

Code of Ethics of the Members and Associates of the Accreditation Commission Czech Republic

February 2016

The Code of Ethics of the Members and Associates of the Accreditation Commission Czech Republic (ACCR) applies to the conduct of the members of the ACCR and the members of permanent and ad-hoc working groups related to these respective roles. To the relevant extent it also applies to the staff members of the Secretariat of the ACCR, who are employees of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and subject to the Code of Ethics of Employees in Public Administration.

1. Members and associates of the ACCR carry out their activities in public interest and with the aim to care for quality of higher education, development of study programmes at higher education institutions (HEIs) and development of scientific and artistic fields at HEIs. In their conduct, they are independent from other parties and do not represent the interests of their home institutions or institutions that take part in their nomination and appointment (the government, representations of HEIs, the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic). Quality of education, design of internal quality assurance mechanisms and perspective of development of the fields are key criteria for evaluation of HEIs and their parts as well as for accreditation of study programmes.
2. Members and associates of the ACCR act in compliance with the law and legal norms enforced in the Czech Republic. They formulate their conclusions on the basis of documents obtained legally and ethically. Their decision-making and evaluation of quality is grounded mainly in the Act No. 111/1998 Coll. on Higher Education Institutions and on Modification and Amendment of Other Acts (the Higher Education Act), particularly in its introductory Article 1: "Higher education institutions, as the highest level of the education system, are the paramount centres of scholarship, independent knowledge and innovative activity. They play a key role in scientific, cultural, social and economic development of society..."
3. Members and associates of the ACCR avoid conflict of interests in their conduct and prevent potential influence on their decision-making or actions through conflict of interests. Conflict of interests can generally occur when a member or associate of the ACCR has an employment relationship to the HEI or its part, whose educational and other activities are subject of evaluation or assessment. The members and associates of the ACCR are obliged to report a possible conflict of interests.
4. Members and associates of the ACCR as recognized experts and authorities in their fields have high personal integrity and act professionally when completing their tasks. They avoid soliciting and accepting advantages or gifts from the HEIs as well as other parties that could have a particular interest in the outcomes of their activities related to assessment of applications for accreditation and evaluation of HEIs.
5. Members and associates of the ACCR act responsibly with awareness of the significance of their activities and the activities of the ACCR on the societal level, for scientific fields as well as for HEIs and their academic communities. They act impartially and objectively. Any form of discrimination against other parties is unacceptable. The members and associates of the ACCR

conduct their activities consistently in line with the principles of equal treatment and legitimate expectation.

6. Members and associates of the ACCR act transparently in communication with other parties. Consultations and information about formal requirements on applications for accreditation and procedures in evaluations of HEIs are provided by the ACCR Secretariat; consultations and explanations to unsuccessful applications, applications that have been temporarily suspended and conceptual planning of existing HEIs can be provided by members and associates of the ACCR. Members and associates of the ACCR inform the Secretariat about all meetings; they inform the ACCR (or the relevant working group of the ACCR) about the outcomes of all meetings prior to adoption of a statement to the matter.
7. Members and associates of the ACCR consider it to be important, as a part of work in public interest, to provide relevant information to the public. All conclusions and evaluations including adequate substantiation are published on the website of the ACCR. Explanatory information on the conclusions and procedures of the ACCR can be provided through the media in the framework of the right and duty to provide information on matters of public interest to the public. Members and associates of the ACCR respect that data (mainly personal data, data related to sensitive economic information etc.) requested, obtained or made available in relation to the quality assurance activities of the ACCR are confidential and intended exclusively for the purposes of quality assurance activities of the ACCR. They do not spread this information or use it for other purposes.
8. Members and associates of the ACCR do not provide any information related to the authorship of opponent assessments, opinions and standpoints of members of the working groups and the ACCR expressed during meetings as well as voting by the members.
9. Members and associates of the ACCR carry out their activities effectively in terms of purposeful use of time and resources and minimization of administrative burden on the part of the HEIs as well as the ACCR. Requests for additional information beyond the common requirements on applications for accreditation and documents for evaluation of HEIs must be substantiated and made for the purpose of enabling assessment and issuing of a statement.
10. Members and associates of the ACCR regularly familiarize themselves with changes in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG); associates also inform themselves about changes in the standards of the ACCR and methodology of evaluation of HEIs adopted by the ACCR. They apply the standards of the ACCR, the ESG and follow the methodology of evaluation in formulating their statements.

Adopted by the ACCR at its meeting no. 1/2016.