTE unit - a person per year;

3.4. researchers with a scientific degree full-time equivalent (hereinafter –FTE(SD)) is the sum of the FTE of teaching staff members with a scientific degree divided by 3, and the FTE of research workers and other researchers with a scientific degree;

3.5. research outputs are the research results dissemination units listed in the Description of the Annual Assessment of Research and Development and Art Activities Carried out by Universities and Research Institutes and other R&D results that are significant in the Institutions' opinion.

CHAPTER II

FORMATION OF UNITS OF ASSESSMENT, CRITERIA AND SCOPE OF ASSESSMENT

4. Units of assessment are structures formed by the Institutions for assessment purposes. Departments of the Institution that form the unit of assessment are interrelated by common R&D activities, enabling an objective expert assessment of the work of the unit of assessment. The units of assessment shall be formed by the Institutions according to the provisions of this Chapter. The unit of assessment shall operate in not more than two research areas. The smallest size of the unit of assessment shall be 5 FTE(SD). The unit of assessment may have maximum 75 FTE(SD). Departments of the Institution that are larger than 75 FTE(SD) shall be split into several units of assessment. If the Institution wishes to form the unit of assessment that has 75–160 FTE(SD) or operates in three research areas, the Institution shall provide arguments for the feasibility of the formation of such unit of assessment and obtain the Council's approval. It is recommended that departments of the Institution that constitute a part of other departments of the Institution and are smaller than 75 FTE(SD) should not be split into smaller units of assessment.

5. The units of assessment shall be assessed according to the following assessment criteria:

5.1. The quality of R&D activities (weight 0.65);

5.2. The economic and social impact of R&D activities (weight 0.2);

5.3. The development potential of R&D activities (weight 0.15).

6. The assessment of the unit of assessment shall involve:

6.1. the assessment of the quality of R&D activities:

6.1.1. in each research field which:

6.1.1.1. has the scope of 10 or more FTE(SD);

6.1.1.2. has the scope of 2 (inclusively) – 10 FTE(SD) and the unit of assessment has the right to provide doctoral studies or intends to seek such right in next 5 years;

6.1.2. in the group of research fields of the research area (the group may also consist of one field) if the unit of assessment does not seek the right to provide doctoral studies and has less than 10 FTE(SD)s in the research field;

6.2. The economic and social impact of R&D activities and the development potential of R&D activities shall be assessed at the level of the unit of assessment.

7. The Institutions shall submit to the Council, within time limits set by the Council, the list of its units of assessment, specifying for each unit of assessment:

7.1. the name;

7.2. the contact person;

7.3. departments of the Institution, or their parts that comprise the unit of assessment;

7.4. research areas and research fields where the unit of assessment operates;

7.5. distribution of research workers by research fields (K – 1 year, where K is the year of formation of the unit of assessment), specifying:

7.5.1. distribution of teaching staff s by position (headcount as at 31 December and FTE);

7.5.2. distribution of research workers by position (headcount as at 31 December and FTE).

8. With a view to achieving the compliance of the units of assessment with the requirements set out in this Description and the configuration of the Institution’s units of assessment that would be most favourable for the assessment, the Council may submit to the Institution a reasoned request to update the configuration.

CHAPTER III

SETTING UP EXPERT PANELS

9. The Council shall form expert panels and appoint their chairs. Persons may be appointed as members of expert panels only if they are not related to the Institutions being assessed, i.e. have no employment relationship with the Institutions being assessed for at least 5 years and no co-publications with the researchers of the units of assessment. The Council shall conclude agreements with experts for the performance of comparative assessments.

10. Each member of the expert panel shall sign the Council expert’s undertaking to follow the principles of impartiality, confidentiality, good faith and transparency. If it transpires that the expert does not comply with the undertaking, the expert shall be subject to sanctions according to the provisions of the contract.

11. Groups of the units of assessment shall be formed having regard to the research fields to be assessed, and expert panels shall be formed for this purpose. Composition of both the groups of the units of assessment and expert panels shall be posted on the Council’s website.

12. The expert panel shall consist of not less than 4 experts.

CHAPTER IV

SUBMISSION OF DATA FOR THE COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

13. For the assessment purposes, the Council shall submit to expert panels:

13.1. the available information of the assessment period on the Institution’s R&D activities in research areas obtained having summarised the data and results of the annual assessment of universities and research institutes;

13.2. the review of the higher education and research system of Lithuania including:

13.2.1. the developments in the higher education and research system over past 10 years;

13.2.2. the institutional configuration of the higher education and research system;

13.2.3. the R&D funding system;

13.2.4. the principles of the organisation of R&D activities.

14. The Council may furnish the experts with other information at the experts' request, where possible. The Council shall familiarise the Institution with such information.

CHAPTER V

COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

15. The comparative assessment shall be performed according to the organisation procedure established by the Council. The work of the expert panel is organised by the chair of the panel together with the coordinator appointed by the Council. The chair of the expert panel shall chair meetings of the expert panel, determine the operational functions of the members of the expert panel, and take responsibility for the results of its work. The coordinator of the expert panel shall provide the information required for the assessment, familiarise the expert panel with the assessment procedures, and provide the administrative assistance required for efficient work of the expert panel.

16. The Council shall provide the expert panel with the information on the units of assessment not later than 20 working days prior to the expert panel's visit to Lithuania.

17. Each unit of assessment shall be assessed on an individual basis by at least 3 experts.

18. During the visit to Lithuania, experts of each expert panel shall take part in joint meetings of the expert panel. The experts shall also meet representatives of the unit of assessment. The schedule of the expert panel visits to the units of assessment shall be usually drawn up not later than 1 month prior to the first visit experts to the Institution.

19. At least 2 experts shall take part in a visit to the unit of assessment. During the visit, the experts shall meet with groups of employees of the unit of assessment – the administration, researchers, PhD students – and shall get familiarised with the research infrastructure of the unit of assessment. One employee of the unit of assessment may take part in only one meeting with experts. All information received during the visit shall be used in assessing the unit of assessment.

20. The experts shall seek consensus when deciding on the assessment. If a consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be taken by a majority vote, and differing opinions (specifying the expert and his/her arguments) shall be annexed to the assessment conclusions. In the event of a tie vote, the decision shall be taken by the chair of the expert panel.

21. The chair of the expert panel shall be responsible for the preparation of the assessment report. The Council shall have the right to request that the expert panel updates the assessment report.

CHAPTER VI

PRINCIPLES OF COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT, DATA CONSIDERED AND ASSESSMENT SCORES

22. A comparative assessment shall be performed in observance of the principles of transparency, equality, mutual recognition, diversity, clarity, reliability, consistency, proportionality and non-discrimination.

23. The following information shall be examined for the purposes of assessing the quality of R&D activities:

23.1. by the research fields and/or group(s) of research field(s) of the research area(s) of the unit of assessment :

23.1.1. the data on doctoral studies of the unit of assessment for each past 5-year period (as of 31 December);

23.1.1.1. the list of theses defended;

23.1.1.2. the numbers of PhD students in the 1–4 years' full-time studies and 1–6 years' part-time studies, separately identifying foreign students;

23.1.2. the list of teaching staff with a scientific degree of the unit of assessment as at 31 December of the last year of the assessment period and the list of research workers and other researchers with a scientific degree, with links to their scientific profiles;

23.1.3. the following information on the unit of assessment for the past five years:

23.1.3.1. the best research outputs;

23.1.3.2. the list of the best reports delivered at conferences abroad;

23.1.3.3. the list of the main national and international awards received for R&D activities;

23.1.3.4. the details of the participation in the competition-based R&D projects;

23.2. The information available to the Council, for the period under assessment, on research results dissemination units (research outputs) of the assessment of the Institution and the participation in the international R&D programmes in research areas obtained after summarising the annual results of R&D activities of universities and research institutes.

24. The following information shall be examined when assessing the economic and social impact of R&D activities:

24.1. for the past five years:

24.1.1. the list of research outputs, R&D orders of economic entities (Lithuanian and foreign), and 1 projects (national and international) that had the greatest economic and social impact;

24.1.2. the lists of the main cases of participation of researchers of the unit of assessment in working groups, panels or committees formed by administrative authorities, state and municipal enterprises and organisations;

24.1.3. the lists of the main consultations provided by the unit of assessment to the public or economic entities;

24.1.4. the lists of the main scientific conferences and events organised by the unit of assessment;

24.1.5. the lists of the main cases of participation of the researchers of the unit of assessment in editorial boards of scientific journals;

24.1.6. the lists of the main memberships of the researchers of the unit of assessment in international working groups, associations etc.;

24.1.7. the lists of the main results of scientific popularisation activities;

24.1.8. the data on cooperation agreements between research and economic entities, specifying the parties to the agreement; purpose and area of the agreement; contributions of the parties (monetary and non-monetary); the method of sharing of the results; the agreement validity term;

24.2. the information for the period under assessment available to the Council on orders of economic entities carried out by the Institution, obtained having summarised the results of annual assessment of R&D activities of universities and research institutes.

25. The following data shall be examined in assessing the prospects of R&D activities:

25.1. the description of the current R&D infrastructure and the lines of its planned development in terms of its use, available access to other R&D infrastructure, participation in national and international research infrastructures, participation in other international R&D organisations;

25.2. human resources structure and dynamics:

25.2.1. numbers of research workers (teaching staff and research workers, other researchers), PhD students, other employees (hereinafter collectively - the employees) for the last year of the period under assessment;

25.2.2. the distribution of the employees by age and gender (as at 31 December of the last year of the period under assessment);

25.2.3. human resources management principles;

25.3. the strategic operating plan of the unit of assessment or the Institution;

25.4. the description and justification of the R&D subjects to be developed;

25.5. the information on the policy of training new generation of researchers;

25.6. the information on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the unit of assessment

26. When assessing the prospects of R&D activities of the unit of assessment UoA, the expert panel shall take account the results of the R&D quality assessment and the economic and social impact assessment as well as global trends in the relevant research field(s).

27. The Institutions shall submit the data required for the comparative assessment to the Council in accordance with the Procedure for the Submission of Data on Results of Research and Development Activities Carried out by Universities and Research Institutes for the Comparative Expert Assessment.

28. For the purposes of points 23.1.3.1, 23.1.3.2, 23.1.3.4 and items 24.1.1–24.1.8 of the Description, the FTE(SD)/2 data shall be provided rounding up the FTE(SD) to the accuracy of the whole number; if the result rounding is less than 5, then 5 data shall be provided. It is recommended that contribution to the works referred to in point. 23.3.1.1 by the same author does not exceed 2.

Amendments to the paragraph:

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29. The quality of R&D activities of units of assessment, their economic and social impact, and the development potential shall be assessed on a scale of 0 to 5, with a precision of 0.5 points. The values of the scores are provided in Tables 1–3.

Table 1. Values of the quality assessment scores of the R&D.activities

Score	Value
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5	Excellent	The unit of assessment is among top international players (in a research field or group of research fields of a research area) . R&D activities are of the highest international standard.
4	Very good	The unit of assessment is strong at the international level (in a research field or group of research fields of a research area. R&D carried out is of high level and internationally recognised.
3	Good	The unit of assessment is strong with limited international recognition (in a research field or group of research fields of a research area. R&D carried out is of high level and nationally recognised.
2	Satisfactory	The unit of assessment is assessed satisfactorily at the national level (in a research field or group of research fields of a research area. R&D carried out is satisfactory.
1	Poor	The unit of assessment is assessed as poor at the national level (in a research field or group of research fields of a research area. R&D activities carried out are of low level.
0	No R&D	The unit of assessment does not carry out R&D.

Table 2. Values of scores in the assessment of the economic and social impact R&D activities of the unit of assessment.

Score	Value	
5	Excellent	The unit of assessment carries out scientific research of exceptional importance and is an extremely important partner in R&D outside academia. The unit of assessment has a positive influence on the development of society and is a highly valued partner in R&D matters not only within the academic community but also outside it. Employees of the Institution are regarded as experts in public and private sectors.
4	Very good	The unit of assessment carries out very important scientific research and is a very important partner in R&D beyond the academic community. The research carried out is important for society. The unit of assessment is closely related not only with academic community but also with business, decision-makers and society.
3	Good	The unit of assessment carries out important research and is an important partner in R&D outside the academic community.

		The research carried out is important for society. Relationship with business, decision-makers and society is appropriate to a recognised institution carrying out academic activities.
2	Satisfactory	Unit of Assessment carries out important scientific research, but little interacts with private sector, decision-makers, society. The research carried out is important for society, but interaction of the unit of assessment with business, decision-makers and society is weak.
1	Poor	The research carried out by the unit of assessment is not important, there is no interaction with business decision-makers and society. The research carried out is not important for society. The unit of assessment does not interact with business, decision-makers and society.
0	No R&D	The unit of assessment does not carry out R&D.

Table 3. Values of the scores in the assessment of development potential of R&D

Score	Value	
5	Excellent	The unit of assessment has potential to achieve excellent ratings. Having regard to current performance, the human resources, strategy, organisation of activities and infrastructure of the unit of assessment will ensure conditions for excellent ratings in the next 5 years.
4	Very good	The unit of assessment has potential to achieve very good ratings. Having regard to current performance the human resources, strategy, organisation of activities and infrastructure of the unit of assessment will ensure conditions for very good ratings in the next 5 years .
3	Good	The unit of assessment has potential to achieve good ratings. Having regard to current performance, the human resources, strategy, and organisation of activities and infrastructure of the unit of assessment will ensure, conditions for good ratings in the next 5 years.
2	Satisfactory	The unit of assessment has potential to operate only satisfactorily. Having regard to current performance, the human resources, strategy, and organisation of activities and infrastructure of the unit of assessment will ensure to achieve only satisfactory ratings in the next 5 years.
1	Poor	The unit of assessment has no potential to operate at least satisfactorily. Having regard to current performance, the human resources, strategy, organisation of activities and infrastructure of the the unit of assessment will lead to poor ratings in the next 5 years.

0	No R&D	The unit of assessment does not carry out R&D.
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CHAPTER VII

FINAL PROVISIONS

30. Having assessed all the unit of assessment according to the criteria listed in paragraph 5 of the Description, the expert panel submits to the Council an assessment report which must contain:

30.1. the results of assessment of the unit of assessment (substantiation of the assessment and the scores);

30.2. the recommendations for the continuity and/or improvement of activities of the unit of assessment.

31. The Council shall send the assessment results of the units of assessment to the Institutions.

Amendments to the paragraph:

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32. Having got familiarised with the assessment results of its the unit of assessment, the Institution has the right to submit to the Council, within 5 working days after the day of sending the assessment results of its unit of assessment, a reasoned appeal concerning possible factual mistakes and/or violation of the assessment procedures that could have affected the substantiation of the assessment of the unit of assessment.

Amendments to the paragraph:

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33. The appeals referred to in paragraph 32 above shall be examined according to the comparative assessment procedure and time limits the set by the Council

34. The Council determines, on the basis of the values expressed in the FTE(SD) of the last year of the assessment period of the unit of assessment, the weighted aggregate scores in the research areas and the weighted scores of the quality of the Institutions' R&D activities in the research fields. For the purposes of determining the weighted scores of the quality of the Institutions' R&D activities in the research fields, only those research fields that meet provisions of item 6.1.1 shall be considered.

35. If expert visits to Lithuania and/or the unit of assessment are prohibited or not recommended due to an emergency situation declared in the Republic of Lithuania or for other reasons beyond control of the Council, meetings may be organised exclusively by remote means of communications.

36. A summary of the results of the comparative assessment shall be published on the website of the Council and submitted to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania.
