



**NATIONAL ENTITY FOR ACCREDITATION AND
QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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THEMATIC ANALYSIS

**OF THE REPORT OF REVIEWING COMMISSIONS ON ACCREDITATION OF
STUDY PROGRAMS OF THE FIRST AND
SECOND DEGREE AND THE ANALYSIS OF CAUSES OF DELAYS IN THE PROCESS
OF ACCREDITATION IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

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1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the new bylaws on accreditation, which came into force in March 2019 the reviewing commissions (RC) were introduced in the accreditation process, made up of three teachers, one student and one representative of the economy, with the task to study the documentation that is submitted by higher education institution with their application, as well as to make a visit and see for themselves about the accuracy of claims and to determine the state of facts relevant to the decision on accreditation.

In this thematic analysis, the reports of the reviewing commissions on accreditation of 193 study programs of the first and second degree of studies, in the field of social sciences and humanities were used. The analysis also included the causes of delays in the process of accreditation of study programs. For that purpose, a sample of 14 study programs organized by 9 higher education institutions was formed.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE REPORTS OF REVIEWING COMMISSIONS ON ACCREDITATION OF FIRST AND SECOND DEGREE STUDY PROGRAMS

Higher education institutions in the field of social sciences and humanities whose study programs are accredited in accordance with the new bylaws, concluding with the session held on 28 June 2021, are as follows:

- University of Belgrade - Faculty of Economics,
- University of Belgrade - Faculty of Philosophy,
- University of Belgrade - Faculty of Law,
- University of Belgrade - Faculty of Agriculture,
- University of Belgrade - Faculty of Security,
- University of Belgrade - Faculty of Sports and Physical Education,
- University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Medicine ,
- University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Education ,
- University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Economics Subotica ,
- University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Agriculture ,
- University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Law ,
- University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Philosophy ,
- University of Novi Sad - Teacher Training Faculty in the Hungarian Language,
- University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Sports and Physical Education ,
- University of Kragujevac - Faculty of Philology and Arts ,
- University of Kragujevac - Faculty of Technical Sciences Čačak ,
- University of Kragujevac - Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja ,
- University of Kragujevac - Faculty of Economics ,
- University of Kragujevac - Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences ,
- University of Niš - Faculty of Philosophy ,
- University of Niš - Faculty of Economics ,
- University of Niš - Faculty of Law ,
- University of Priština - Faculty of Philosophy ,

- University of Priština - Faculty of Law ,
- University of Defense - Military Academy,
- Criminal Police University - University Studies ,
- Singidunum University - Faculty of Health and Business Studies,
- Singidunum University - Faculty of Media and Communications (FMC) ,
- Megatrend University - Faculty of Business Studies ,
- University "Business Academy" - Faculty of Economics and Engineering Management ,
- University "Business Academy" - Faculty of Social Sciences ,
- University "Business Academy" - Faculty of Law for Economy and Justice ,
- Educons University - University Studies ,
- Educons University - Faculty of Project and Innovation Management,
- Educons University - Faculty of Sports and Tourism (TIMS) ,
- Union University - Belgrade Banking Academy - Faculty of Banking, Insurance and Finance ,
- Union University - Faculty of Law ,
- Union University - Faculty of Law and Business Studies "Dr. Lazar Vrkatić" ,
- Union - Nikola Tesla University - Faculty of Law, Security and Management "Constantine the Great",
- College of Management and Economics ,
- College of Social Work ,
- Agricultural College of Vocational Studies ,
- Užice College of Vocational Studies,
- Belgrade Business School - College of Vocational Studies ,
- Higher Business School of Professional Studies Leskovac ,
- College of Applied Technology - Arandjelovac ,
- College of Communications ,
- College of Vocational Studies in Economics and Administration ,
- College of Vocational Studies in Management and Business Communications ,
- College of Vocational Studies for the Education of Preschool Teachers and Sports Trainers,
- Business School of Vocational Studies - Blace.

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the types of programs that are accredited:

Table 1	
Types of study programs	Number
First degree studies	92
Basic academic studies - BAS	79
Basic vocational studies - BVS	8
Specialist vocational studies - SVS	5
Second degree studies	100
Master Academic Studies - MAS	95
Master Vocational Studies - MVS	4
Specialist Academic Studies - SAS	1

Integrated Academic Studies - IAS	1
In total	193

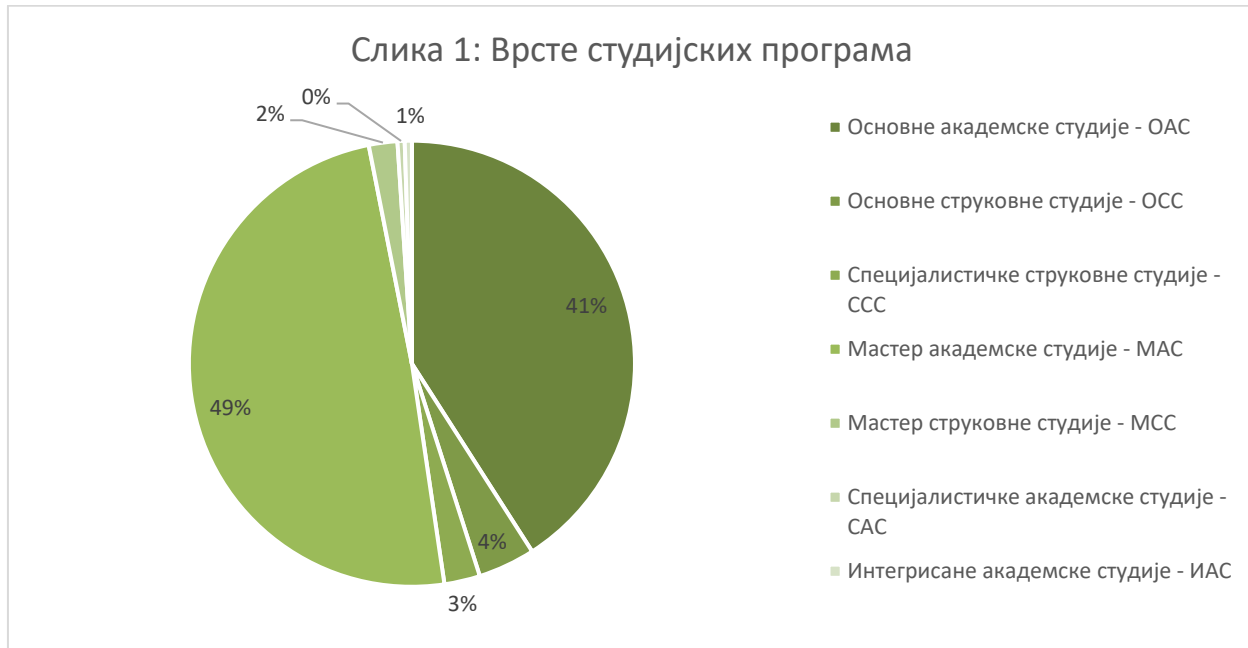


Figure 1: Types of study programs

- Basic academic studies - BAS
- Basic vocational studies - BVS
- Specialist vocational studies - SVS
- Master Academic Studies - MAS
- Master Vocational Studies - MVS
- Specialist Academic Studies - SAS
- Integrated Academic Studies - IAS

It is evident that 90% of the programs that are accredited are basic and master academic study programs. Only one IAS program (Physical Education and Sports, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Sports and Physical Education) and one SAS program (Criminalistics, Criminalistics and Police Studies University, University Studies) have been accredited.

As for the type of higher education institution, 171 programs are organized by universities, 5 programs by College Academic Studies institutions, and 17 programs by College Vocational Studies institutions. The universities founded by the Republic of Serbia offer 137 programs that are accredited according to the new bylaws, while universities that are not founded by the Republic of Serbia offer 34 such programs. Figure 2 shows the number of accredited programs by type of higher education institution:

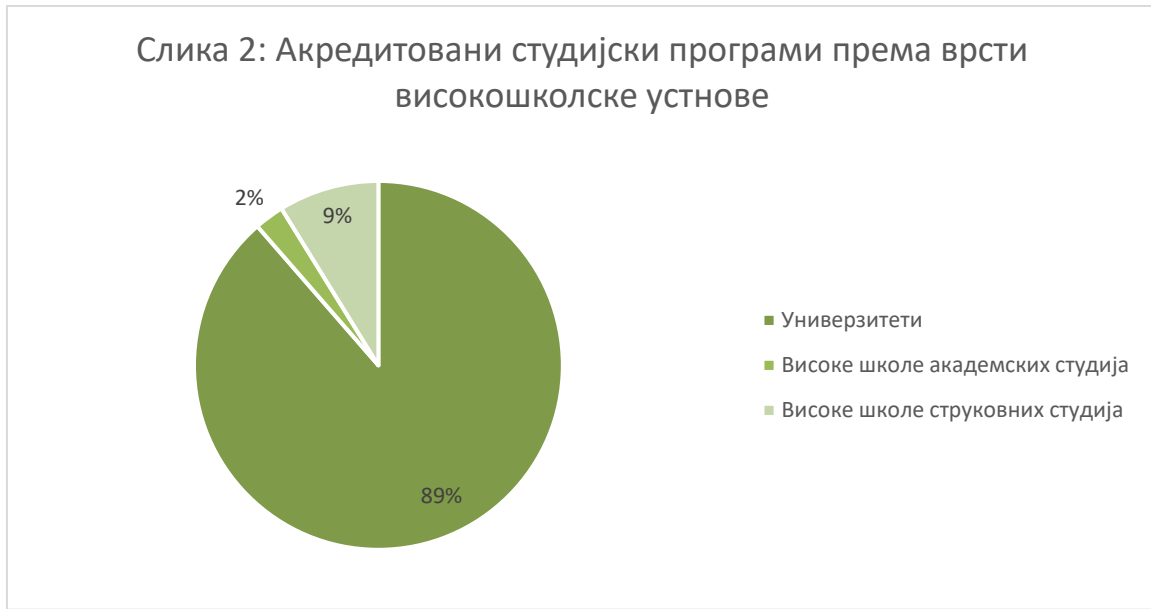


Figure 2: Accredited study programs by type of higher education institution

- Universities
- College Academic Studies institutions
- College Vocational Studies institutions

The implementation of the accreditation process began in May 2019, and the visits to the higher education institutions started in September 2019. Considering that about two years have elapsed since then, the sample is significantly larger in relation to the previously conducted thematic analysis, which included study programs in the field of technical and technological sciences. Therefore, this sample can be considered more representative in relation to the sample used in the previous thematic analysis, but also in relation to all other samples used in previous thematic analyzes.

2.1. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

As in the case of previous thematic analyzes, differences in the writing of reports of the reviewing commissions can be noticed here as well, which indicates that the new accreditation system is still being established. Within each standard, the report contains a section entitled comments and remarks in which the reviewers provided information about the study program, facts, commendation and recommendations. After that, some reports contain only a statement that the standard has been met, while others contain a concluding comment in which the opinion of the reviewers is summarized in a few sentences, along with commendation and recommendations for improving the study program.

In most reports, commendations and recommendations are not clearly indicated. In some reports they are listed within each standard, while in others they are listed at the very end of the report without an indication of which standard the respective commendations or recommendations refer to. It is evident that comments and commendations that relate to a single

standard are sometimes referred to in the framework of other standards, and it also happened that the reviewers list identical comments in the context of multiple standards. With this in mind, in the coming period the form should be modified and harmonized with ENQA panels way of reporting, which within each standard has a part in which the factual status is stated, then the comments of the panel, and finally commendations and recommendations. As indicated in previous thematic analyzes, in order to make the comments of the reviewing commissions even clearer and more effective, the report form could contain the following categories within each standard: relevant facts, factual analysis, clearly stated explanations and arguments on compliance or non-compliance with the standards as well as commendations, recommendations, and conclusion of the reviewing commission.

The reports of the reviewing commissions also differ in quality. Higher quality reports usually have more than 25 pages and within each standard contain a clearly stated factual status, arguments for assessing the fulfillment /non-fulfillment of each standard, commendations, as well as recommendations that higher education institutions can use to improve their study programs. At the end of each standard, in addition to the statement of compliance with the standard, these reports usually contain a concluding comment. Poorly written reports do not clearly define the facts and often only state that the higher education institution did everything in accordance with the standards and the law and that the standard was met. The reasons or arguments for meeting the standard are not clearly stated. This is especially problematic in reports with a recommendation to deny accreditation as they may be the subject of litigation. Such reports were often returned several times in order to be supplemented, which led to delays in the accreditation process of these study programs. The NEA should urgently amend the reviewing form and list the most important elements for each standard, which must include a justification for meeting / not meeting the standard. In this way, the requirements for reviewers on how to write a review report would be clear, and uniformity of the way of writing the report would be achieved.

Some reports contain data on the visit made to the institution, while others do not provide such information, and the same applies to self-evaluation reports. Therefore, in the future, more attention should be paid to the training of reviewing commissions. Also, reviewers should devote more time to getting acquainted with the Law on Higher Education, standards for self-evaluation and standards for accreditation of higher education institutions and study programs. When NEA forms the list of reviewers, training should be organized, but also a test that would include all regulations and standards that are necessary to know for the responsible job of accreditation and quality assurance in higher education. Reviewers who do not pass the test would be removed from the list of reviewers and the competition for reviewers would be permanently open. In that way, much greater efficiency and high quality would be achieved in the implementation of accreditation procedures and external quality control.

In addition, in the future, perhaps the database might be formed, containing information about the reviewers, and including data on experience with each of the reviewers who have so far been engaged. In that way, in the future, it would be possible to avoid hiring reviewers who did not do their job conscientiously, which would significantly reduce delays in the accreditation process and improve the quality of the process itself.

Analyzing the report, it was noticed that the description of the standard often does not match the numerical grade given at the end of the report. For example, the institution is undergoing the first accreditation of the study program and has no data on the evaluation and success of students in passing the exams, which the reviewing commission itself states but awards a grade of 10. Another example is when the reviewing commission did not state any

objections or recommendations and stated that everything was done as it should, but in the end awarded a grade of 9, not 10.

It was also noticed that a large number of reports are written in the context of noticing shortcomings instead of affirmatively. For example, in one report it is written that the purpose of the study program is defined in general terms, instead it is necessary to more precisely define the purpose of the study program. Also, a number of reports contain comments in which the institutions are criticized, without suggestions on how to eliminate the shortcomings. This observation is to be taken into consideration in order to build a culture of quality.

2.2. TRENDS AND ISSUES ARISING FROM THE COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF REVIEWING COMMISSIONS

2.2. 1. Structure of the study program

When it comes to the structure of the study program, the usual commendation is that the reviewers cited that the program is relevant (there is a need for personnel who are educated) that the program is scientifically based and aligned with theory and practice, there is a good relationship between mandatory and elective courses, that there is a large number of elective courses, that there are clear requirements for transfer from other higher education institutions and that the conditions for enrollment in the study program are clearly defined .

For some study programs that contain several modules, the reviewers recommended that in the next cycle the modules be accredited as separate study programs. Some study programs state that the objectives and outcomes of the program should be made more publicly available, that the principles by which ECTS credits are allocated should be more clearly defined and that the curriculum should be more clearly linked to the scientific field and increase the number of subjects foreseen for respective narrow fields. In addition, the reviewers recommended continual monitoring and comparison of the study program with the study programs of faculties from the European Higher Education Area and research new ways to involve students in the creation and improvement of the study program.

2.2. 2. Purpose of the study program

Within this standard, most of the commendations by the reviewers referred to the future occupations of the students. For example, reviewers emphasized that there is a wide range of occupations that students can pursue after completing the program, that a set of occupations specific to the study program is precisely stated, that students' competencies are socially justified and useful, and so on. In addition, for some study programs the reviewers stated that a program represents a good starting point for the continuation of the training at higher levels of the study, that the particularities of a program are stated clearly as compared to other programs in connection with one education institution and that the purpose of realization of the study program is fitted in the framework of national and regional contours.

As the most common recommendations, the reviewers stated that it is necessary to formulate the purpose of the study program more precisely and that it is necessary to bring the competencies of students and the purpose of the study program into a clearer connection. Some higher education institutions stated that the purpose of the study program was to provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and skills, which the reviewing commission objected to and requested that the purpose be redefined since the purpose could not be to provide

opportunities for students. In the case of a new study program, the reviewing commission objected that it was not clear enough what professions and occupations the program would result in, but on the other hand pointed out that, given the changes in society, the program has the prospect of securing competencies in the future, which are socially justified and useful. Certainly, such an attitude of the reviewing commission is not justified either. The competencies that students acquire and the professions and occupations for which they will be trained must be clearly defined.

2.2. 3. Objectives of the study program

The most frequent commendations of reviewing commissions, when it comes to the objectives of the study program, are that the objectives are clearly and unambiguously formulated, that they are in line with the goals of the higher education institution, that they are in line with labor market requirements, that they include competences and academic skills and methods for their acquisition and that there is a harmony between the general (common) objective and the specific objectives of the study program.

When it comes to recommendations, the reviewers most often suggested that the objectives of the study program should be more clearly and specifically defined, and sometimes reformulated, in order to more clearly indicate the competencies and skills of students. In a few cases, the reviewers have suggested to higher education institutions to state the objectives of the study program on its website, to make them publicly available.

2.2. 4. Competencies of graduate students

Within this standard, there were generally no special commendations, except for the statements of the reviewing commissions that the general and subject-specific competencies are clearly and precisely stated and that they are in accordance with the structure and content of the study program. In a few cases, the reviewers commended the content of the Diploma Supplement and stressed its role in the strengthening of international visibility and easy perception of acquired qualifications.

As for the recommendations, the reviewers have suggested that it is necessary to precisely define the competences of students according to the NFQ descriptors, and that general and subject-specific competencies should be clearly separated, and that competencies should be more clearly linked to the labor market and specific occupations. In a few cases, the reviewers have suggested for the higher education institutions to adapt the number of those competencies to the length of the program and to not specify the competencies that are universal, and not specifically related to the given study program.

2.2. 5. Curriculum

Under this standard the reviewing commissions gave a far greater number of recommendations than commendations. The most frequent commendations sent by the reviewers are that the curriculum is clear, precise and elaborated in detail, that the course sequence is logical and explained, that there are a large number of modules and elective courses and that the curriculum is formulated in accordance with modern trends.

The reviewers suggested to the institutions that in addition to the subject teacher's book, they recommend wider literature that includes foreign literature, to innovate the proposed

literature in subjects older than a certain number of years, to increase the number of subjects belonging to a narrower scientific field and to connect the curriculum more clearly with a scientific field. Institutions have also been advised to carry out the equalization of respective subjects in terms of objectives, outcomes, literature and volume of active teaching because it is in some subjects described broadly and in some other ones too closely. Finally, institutions that have not yet done that were advised to adjust ECTS credits to the number of lessons and duties provided for students. All these suggestions can be understood as the development of a culture of quality.

2.2. 6. Quality, modernity and international compliance of the study program

Higher education institutions whose programs are accredited have generally received high grading for meeting this standard. Most frequent commendations by the reviewers are that the program is comprehensive and inclusive, that it is compliant with the latest developments and current status in the respective field, that it is harmonized with other programs that are taught in the respective higher education institution, that it complies with the accredited foreign programs taught at higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area, and that it is in line with European standards in terms of enrollment requirements, length of studies, conditions for the transition to the next year, obtaining a diploma and the mode of studying.

The recommendations referred to the further elaboration of the international comparability of the study program. It was suggested to the institutions to show more clearly the harmonization of the study program with foreign programs within the European Higher Education Area, and in a few cases the reviewers suggested the introduction of new subjects. In evaluating this standard, certain problems and different approaches by the reviewing commissions were manifested. Some reviewing commissions had an extremely rigid approach, with the requirement that the names and contents of the subject of the study program that is the subject of accreditation must be the same in relation to the study program with which it is compared, which certainly should not be so, since it would border on by plagiarizing other people's study programs. Another, more rational approach, on the part of the reviewing commissions, was that which compared the knowledge and skills, and competencies, outcomes and qualifications acquired in a particular study program. Since this standard is eliminatory, there is a danger inherent in such different approaches and that an institution may be unjustifiably assessed as not meeting the standard. Therefore, it is necessary to clearly define the elements that need to be compared, in order for this standard to be met.

2.2. 7. Student enrollment

There were no special commendations within this standard. The reviewers usually only stated that there is a harmonization of the number of enrolled students with the available capacities of the institution, that assessing the abilities of future students corresponds to the character of the study program and that the enrollment conditions, tuition fees and competition deadlines are clearly stated.

The recommendations referred to providing more detailed information on the entrance exam and to organize preparatory classes.

2.2. 8. Student assessment and progress

In most cases, the reviewers described the way students were graded and finally stated that the standard was met without giving commendations or recommendations. When giving commendations, the reviewers stated that the proportion between the subjects in terms of number of points and workload is adequate and that each subject from the study program has a clear and publicly announced way of gaining points.

In several instances, however, it happened that the higher education institutions stated that the maximum number of points that a student can accumulate through the prerequisites provided in individual subjects is less than 30. The reviewers demanded that this be changed in order for the standard to be met, which the institutions did. One higher educational institution had to correct the evaluation method to 36 out of a total of 89 offered subjects. Other recommendations related to the use of student surveys that would contain questions related to the objectivity of assessment and in which students would have the opportunity to give recommendations for improving the assessment system.

2.2. 9. Teaching staff

Regarding the teaching staff, the commendations of the reviewing commissions were related to the number of teaching staff, the qualifications of the teaching staff and the existence of capacities for their training. The most common commendations by the reviewers are that the number of teachers and associates suits the needs of the program and that is sufficient to cover the total number of lessons in a lesson plan, that the qualification of the teachers and associates are aligned with their responsibilities and supported by appropriate references, that there are capacities for the continuous education and development and that all data on teachers and associates are publicly available at the institution's website.

Most of the recommendations were related to improving the qualifications of teaching staff. For example, it was suggested to increase references for teaching staff with works from the narrow field of the subject for which they are engaged, then stimulating teachers to find and attend various seminars, training courses, etc., to take part more in the mobility of teachers and to be active as members of research teams or as project managers. It was also suggested to encourage and stimulate associates who are involved in the teaching process for the first time to acquire basic courses in pedagogy, didactics and teaching methodology, as well as to develop a system of measures that should reward and stimulate those teachers who have the highest grades.

In order to advance in the capacities for scientific research, higher education institutions were advised that teachers are provided with access to databases and magazines in the country and abroad. Finally, in cases where teachers did not have a scientific education in a narrower field or did not have a legal basis for engagement, higher education institutions were advised to replace these teachers with adequate teachers by redistributing the existing teaching staff if there were opportunities for that. The problems manifested regarding teaching staff were primarily related to incompetence for the subjects for which they are engaged, having in mind the field in which they received their doctorate, as well as the lack of references for the field to which these subjects belong. Also among the hired teachers were those who have not written any works in the last 10 years. These were the most common reasons for non-compliance with this standard.

2.2. 10. Organizational and material resources

When it comes to this standard, the reviewers mostly stated the factual status and stated the fulfillment of the standard without much commendation. For example, the reviewers stated that the institutions have all the necessary equipment (servers, computers, software, projectors, etc.), that there is access to databases, that the library has all the textbooks for the subjects of the study program, as well as numerous textbooks, books and other editions in different world languages. In several cases, the reviewers commended the commitment and devotion of the non-teaching staff. In addition, as a commendation they stated that institutions systematically monitor and improve the scope and sectorial structure of library fund according to international standards ISBRD and that people with disabilities can use the space for classes. In one report, the commission commended the quality, systematic approach, precision and clarity of the adopted acts which regulate the business of the higher education institution.

As for the recommendations, the reviewers have stated that it is necessary that the higher education institutions, in accordance with their capabilities, are investing continually in the library fund and the modernization of computer and communications equipment. Also, it was suggested that continuous quality control of space and equipment should be continued and that monitoring and evaluation of non-teaching attitudes towards students should be ensured. One report indicated the higher education institution should provide access to databases of other higher education institutions in the same field, at home and abroad, for the education of students at a higher level.

2.2. 11. Quality control

The reports of the reviewing commissions differed significantly when it comes to quality control. Some reports contain a detailed description of the facts with numerous comments in the form of commendations and recommendations. There is even the impression that some reviewing commissions were paying more attention to this standard as compared to other standards. On the other hand, in some other reports this standard was given only one paragraph.

When it comes to commendations, the reviewers pointed out that the higher education institution regularly conducts internal quality assurance assessments, that the active role of students is ensured in quality control and that they are involved in the work of the commission for quality assurance and improvement, that the higher education institution has a quality assurance strategy, and that the statute contains provisions governing the quality system. The reviewers also highlighted the existence of an institutional base for the teaching, non-teaching staff and the students to be involved in the process of monitoring, control, securing and improvement of quality, and that for this purpose, they adopted different rules and procedures.

The reviewers also frequently focused on student surveys pointing that an institution regularly conducted surveys of students on pedagogical work of teachers and staff, and on the degree of non-teaching support. Finally, the reviewers commended the institutions for having a developed system for improving the quality of scientific research, which is implemented through adopted programs, constituting centers, organizing conferences and publishing journals and monographs.

When it comes to recommendations, the reviewers pointed out that the strategy of quality assurance must be constantly innovated, that the associates should be more involved in international projects, that students should be extra motivated to get involved in the control of the quality of teaching process and study programs, that non-teaching staff should be informed about

the importance of providing and improving quality for the support of the teaching process and that monetary rewards should be provided for achieving extraordinary results in scientific research , all with the aim of establishing a culture of quality.

By analyzing the student surveys, the reviewers suggested that students should be encouraged to think critically and actively engage in teaching and lectures, not just exercises, and that the survey on graduates' qualifications should be improved by increasing the number of evaluation options and that this survey should be conducted every year.

The reviewers also stated that specific measures should be prescribed in case of irregularities in evaluation and passing exams in the subjects, and that an institutional framework should be created for work on planning and developing student careers. In the case of one higher education institution , the reviewers stated that the self-evaluation commission was not able to distinguish between the two standards and recommended that the institution to approach the first subsequent self-evaluation much more seriously.

3. CAUSES OF DELAY IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE OF STUDY PROGRAMS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

In April 2021, the procedures for performing administrative tasks in the accreditation procedure were adopted. In accordance with them, after submitting a proper request for accrediting the study program, the clerks forward the documentation (material) to the field coordinator within 3 days at the latest, who should propose the reviewers within 3 days. When the coordinator sends the reviewing commission's proposal to the clerk, the clerk contacts the reviewers within 3 days at the latest, to confirm whether they accept the job. In case one of the reviewers does not accept the job, the clerks inform the coordinator of the Subcommittee to give a new proposal.

After determining the proposal of the reviewing commission and after all its members give their consent, the proposal of the reviewing commission is adopted at the next session of the CASP. The deadline for drafting the decision on appointment is 3 days following the adoption of the proposal of the reviewing commission at the CASP session. No later than 2 days after the signing of the decision on the appointment of the reviewing commission by the director , the reviewer submits the material to the reviewing commission , and within 30 days the reviewing commission submits to the reviewer a preliminary report with a list of questions for the institution. The clerk immediately submits a list of questions to the institution, arranges for a visit to the institution , and informs the institution and the reviewing commission about the date of the visit.

After the visit, and no later than within 15 days, the institution submits to the NEA (clerk) the requested documentation and clarifications requested before or during the visit, and the clerk immediately submits to the reviewing commission the supplement sent by the institution. The reviewing commission submits the draft of the Final Report to the clerk, within no longer than 2 months from the receipt of the material, and the clerk immediately submits the draft of the Final Report to the institution for comment . The institution shall comment on the draft Final Report within 15 days and submits a statement to the NEA (clerk). If the institution has no objections, the report is considered final and it is submitted to the Subcommittee.

The clerk immediately submits any objections to the reviewing commission for comment and possibly corrects the Final Report. Upon receipt of the Final Report from the reviewing commission, the clerk immediately submits it to the subcommission - rapporteur with objections of the institution, if any.

In order to work more efficiently, the subcommission may request additional explanations from the reviewing commission, and the reviewing commission is obliged to respond to the requests of the Subcommission within 7 days at the latest. The Subcommission (Rapporteur) shall prepare a draft decision for the next session of the CASP within 20 days.

After the session, the rapporteur (field coordinator) submits the draft decision to the clerk of the appropriate field within no later than 3 days, and the clerk submits the decision for verification and initialing within 2 days. After the payment of the fee for certificates, the signed certificates / decisions by the director with the decisions signed by the Chair of the Accreditation Commission are delivered immediately, and no later than within 3 days to the higher education institution.

The analysis of the causes of delays includes 14 study programs organized by 9 higher education institutions. Higher education institutions that are included in the sample are as follows: Union - Nikola Tesla University - Faculty of Business Studies and Law, Union - Nikola Tesla University - Faculty of Business and Law, Union - Nikola Tesla University - Faculty of Sports, Business Academy University in Novi Sad - Faculty of Economics and Engineering Management, South Serbia Academy of Vocational Studies - Department of Studies for Preschool Teachers Bujanovac, Megatrend University - Faculty of Law, University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Sciences, Vocational College - International Center for Professional Studies - ICEPS and the Economic Academy University in Novi Sad - Faculty of European Legal and Political Studies.

The causes of delays can be divided into three groups: (1) delays caused by the work of the NEA service, (2) delays caused by the work of the CASP Subcommission and (3) delays caused by the work of the reviewing commission.

Analyzing the procedures for performing administrative tasks, it can be noticed that there are 4 activities of the NEA service that could have led to delays. These are sending materials to the field coordinator, making appointment decisions, sending materials to the members of the reviewing commission and submitting decisions for review and initialing. Contacting reviewers to confirm whether they accept the job is excluded from the analysis of the causes of delays, since it depends not only on the work of the service, but also on the reviewers themselves and on how often they check their email. These 4 activities are shown in Table 2 and Figure 3.

Institution	Service - Number of days of delay				In total
	Sending material to the field coordinator	Making a decision on appointment	Sending materials to RC members	Submission of the decision for verification and initialization	
	deadline 3 days	deadline 3 days	deadline 2 days	deadline 2 days	
1. Union-Nikola Tesla University - Faculty of Business Studies and Law					
1.1. BAS - Business Economics	0	205	0	0	205
1.2. MAS - Business Economics	0	205	0	0	205

1.3. DAS - Management and Business	0	205	0	0	205
2. Union-Nikola Tesla University, Faculty of Business and Law					
2.1 .. DAS - Law	13	12	0	0	25
3.. Union-Nikola Tesla University - Faculty of Sports					
3.1. MAS - Physical Education and Sports	2	0	0	0	2
4. University Business Academy in Novi Sad, Faculty of Economics and Engineering Management					
4.1. BAS - Business Economics and Finance	11	0	0	0	11
4.2. BAS - Business Economics and Finance - Distance Learning	11	0	0	0	11
4.3. MAS - Business Economics and Finance	11	0	0	0	11
5 South Serbia Academy of Vocational Studies, Department of Studies for Preschool Teachers Bujanovac					
5.1. BVS for the education of educators in homes and institutions	0	155	0	0	155
5.2. MVS - Professional Master Educator	0	155	0	0	155
6. Megatrend University - Faculty of Law					
6.1. BAS - Law (240 ECTS, 2 modules)	0	2	5	0	7
7. University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Sciences					
7.1. DAS - Tourism (in Serbian and English)	0	2	4	0	6
8. Vocational College - International Center for Professional Studies - ICEPS					
8.1. MVS - Health Management	0	2	82	0	84
9. Economic Academy University in Novi Sad - Faculty of European Legal and Political Studies					
9.1. MAS - Political Science	19	0	0	0	19
Total number of days of delay	67	943	91	0	1101
Average number of days of delay	5	67	7	0	79



Figure 3: Service - Causes of delay
 sending materials to the field coordinator
 drafting decision on appointment
 sending materials to the RC members
 sending decision for verification and initialing

It is evident that the service late by an average of 79 days, and the biggest delay occurred in making decisions on the appointment of reviewing commissions. In the case of 5 study programs, the drafting of the appointment decision took more than 150 days, although the deadline for this is only 3 days. When sending the material to the field coordinator, i.e. the members of the reviewing commission, it was late by an average of 5 or 7 days. The only activity that was not late was the submission of the decision for verification and initialing.

In the case of the CASP Subcommittee, the activities that could have led to delays are proposing a reviewing commission, preparing a draft decision for the CASP session and submitting a draft decision to the appropriate field officer. These activities are shown in Table 3 and Figure 4.

Table 3 Institution	CASP Subcommission - Number of days of delay			In total
	Proposing RC	Preparation of a draft decision for the CASP session	Submitting a draft decision to the clerk	
	deadline 3 days	deadline 20 days	deadline 3 days	
1. Union - Nikola Tesla University - Faculty of Business Studies and Law				
1.1. BAS - Business Economics	0	0	0	0
1.2. MAS - Business Economics	0	0	0	0
1.3. DAS - Management and Business	0	0	0	0
2. Union-Nikola Tesla University, Faculty of Business and Law				
2.1 .. DAS - Law	14	0	0	14
3. Union-Nikola Tesla University - Faculty of Sports				
3.1. MAS - Physical Education and Sports	247	0	0	247
4. Business Academy University in Novi Sad, Faculty of Economics and Engineering Management				
4.1. BAS - Business Economics and Finance	27	0	0	27
4.2. BAS - Business Economics and Finance - Distance Learning	27	0	0	27
4.3. MAS - Business Economics and Finance	27	0	0	27
5 South Serbia Academy of Vocational Studies, Department of Studies for Preschool Teachers Bujanovac				
5.1. BVS for the education of educators in homes and institutions	23	0	0	23
5.2. MVS - Professional Master Educator	23	0	0	23
6. Megatrend University - Faculty of Law				
6.1. BAS - Law (240 ECTS, 2 modules)	96	0	0	96
7. University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Sciences				
7.1. DAS - Tourism (in Serbian and English)	89	0	0	89
8. Vocational College - International Center for Professional Studies - ICEPS				
8.1. MSS - Health Management	39	0	0	39
9. Economic Academy University in Novi Sad - Faculty of European Legal and Political Studies				
9.1. MAS - Political Science	0	0	0	0

Total number of days of delay	612	0	0	612
Average number of days of delay	44	0	0	44



Figure 4: CASP - Causes of delay

proposing RC

drafting proposed decision for the CASP session

sending proposed decision to the clerk

Preparation of draft decisions for the CASP session, as well as submission of proposals for these decisions to the clerk after the session was done in time for all 14 study programs. The delay only occurred when proposing members of the reviewing commission, and it averaged 44 days. In the case of one study program, the delay was as much as 247 days.

The activities of the reviewing commission that could have led to delays are the preparation and submission of the Preliminary Report, the preparation and submission of the draft Final Report and the replying to the requests by the CASP Subcommittee. These three activities are shown in Table 4 and Figure 5.

Institution	Reviewing commission - Number of days of delay			In total
	Submission of the Preliminary Report	Submission of the draft Final Report	Replying to the requests of the CASP Subcommission	
	deadline 30 days	deadline 2 months	deadline 7 days	
1. Union - Nikola Tesla University - Faculty of Business Studies and Law				
1.1. BAS - Business Economics	0	0	0	0
1.2. MAS - Business Economics	0	0	0	0
1.3. DAS - Management and Business	0	0	0	0
2. Union-Nikola Tesla University, Faculty of Business and Law				
2.1 .. DAS - Law	0	0	0	0
3. Union-Nikola Tesla University - Faculty of Sports				
3.1. MAS - Physical Education and Sports	0	0	0	0
4. Business Academy University in Novi Sad, Faculty of Economics and Engineering Management				
4.1. BAS - Business Economics and Finance	0	0	0	0
4.2. BAS - Business Economics and Finance - Distance Learning	0	0	0	0
4.3. MAS - Business Economics and Finance	0	0	0	0
5 South Serbia Academy of Vocational Studies, Department of Studies for Preschool Teachers Bujanovac				
5.1. BVS for the education of educators in homes and institutions	0	0	22	22
5.2. MVS - Professional Master Educator	0	0	22	22
6. Megatrend University - Faculty of Law				
6.1. BAS - Law (240 ECTS, 2 modules)	0	0	0	0
7. University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Sciences				
7.1. DAS - Tourism (in Serbian and English)	107	0	0	107
8. Vocational College - International Center for Professional Studies - ICEPS				
8.1. MSS - Health Management	7	15	0	22

9. Economic Academy University in Novi Sad - Faculty of European Legal and Political Studies				
9.1. MAS - Political Science	0	37	508	545
Total number of days of delay	114	52	552	718
Average number of days of delay	8	4	39	51



Figure 5: Reviewing commission - Causes of delay
 sending Preliminary Report
 drafting draft Final Report
 replying to the CASP Subcommittee requests

The preparation of the Preliminary or Draft Final Report was delayed by an average of 8 and 4 days, respectively. When it comes to responding to the requests of the CASP Subcommittee, the average delay is 39 days. However, a detailed analysis of the table it can be noticed that in case of this activity delay occurred in only 3 study programs, but that is the case of one study program the delay was as long as 508 days. The reason for such a delay is that the CASP Subcommittee returned the Final Report as many as 8 times for additional explanations. In the case of the other two study programs that were delayed, the Final Report was returned twice for correction.

With this in mind, in the future, it would be good to create a database of data on the reviewers, in which the experience of CASP with the reviewers engaged so far would be registered. In that way, it would be possible to avoid hiring reviewers who do not do their job conscientiously, and that would significantly reduce the chances of this type of delay in the future .

When all three groups of causes of delays are taken into account, it can be seen that the NEA service was the most late, followed by the reviewing commissions and finally

the CASP Subcommittee. Figure 5 shows how late the NEA service, the reviewing commission, and the CASP Subcommittee were on average .



Figure 5: Causes of delay per groups

Service
CASP Subcommittee
reviewing commission

The average number of days of delay for the 14 study programs included in the sample is 174 days. Of that, the NEA service was 79 days late, the reviewing commissions were 51 days late, and the CASP Subcommittee was late 44 days. When individual activities are taken into account , the biggest delay was evidenced in making a decision on appointment (67 days), proposing members of the reviewing commission (44 days) and responding to the requests by the reviewing commission to the requests of the CASP Subcommittee (39 days) was the most delayed . Figure 6 shows the average delay in each activity in the process of accreditation of study programs.



Figure 6: Causes of delay per activity

- sending materials to the field coordinator
- drafting decision on appointment
- sending materials to the RC members
- sending decision for verification and initialing
- proposing RC
- drafting proposed decision for the CASP session
- sending proposed decision to the clerk

4. CONCLUSION

As in the case of previous thematic analysis, here one can spot the differences in the content and quality of the report of the reviewing commissions, which indicates that the new accreditation system was raised to a significantly higher level, but it is still gradually taking shape. In most reports, commendations and recommendations are not clearly indicated. In some reports they are listed within each standard, while in other ones they are listed at the very end of the report without an indication of which standard each of the respective commendations or recommendations refers to. It was also noticed that the comments and commendations that refer to one standard are sometimes mentioned within other standards, and it happened that the reviewers state the same things within several standards.

Some reports contain a clearly stated factual situation, while in others the factual situation is not clearly defined and it is often only stated that the higher education institution did everything in accordance with the standards and the law, and that the standard was met. The reasons why the standard was met are not clearly stated. Such reports were often returned several

times in order to be supplemented, which led to delays in the accreditation process of these study programs.

With this in mind, the rules on the conduct of reviewing commissions should be clearly defined in the forthcoming period and the report form should be modified, which could contain the following categories within each standard: relevant facts, factual analysis, clear arguments for meeting/not meeting standards, commendations, recommendations and conclusion of the reviewing commission. The training of reviewing commissions should also be given even more attention, and the reviewers themselves should dedicate more time to getting acquainted with the Law on Higher Education, standards for self-evaluation and standards for accreditation of higher education institutions and study programs. After the forming of a new list of reviewers, the training of reviewers should be organized immediately, and after the training, a test of knowledge assessment. Reviewers who do not pass the test should be removed from the list. This would significantly contribute to quality assurance in the implementation of accreditation procedures and external quality control. In addition, in the future, it might be possible to create a database that would contain information on the reviewers, including data on experience of the CASP with each of the reviewers who have so far been engaged.

When it comes to the causes of the delay, the analysis of the sample showed that the NEA service was the most late, then the reviewing commissions and finally the CASP Subcommittee. When individual activities are taken into account, the delay in making a decision on appointment, proposing members of the reviewing commission and responding to the requests by the reviewing commission to the requests of the CASP Subcommittee was the most delayed. The introduction of new procedures introduced internal control of the NEA service that is required to submit a report on the work on a weekly basis, and the results of raising the efficiency of the service are have been evident.