

APPROVED
by the KUAS Director's
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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE FOR THE ACADEMIC RECOGNITION OF EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION AND ACQUIRED UNDER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF FOREIGN STATES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AT KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

CHAPTER 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Description of the Procedure for the Academic Recognition of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired Under Educational Programmes of Foreign States and International Organisations at Kaunas University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter referred to as Description) establishes the general principles and procedures for assessment and academic recognition of persons who have acquired education abroad and seek to study at Kaunas University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter referred to as the College) and the quality assurance of decision-making.

2. The Description has been developed in accordance with the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of February 29 by Resolution No. 212 "On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure for the Academic Recognition of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired Under Educational Programmes of Foreign States and International Organizations" (hereinafter referred to as the Description of Recognition), Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of May 28, 2012, by order No. V-48 (together with the amendment to Order No. V-23 of 14 February 2020) "On the Approval of The Methodology for Assessment of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired Under Educational Programmes of Foreign States and International Organisations" (hereinafter referred to as the Assessment Methodology).

3. Assessment and academic recognition shall be carried out in accordance with the Description, Description of Recognition, Assessment Methodology, Council of Europe and UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (hereinafter referred to as Lisbon Convention), European Recognition Guide for Higher Education Institutions (CQAHE, 2016), bilateral and multilateral agreements, national legislation and other relevant documents of the University.

4. Key terms:

4.1. **General requirements** are the conditions that shall be met in any case in order to obtain the right to higher education, a certain level of higher education or a certain level of higher education qualification.

4.2. **The essential difference** is the difference when the qualification obtained abroad differs substantially from the respective requirements established for secondary education or higher education qualification in the Republic of Lithuania in terms of the requirements for the content, purpose, scope, quality of the study (studies) and study results.

4.3. **Qualification granting the right to higher education** – any diploma or other appropriate document issued by a competent authority attesting to the successful completion of an educational programme and entitling the holder to be considered for admission to a higher education institution.

4.4. **An Applicant** is a holder of foreign qualification or a person authorized by him or her who has submitted an application to the University for academic recognition of foreign qualification.

4.5. **Special requirements** are additional conditions that shall be met in addition to the general requirements in order to be admitted to a particular educational programme or to obtain a certain higher education qualification.

4.6. **Qualification related to higher education** - a qualification (or education) granting the right to higher education, or a higher education qualification.

4.7. **Foreign qualification** - a qualification (or education) related to higher education that does not belong to the education system of the Republic of Lithuania.

4.8. **Academic recognition of foreign qualification** - a formal approval of the University, which identifies the value of that qualification determined during the assessment of foreign qualification for the holder of the qualification in order to study at the University.

4.9. **Assessment of foreign qualification** - determination of the value of foreign qualification accessed by comparing foreign qualification with a secondary education provided in the Republic of Lithuania or the nearest higher education qualification.

5. Academic recognition of foreign qualifications is an integrated part of the process of admission of foreign citizens to the University; however, in accordance with the Description, the fulfilment of general and special requirements and academic recognition of foreign qualifications does not mean admission to the University which is regulated by Kaunas University of Applied Sciences Admission Rules (hereinafter referred to as Admission Rules).

6. The assessment and academic recognition of foreign qualifications for entrants to the University's study programmes and their counselling shall be performed by an employee of the International Relations Services authorized by the Director. The University's Student Admissions Office and representatives of academic subdivisions/departments/centres are consulted on admission and special requirements.

7. The procedure and criteria for the assessment of foreign qualifications shall be transparent, clear, consistently applied and reliable. Information on the assessment and academic recognition of foreign qualifications at the University is published on the University's website in Lithuanian and English.

8. The assessment of qualifications shall not discriminate on grounds of gender, race, language, belief, political views, national, ethnic or social origin, or for any other reason unrelated to the essence of the qualification.

9. The diversity of educational traditions and systems in the world shall be taken into account when developing the procedure for the assessment of qualifications.

10. The responsibility for providing true, correct and clear information on foreign qualifications lies primarily with the Applicant.

11. Foreign qualifications not assessed by the University:

11.1. general education qualifications which do not grant the right to the holder to enter higher education;

11.2. vocational training qualifications;

11.3. degrees.

12. This Description does not apply to foreign qualifications that are automatically recognized in Lithuania without any additional procedures:

12.1. European Baccalaureate Diploma;

12.2. Qualifications issued in the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Estonia in 2019 and later, the automatic recognition of which is regulated by the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia, the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on Automatic Academic Recognition.

13. Procedures for the assessment and academic recognition of foreign qualifications are performed free of charge at the University.

CHAPTER 2

DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

14. The list of documents required for the assessment and academic recognition of qualifications is published on the University's website and on the admission platform.

15. The Applicant shall complete an application form on the online admission platform and shall upload digital copies of all the documents and information required for the admission and the assessment of qualifications and academic recognition.

16. The application shall be filled in with information about the Applicant, his/her education, desired study programme (s), personal information and contact details.

17. The application shall be accompanied by the following documents:

17.1. a digital copy/copies of a document/documents attesting foreign qualification (certificate, diploma) and its/their supplements. The Applicant may be required to provide original documents in case of doubt as to the authenticity of the documents submitted and for other objective reasons;

17.2. a digital copy of an identity document;

17.3. a copy/copies of a document/documents proving the change of the name and/or surname in case the education documents are issued in a different name and/or surname;

17.4. digital copies of other documents (if any) required for the objective assessment of the foreign qualification, confirming other education obtained by the Applicant and explaining the acquired qualifications or submitted educational documents. If the Applicant has studied (or is studying) in another higher education institution, he/she may submit a statement of the subjects completed there;

17.5. other documents (e.g. a certificate of English language proficiency) may be required depending on the desired programme (s), that are not directly related to the assessment and recognition of the qualification;

17.6. confirmation by the Applicant that the information provided is accurate and correct, and consent to the processing of personal data, that the University may apply to third parties to determine the accuracy of the documents, the value of the education.

18. Refugees and persons from conflict zones who are unable to submit original documents, etc., or when the qualification has been acquired in non-traditional ways, shall formally apply for consultations to the Centre For Quality Assessment In Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as CQAHE) and follow their recommendations.

19. The responsible employee of the International Relations Services reserves the right to request from the Applicant additional documents required to carry out the qualification assessment and recognition procedures.

20. The documents provided shall be official, i.e. issued by the competent and authorized authorities and/or persons. If the documents certifying foreign qualification are issued in a language other than English or Lithuanian, the Applicant shall also submit officially notarized translations of the documents into Lithuanian or English.

21. The University reserves the right to request the legalization of documents.

22. Upon receipt of the application, the responsible employee of the International Relations Services shall inform the Applicant about the receipt of the documents within three working days and, if necessary, shall contact the Applicant concerning the submission of the missing documents.

23. Academic recognition of foreign qualification shall be carried out within one month from the date of submission of all documents specified in Item 17 of the Description. This term may be extended by a decision of the Head of the International Relations Services (for a maximum of 3 months) if additional information needs to be collected for the academic recognition of foreign qualification.

CHAPTER 3

ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

24. The procedure for the assessment of foreign qualifications shall be commenced and carried out within one month from the submission of all the documents required for the assessment.
25. The assessment of qualifications consists of the following stages:
 - 25.1. determining the value of qualification in its country of origin;
 - 25.2. determining the level of qualification in its country of origin;
 - 25.3. comparison of the qualification with the most similar qualification provided in the Republic of Lithuania, i.e. comparison of the content, purpose, scope, quality of learning with the relevant requirements established in the Republic of Lithuania;
 - 25.4. determining whether the differences found between the qualification obtained abroad and the qualification provided in the Republic of Lithuania are essential, taking into account the purpose of the assessment.
26. In the assessment of an individual foreign qualification, depending on the data provided in the information sources or other circumstances, the stages may overlap or change their sequence.
27. The stage of determining the value of a qualification is to determine whether the qualification is recognized in its country of origin, i.e.,
 - 27.1. whether the qualification awarded belongs to the formal education system of that country;
 - 27.2. whether the provider of the qualification is authorized to provide such qualifications;
 - 27.3. whether a document of a duly approved specimen has been issued (if any).
28. In cases where the qualification does not comply with the provisions of Item 27 of the Description, no further assessment shall be performed. The Applicant shall be notified thereof in writing.
29. The qualification level determination stage is intended to determine:
 - 29.1. the acquired education entitles the person to higher education;
 - 29.2. whether the acquired education corresponds to the secondary education acquired in the Republic of Lithuania.
30. The determination of the level of qualification takes into account the education sector to which the qualification belongs and the relationship of the qualification with other qualifications provided in that education sector (e.g. entry requirements and further rights).
31. In cases where the qualification does not comply with the provision of subparagraph 28.1 of the Description, no further assessment of the qualification shall be carried out and the Applicant shall be notified thereof in writing.
32. In cases when, after performing the action provided for in subparagraph 29.2, establishing that a similar qualification is not provided in the Republic of Lithuania, no further qualification assessment shall be performed and the Applicant shall be informed thereof in writing. The responsible employee of the International Relations Services informs the Applicant about the possibility to apply to CQAHE for information on the value and level of foreign qualification, the rights granted in the country of origin of the qualification and further opportunities in the Republic of Lithuania.
33. During the qualification comparison stage, the responsible employee of the International Relations Services shall compare the qualification with the most similar qualification(s) provided in the Republic of Lithuania, determined during the assessment stage provided for in subparagraph 29.2 of the Description, according to the following criteria:
 - 33.1. content that includes requirements for the structure and content of the completed program;

33.2. the purpose, which includes the aim of the completed study programme and the professional and/or academic rights provided by the further qualification;

33.3. the scope (duration) which includes the formal and factual scope and duration of learning (studies);

33.4. the quality of learning (studies) which includes the organization and implementation of studies;

33.5. the understanding of learning (studies) outcomes, which includes the knowledge, skills and competencies that the holder intends to acquire (if the learning/studies outcomes have been identified).

34. The comparison of general requirements according to the criteria listed in Item 33 of the Description includes general requirements for level and qualification.

35. The responsible employee of the International Relations Services shall analyse the differences found at the stage provided for in subparagraph 25.4 of the Description in order to determine whether they are essential in accordance with Paragraphs 44-50 of the Assessment Methodology.

36. During the assessment of an individual qualification, the practice of assessment of similar qualifications shall be taken into account, thus ensuring the consistency of the practice of assessment of qualifications. The internship is systematised and accumulated by the International Relations Services and is taken into account in decisions on the academic recognition of qualifications.

37. If it turns out that the document(s) certifying the Applicant's foreign qualification is (are) forged, the University shall terminate the procedure of academic recognition of the foreign qualification and inform the Applicant thereof by e-mail.

38. If there are any inconsistencies in the documents submitted by the Applicant and in the information collected by the responsible employee of the International Relations Services and there are no objective possibilities to explain them reasonably, the qualification assessment shall not be carried out further and the Applicant shall be informed thereof by e-mail.

CHAPTER 4

DECISION ON ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

39. A qualification obtained abroad shall be recognized as equivalent to the secondary education provided in the Republic of Lithuania, if substantial differences between the general requirements of the country where the qualification was obtained and the general requirements of the Republic of Lithuania cannot be indicated.

40. Upon the assessment of foreign qualifications, the responsible employee of the International Relations Services shall make one of the following decisions concerning academic recognition:

40.1. to recognize secondary education acquired abroad;

40.2. to recognize a secondary education obtained abroad only together with additional requirements (e.g. the requirement to assess the adequacy of the applicant's language proficiency for his/her chosen studies at the University, additional courses, studies, etc.) which the holder of the qualification should fulfil;

40.3. not to recognize foreign qualifications.

41. The decision on the recognition of foreign qualification shall be made only in the possession of sufficient information and on the basis of only official and reliable documents. The decision shall be reasoned and the reasons for the decision shall be clearly stated in writing.

42. The decision concerning the academic recognition of foreign qualification shall be executed in a letter signed by the responsible employee of the International Relations Services authorized by the Director of the University (Annex 1) and registered in the Register of Foreign

Academic Recognition of the University (Annex 2). The decision shall be communicated to the Applicant thereof by e-mail.

43. The decision on academic recognition in accordance with Item 40.3 of the Description, with clearly stated reasons for the decision and the conditions for appeal, shall be sent to the Applicant by e-mail.

44. Upon adoption of the decision specified in subparagraphs 40.1 or 40.2 of the Description, the procedures for admission of the Applicant to the University shall be initiated in accordance with the Admission Rules.

CHAPTER 5

SUBMISSION AND INVESTIGATION OF APPEALS

45. An Applicant who does not agree with the decision of the University concerning the academic recognition of qualification obtained abroad may, within 10 calendar days, submit a request to the International Relations Services to review the qualification obtained abroad in response to the reasons for the decision. In this case, the Applicant shall submit the originals of the educational documents or duly certified copies thereof, if the documents have not been submitted before. Within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt of the original documents or certified copies thereof, if not previously obtained, the employee of the International Relations Services shall re-evaluate the qualification obtained abroad and, if necessary, revise the decision.

46. An Applicant who does not agree with the decision of the University concerning the academic recognition of qualification obtained abroad may appeal against it within 14 calendar days after the receipt of the decision to the Appellate Commission for Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as Board of Appeals), which may take the following decisions:

46.1. to uphold the decision of the University concerning the academic recognition of foreign qualification and to reject the appeal of the Applicant;

46.2. to oblige the University to re-evaluate foreign academic qualifications and academic recognition.

47. An Applicant who does not agree with the decision of the Board of Appeal may appeal against it to the Administrative Court in accordance with the procedure established by the Law on Administrative Procedure of the Republic of Lithuania.

48. In the cases provided for in items 46-47 of the Description, the University undertakes to provide the named institutions with all available documents of the Applicant.

CHAPTER 6

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN DECISION- MAKING PROCESS

49. In order to make impartial and consistent decisions, the assessment and academic recognition of foreign qualifications are carried out centrally.

50. The assessment is based on CQAHE's general requirements for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

51. In the absence of sufficient information or qualifications to make a decision on academic recognition in a particular case, the responsible employee of the International Relations Services may and shall apply for a consultation with CQAHE.

52. Representatives of the University Admissions Office and of academic subdivisions/departments/centres shall be consulted in case of need for determination of compliance with special requirements.

53. The responsible employee of the International Relations Services must be interested in the practice of academic recognition in the world, improve his/her qualification by participating in training courses, seminars and internships. The responsible employee of the International Relations Services, who carries out the academic recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, reviews the

Description at least once a year and proposes updates in the light of the experience gained and the recommendations provided by CQAHE.

54. The responsible employee of the International Relations Services shall systematically store and maintain information on foreign education systems and qualifications in electronic format and files; the database is constantly updated. Special features of documents, security measures or samples of forged documents shall be kept in the relevant files, indicating the date of receipt and the country of origin.

55. The responsible employee of the International Relations Services shall provide CQAHE with information on the adopted academic recognition decisions and other requested information within the deadlines set by CQAHE.

CHAPTER 7

FINAL PROVISIONS

56. This Description shall be approved, amended or repealed by the order of the Director of the University.

57. This Description shall enter into force on the day following its publication in the University's internal information system.



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DECISION ON ACADEMIC RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATION

Foreign qualification: e.g.: *Diploma di superamento dell'esame di stato conclusivo* (Diploma certifying the results of the state exam)

Year of acquisition: e.g.: 2018

Authority responsible for issue: e.g.: *Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca* (Ministry of Education, Science and Research)

Country or territory of origin: e.g.: the Republic of Italy

Recipient of Education Certificate: e.g.: John Doe

Decision e.g.: to recognise secondary education acquired abroad
The Maturity Certificate in the Republic of Lithuania corresponds to the fourth level of the qualification structure according to the list of the Lithuania qualification structure and gives the right to apply for the first cycle of professional bachelor's studies at Kaunas University of Applied Sciences.

Information of foreign qualification:

E.g.: A 5-year secondary education programme (*Liceo Scientifico*) has been acquired which admits those who have completed primary education. The qualification was awarded on successful completion of the program and passing the state final examinations (*Esame di Stato*).

This decision does not prove the authenticity of the qualification and the documents.

The Appendix to the Decision is attached to this Decision.

Director

Paulius Baltrušaitis

APPENDIX TO THE DECISION

Purpose of the decision

This decision certifies its academic level in the Republic of Lithuania established during the qualification assessment. The academic level is determined by comparing foreign qualifications with the qualifications provided in Lithuania at the time of decision-making. The purpose of the decision is the academic recognition of education and qualifications concerning higher education and acquired under educational programmes of foreign states and international organizations for persons seeking to study at Kaunas University of Applied Sciences.

The final decision on the suitability of qualification for the purpose of studying is made by the higher education institution.

Education system in Lithuania

The place of the qualification of the Republic of Lithuania, the most similar equivalent of which is considered to be the foreign qualification mentioned in the decision, may be identified in the Lithuanian education system according to the structure (or) level of the qualification:

Doctor of Science and/or Arts, 4 years, 3 study cycles, LTKS level 8				
Master degree, 60 to 120 credits, 2 nd study cycle, LTKS level 7		Master degree, upon completion of integrated studies, 300 to 360 credits, 2 nd study cycle, LTKS level 7		
Bachelor degree: 180 to 240 credits, 1 st study cycle, LTKS level 6	Bachelor of Vocational Education, 180 to 240 credits, 1 st study cycle, LTKS level 6			Vocational education, LTKS level 6 or 7
Short-Cycle Higher Education, 90 to 120 credits, LTKS level 5				
Maturity Certificate (a secondary education), 2 years; LTKS level 4				

Legal framework

The decision is based on the following legal acts:

- Description of the Procedure for the Academic Recognition of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired Under Educational Programmes of Foreign States and International Organizations approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of February 29, 2021, by Resolution No. 212.;
- Methodology for Assessment of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired Under Educational Programmes of Foreign States and International Organisations approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of May 28, 2012, by order No. V-48.

Sources of information

The decision is made on the basis of the documents and/or information provided by the holder of the qualification. At the time of making the decision, the methodology and practice of recognition of foreign qualifications, the information available to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education and collected during the assessment about the education system of the country of origin, the qualifications provided therein and the circumstances of completed studies or learning are applied.

Authenticity

Internal and/or external verification mechanisms shall be applied to ensure that the decisions of recognition are taken as far as possible on the basis of authentic instruments only. However, even the application of these mechanisms cannot guarantee the authenticity of the qualification or the documents submitted. We note that the authentication of a document is the responsibility of the entity that issued it.

Recognition criteria

During the qualification assessment, the following elements of the qualification are compared – level, quality, purpose, learning (study) results, content structure, scope (duration). The comparison takes into account only the general requirements for the type of qualification in question, regardless of the direction or profile of the program, and is based on the principle of admissibility, i.e. only substantial differences between qualifications are taken into account when deciding on the recognition of qualification. This means that the assessment does not include a detailed analysis of the content of the qualification programme and does not seek full identity between qualifications. Additional requirements may be imposed by the authorities making the final decision on a person's suitability.

Appeal procedure

The holder of the qualification who does not agree with the decision of Kaunas University of Applied Sciences concerning the academic recognition of qualification and in response to the reasons for the decision may submit a request to the International Relations Services of Kaunas University of Applied Sciences to review the qualification obtained abroad within 10 calendar days. An Applicant who does not agree with the decision of the University may appeal against it within 14 calendar days after the receipt of the decision to the Appellate Commission for the Recognition of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired Under Educational Programmes of Foreign States and International Organisations.