

Post-Accreditation Evaluations of
Educational Programmes by LEPL - National
Center for Educational Quality
Enhancement



Follow-up/Developmental
Evaluations of the External
Evaluation

Tbilisi

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Content

1. Introduction	2
1.1 National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE).....	2
1.2. Goal of the accreditation evaluation of a higher education programme.....	1
2. Follow-up Evaluations of the Higher Education Programme Accreditation	2
2.1. Goal of the follow-up evaluation of the accreditation	2
2.2 Types of the inspection of the accreditation conditions, planned and un planned monitoring.....	2
2. Inspection of the Fulfillment of the Higher Education Programme Accreditation Conditions by the Higher Education Institutions	3
3.1. Planned monitoring	3
3.2. Case based monitoring	5
3.2. Experts of the evaluation – Planned and Case based monitoring.....	9
3.3 Terms of the evaluation– planned and case based monitoring.....	9
3.4. Accreditation Council and types of the decisions - planned and case based monitoring	9
3.5. The term of no more than 60 days to rectify the deficiencies by the educational institution determined by the Council.....	10
4. Report on the Fulfillment of the Recommendations Provided in the Accreditation Experts’ Report	10
4.1. Procedures for submission of a report on the fulfillment of the recommendations of the Accreditation Council.....	11
4.2. Decisions of the Accreditation Council on the report	11
5. Self-Evaluation Report of the Higher Education Institutions for the Accredited Educational Programmes Submitted at least in Three Years	13
5.1. Self-evaluation report	13
5.2. Expert panel.....	14
5.3. Evaluation process.....	14

1. Introduction

This document is elaborated by the Higher Education Quality Assurance Department of LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (hereinafter - the NCEQE). It aims at description of the processes that accompany the accreditation of higher education programmes of higher education institutions in order to help the parties engaged in the process to obtain information on the type and any stage of the process if they are interested.

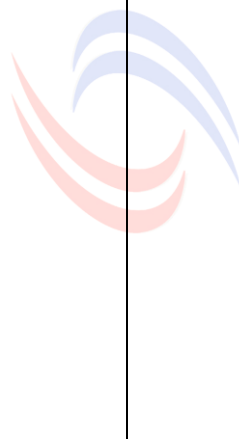
The document coherently describes the types, procedures, and implementation stages according to the process characteristics of the evaluation of the follow-up processes of external evaluation.

1.1 National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE)

Scope of activity of the higher education quality assurance

The NCEQE:

Conducts the authorization of the higher education institutions and the accreditation of the higher education programmes to ensure the external quality of the educational institutions. It also monitors the fulfillment of the authorization and accreditation standards. It develops, implements and elaborates the relevant recommendations for both



external and internal mechanisms for education quality assurance.

The NCEQE promotes the development and advancement of educational programmes. It also works on refining the National Qualifications Framework to bring it closer and ensure its compliance with the European Education Area;

The NCEQE cooperates with the relevant international and foreign organizations and is involved in international projects.

The NCEQE is a [member](#) of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).

The NCEQE is [registered](#) at EQAR (The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education).

The NCEQE is [recognized](#) by WFME (World Federation for Medical Education) .

Objectives:

To develop a result-oriented quality assurance system and improve relevant services for the educational institutions and programmes;

1. To promote the quality enhancement mechanisms and quality culture at the educational institutions through counseling meetings, trainings and other relevant services;
2. To develop and improve qualifications based on the requirements of the international labor market;

3. To promote the lifelong learning principles;
4. To promote the integration of Georgia into the European Higher Education Area.

1.2. Goal of the accreditation evaluation of a higher education programme

Accreditation

One of the mechanisms of external quality assurance is the accreditation of higher education programmes. The purpose of the accreditation is to establish systematic self-evaluation and promote quality assurance mechanisms.

The quality assurance of the educational programme is based on the following principles: transparency, publicity, reliability, continuity and validity. The accreditation serves to determine the compliance of the educational programme with the quality benchmark. Recommendations/suggestions given during the programme accreditation aims at the development of the programme content, resources, quality assurance, student services and other features/components.

The accreditation evaluation is implemented by the accreditation expert panel based on the analysis of the information received from the self-evaluation report of the institution and the accreditation site visit.



2. Follow-up Evaluations of the Higher Education Programme Accreditation

2.1. Goal of the follow-up evaluation of the accreditation

As the NCEQE determined, the goal of the follow-up evaluation of the accreditation is the monitoring of the fulfillment of the recommendations and enhancement of educational programmes by the institutions as a result of the accreditation. This is a significant opportunity for the institution to demonstrate what progress it has made after the accreditation of the educational programme.

The process of monitoring is an important mechanism for education quality assurance which allows the parties engaged in the educational process to maintain continuous development of the activities. This process serves to identify and eliminate the short comings and challenges emerging during the implementation of educational activities by the institution, which hinder the achievement of target benchmarks of the quality.

2.2 Types of the inspection of the accreditation conditions, planned and un planned monitoring

Conditions of accreditation shall be inspected through the planned and case based monitoring. The monitoring is carried out by the initiative of the NCEQE and by mediation of the Accreditation Council. The types of monitoring process are determined according to the basis of the monitoring.

The following evaluations may be determined through the mediation of the Accreditation Council and/or the initiative of the NCEQE:

1. Inspection of the accreditation conditions by the NCEQE through monitoring based on the Accreditation Council's petition to monitor the programme;
2. Evaluation of the report submitted by the institution on implementation of the suggestions and recommendations determined by the Accreditation Council;
3. The self-evaluation report which shall be submitted by the education institution to the NCEQE at least once in every 3 years in order to inspect the accreditation conditions.
4. Evaluation of the programme determined by the initiative of the NCEQE based on the following:
 - a) legislative changes that can create basis for inspection of programme/programmes;
 - b) complaint received by the NCEQE;
 - c) information at the NCEQE on the breach of the standards;
 - d) other issues determined by the legislation, according to which the NCEQE deems it necessary to monitor the compliance of the programme/programmes with the standards.

All the above-mentioned mechanisms serve the goal to inspect whether the accredited programme continues satisfaction of the accreditation standards in continuous mode after the accreditation is granted.

2. Inspection of the Fulfillment of the Higher Education Programme Accreditation Conditions by the Higher Education Institutions

For the evaluation process, the NCEQE may plan planned as well as case based monitoring.¹

3.1. Planned monitoring

The process; the methodology of programmes selection

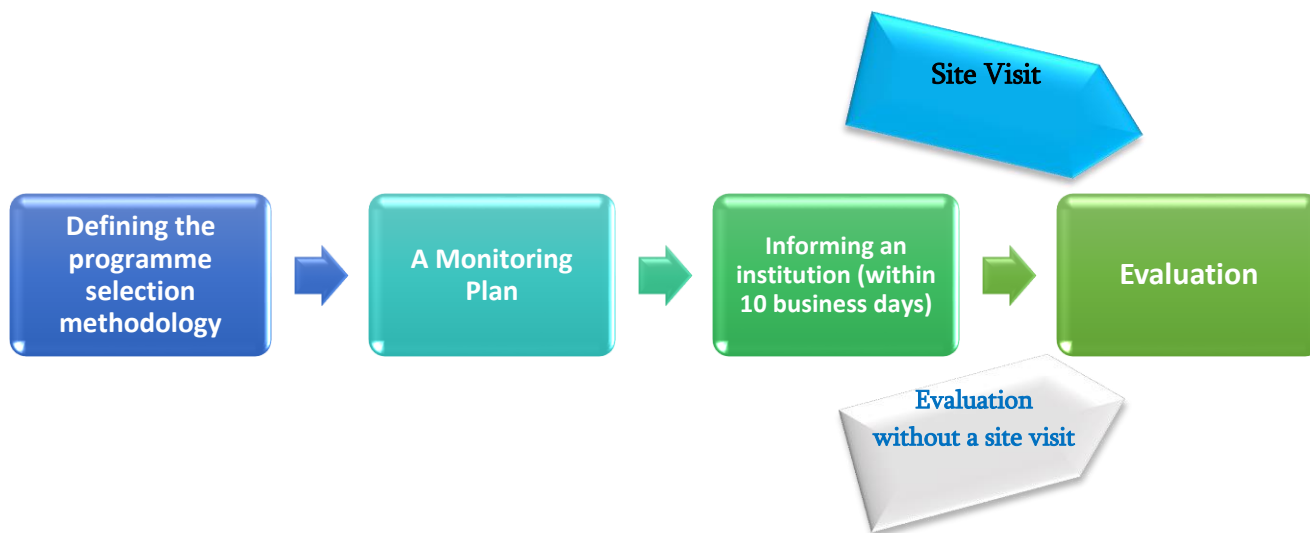
Planned monitoring plan of the accredited programmes shall be approved at the beginning of every year. The process for developing a monitoring plan includes working on a programme selection methodology and defining selection criteria.

As it was mentioned the methodology for elaborating the plan for planned monitoring, the criteria for selection of the educational programmes, are approved by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the NCEQE, which also defines the scope of the inspection according to the Standard/Standard component for each programme.

Selection criteria may be a request from the Accreditation Council to monitor the programme (if the inspection is done within that year, according to the term), as well as criteria based on a risk management methodology, for example: Foreign language programmes, programmes with small/large quotas (target benchmarks are defined in advance), selection of programmes in terms of ratios - the nominal target benchmark ratios between the staff/academic staff/doctoral dissertation supervisors and students are determined in advance, etc. Also, within the methodology, the scope of selection is determined according to the type of institution i.e. it is public or private, located in Tbilisi or in the region and so on.

An individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the NCEQE on the annual plan of the planned monitoring is available at the beginning of the year for those educational institutions where planned monitoring is planned for the respective year. This approach further facilitates the introduction of a development-oriented quality assurance system and the preparatory process carried out by the institution may be more efficient and consistent.

See The Diagram of the Planned Monitoring - developing a monitoring plan and conducting an evaluation:



¹[Accreditation Charter](#), Articles 29, 30, 31.

To sum up, a planned monitoring includes the following stages:

- *²Carrying out methodological work – defining the programme selection criteria by the NCEQE for a planned monitoring plan;
- *Plan of a planned monitoring - legal act of the Director of the NCEQE;³
- *Informing the institution - within 10 working days upon issuing a plan of a planned monitoring;
- *Defining the fee for the inspection of the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions according to the Accreditation Statute, 1 month before the monitoring site visit (only if the planned monitoring is planned in case of the Decision of the Accreditation Council on inspection (monitoring) of the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions);
- Requesting respective documentation from the institution;
- Creating the expert panel;
- Evaluating the programme by the expert panel:
 - through the accreditation expert panel site visit to the institution;
 - through studying the documentation (provided from the NCEQE) by the expert panel.⁴
- Requesting the additional information from the institution by the expert panel (if necessary);⁵
- Elaborating the draft report by the expert panel;
- The NCEQE's feedback on the formal compliance of the draft report;⁶
- Submission of the updated draft report after the NCEQE determines its formal compliance;
- Submission of the institution's feedback i.e. its argumentative position on the draft report after getting familiarized with;⁷
- Based on the argumentative position sent to the expert panel, the panel elaborates a report, which also reflects the information on whether it shares or not the institution's argumentative position;
- Sending the experts' report to the institution and the Accreditation Council;
- Oral hearing at the Accreditation Council session;
- Decision making.

² The stage marked by * is a characterized to the planned monitoring, other stages are the same for the unplanned monitoring stages.

³ The document includes information on accredited educational programmes, scope of the inspection by standards and components and terms for implementation of evaluation.

⁴ Selection of the evaluation form and need for the site visit depends on the scope of the inspection of the educational programme standards defined by the NCEQE/Council. It is logical that if within the scope of the inspection it is selected to determine the compliance with the standard of material resources, the inspection shall be done by the site visit or it is necessary to interview the stakeholders as one of the evidences for the inspection.

⁵ The expert panel addresses the NCEQE to request the additional documentation from the institution.

⁶ The elaboration of the feedback is based on paragraph 3 of Article 12 of the Order №170 of 7 March, 2018 of the Director of the NCEQE on Approval of the Rule of Authorization and Accreditation Experts' Selection and Activities and Termination of Membership of Expert Pool, stating that the information presented in the expert panel report should be clear, self-evident, linguistically sound, argumentative and evidence-based.

⁷ If the institution does not submit the argumentative position to the Center within the specified period, the expert panel will be notified to submit a report;

3.2. Case based monitoring

Case based monitoring is implemented by the mediation of the Accreditation Council, based on the complaint submitted to the NCEQE about the fulfillment of the accreditation standards of the educational programmes and/or by the initiative of the NCEQE.

The complaint may be submitted to the NCEQE by the interested person (a student, academic, scientific, invited or/and administrative staff and others) who believes that the standards of external evaluation of the higher education institution defined by this Charter are breached. The form of the complaint, the methodology for elaborating and reviewing the complaint shall be approved by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the NCEQE.

Detailed information on the procedures and forms for complaints can be found at the following link on the NCEQE's website: <https://eqe.ge/en/page/static/835/apelatsia-da-sachivrebi>.

At this stage, the [Accreditation Charter](#) defines the rules of procedure for reviewing complaints related to the accreditation process. According to it an educational institution or/and other stakeholder participating in the accreditation process shall be authorized to submit a complaint to the NCEQE about the accreditation process within 10 calendar days during the accreditation process or after its completion if the employee/employees of the NCEQE⁸ or/and the member/members of the accreditation expert panel⁹ violate the requirements determined by this Charter or/and by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the NCEQE or/and by the Code of Ethics of Authorization and Accreditation Experts approved by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the NCEQE.

This regulation gives more possibilities to the educational institutions and other stakeholders to elaborate a complaint if they believe that the current legislative regulations are violated by the NCEQEs' employee or/and by an accreditation expert and to request fair and objective review of the claim. Therefore, presented amendment of the [Accreditation Charter](#) facilitates further transparency, objectivity and fairness of the accreditation process.

In case of case based monitoring as in planned monitoring to inspect the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions, the NCEQE is entitled to request relevant documentation/information and explanation from the institution to clarify the details of the issue/share the position of the institution.

If an additional need for the examination of the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions is identified as a result of the examination of the documentation/information, the NCEQE shall issue an individual administrative-legal act on the creation of accreditation expert panel and on case based monitoring at the institution through a site visiting or/and examining the documentation, while other wise, the NCEQE shall terminate the administrative proceedings on the monitoring.

⁸ A complaint which is submitted against the employee/employees of the Center shall be reviewed according to the rules of procedure determined by the NCEQE's internal regulations.

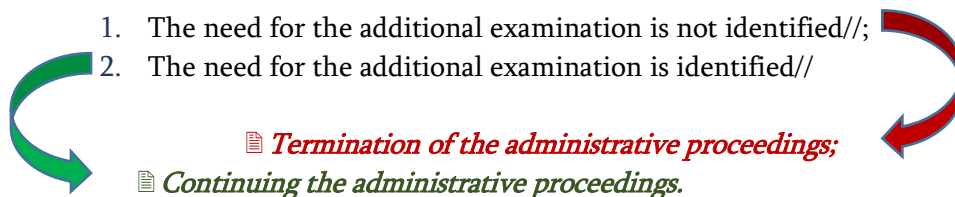
⁹ A complaint which is submitted against the member/members of the accreditation expert panel of accreditation shall be reviewed according to the Rule of Authorization and Accreditation Experts' Selection and Activities and Termination of Membership of Expert Pool approved by Order №170 of 7 March, 2018 of the Director of the NCEQE on Approval of [№170 issued by the NCEQE Director on March 6, 2018](#).

The initiative of the NCEQE to monitor accredited educational programmes can be as follows:

- 📄 legislative changes that can create basis for inspection of programme/programmes. For example, changes in the sectoral benchmarks, changes in the National Qualifications Framework and the classifier of the fields of study, etc.;
- 📄 Complaint received in the NCEQE (<https://eqe.ge/en/page/static/835/apelatsia-da-sachivrebi>).
- 📄 Information at the NCEQE on the breach of the standards. It may be related to the information disseminated through media, and the review of the case reveals the need for the inspection of the conditions of the educational programme standards. Also, another document/application/information received at the NCEQE for other purposes, and the review of the case also demonstrates the need for the inspection of the conditions of the standards of the specific educational programme.

To sum up, an case based monitoring includes the following stages:

- ❑ *¹⁰Basis for an case based monitoring;
- ❑ *A review by the NCEQE;
- ❑ *Defining the fee for the inspection of the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions according to the Accreditation Statute, 1 month before the monitoring site visit (only if the case based monitoring is planned in case of the Decision of the Accreditation Council on inspection (monitoring) of the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions);
- ❑ *Requesting relevant documentation/information from the higher education institution and receive an explanation to clarify the details of the issue;



(The latter scheme does not apply if case based monitoring is planned based on the decision on the inspection (monitoring) of the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions by the Accreditation Council);

- ❑ Creating the expert panel;
- ❑ Evaluating the programme by the expert panel:
 - through the accreditation expert panel site visit to the institution;
 - through studying the documentation (provided from the NCEQE) by the expert panel.
- ❑ Requesting the additional information from the institution by the expert panel (if necessary);
- ❑ Elaborating the draft report by the expert panel;
- ❑ The NCEQE's feedback on the formal compliance of the draft report;
- ❑ Submission of the updated draft report after the NCEQE determines its formal compliance;

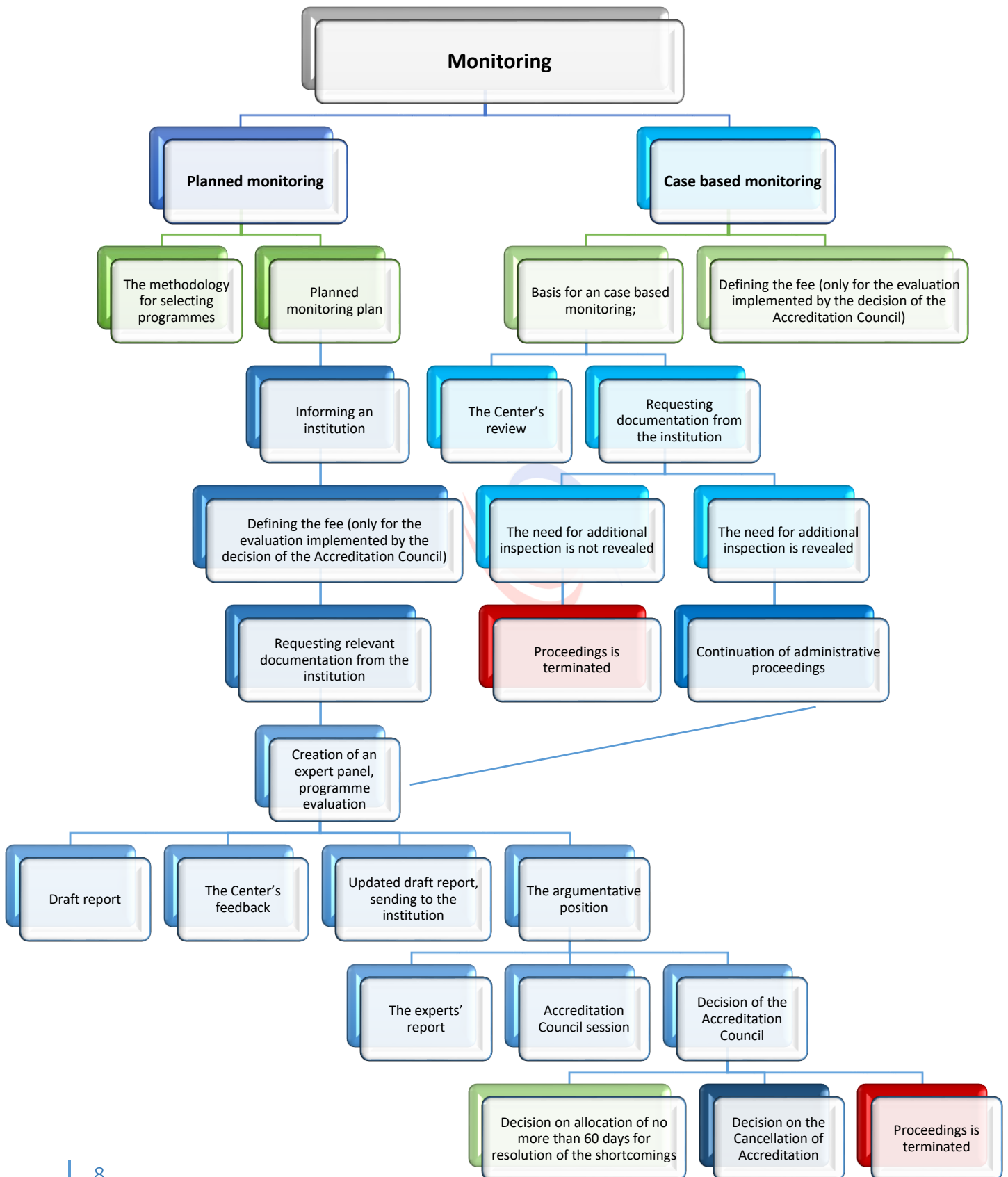
¹⁰The stage marked by * is a characterized to the unscheduled monitoring, other stages are the same for the scheduled monitoring stages;

- ❑ Submission of the institution's feedback i.e. its argumentative position on the draft report after getting familiarized with¹¹;
- ❑ Based on the argumentative position sent to the expert panel, the panel elaborates a report, which also reflects the information on whether it shares or not the institution's argumentative position;
- ❑ Sending the experts' report to the institution and the Accreditation Council;
- ❑ Oral hearing at the Accreditation Council session;
- ❑ Decision making.



¹¹If the institution does not submit the document of the reasoned position to the center within the specified period, the expert team will be sent a notification from the center to submit a report;

See The Diagram of the Planned and Case based monitoring Process:



3.2. Experts of the evaluation – Planned and Case based monitoring

At this stage, the [Accreditation Charter](#) clarifies the methodology for the composition of accreditation expert panel besides distinguishing planned and case based monitoring from each other and refining the procedure.

In case of inspection of the fulfillment of accreditation conditions through planned or/and case based monitoring, the accreditation expert panel shall be created by the following members of the expert's pool: the administrative/academic/scientific/invited staff of other higher education institutions, also it may include a student and an employer. If a higher educational institution implements a regulated educational programme the panel composition may include the representatives of the relevant regulatory body or/and professional association and other persons having relevant qualification. The accreditation expert panel is chaired by the Chair of the panel.

3.3 Terms of the evaluation– planned and case based monitoring

The institution shall be notified in case of the *planned monitoring* through a site visit and/or study of documentation at least 10 working days before the start of the site visit; while in case of the *case based monitoring* it shall be notified directly before the commencement of the site visit or 5 calendar days before the site visit.

In case of creation of the accreditation expert panel, a draft report of the panel is elaborated, submitted to the NCEQE and sent to the institution. The deadlines for submitting the draft report by the expert panel and sending this document to the institution are determined by the legal act of the Director of the NCEQE. Within 5 working days after getting familiarized with the draft report, the higher education institution shall submit an argumentative position in written form to the NCEQE, which then shall be sent to the expert panel and the Accreditation Council. Interested parties are informed on the oral hearing no less than 7 calendar days before the oral hearing.

Decision of the Accreditation Council shall be made within 90 calendar days after the Director of the NCEQE issues an order on the inspection of the fulfillment of accreditation conditions by the educational institution.

3.4. Accreditation Council and types of the decisions - planned and case based monitoring

The Council is authorized to make the following decisions as a result of inspecting the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions:

- Decision on termination of administrative proceedings related to the monitoring;
- Decision on the cancellation of the accreditation/conditional accreditation of an educational programme if the Council assesses an institution as "does not comply with standard requirements" in relation to one of the standards;
- In case of identification of the deficiencies, the Council is authorized to provide higher education institution with a reasonable period of no more than 60 days to rectify these deficiencies except for the case, when it is apparent that it may not have the actual results.

3.5. The term of no more than 60 days to rectify the deficiencies by the educational institution determined by the Council

The decision of the Accreditation Council on rectifying the deficiencies (no more than 60 days term) shall be reflected in the minutes of the Accreditation Council session. After 60 days from the introduction of this minutes to the institution, the institution shall submit to the NCEQE the report on the fulfillment of the standard conditions according to the recommendations reflected in the monitoring report and minutes of the Accreditation Council, with respective annexes if necessary. After submission of the report, the NCEQE once again creates an expert panel to inspect the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions (inspect the fulfillment of the recommendations). Also, it is desirable to include at least one expert from the previous monitoring in the composition of the new expert panel.

The Accreditation Council Final reviews the final report of the accreditation expert panel.

The NCEQE implements the inspection of the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions through creating an accreditation expert panel.

If as a result of the inspection after expiration of 60 days' term, it is determined that:



- none of the recommendations are fulfilled by the institution, the Accreditation Council shall be entitled to make a decision on the cancellation of accreditation/conditional accreditation.
- part of the recommendations are fulfilled by the institutions and none of the standards are evaluated as "does not comply with standard requirements", the Accreditation Council defines a term for the institution to submit the report on the fulfillment of the remaining recommendations or addresses the NCEQE with the petition on implementation of a monitoring.¹²(In the case of addressing the NCEQE with the petition on inspection of the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions, the Council shall define the period for the implementation of the monitoring, the form of the implementation of such monitoring and the scope of the monitoring).
- all the recommendations are fulfilled by the institution, the Council shall make a decision on termination of the administrative proceedings related to the monitoring.

4. Report on the Fulfillment of the Recommendations Provided in the Accreditation Experts' Report

If during the evaluation of the compliance with the accreditation standards, the higher education programme:

- b) was evaluated in relation with at least one standard as "substantially complies with standard requirements" and is not evaluated in relation with any of the standards as "partially complies with standard requirements" or "does not comply with standard requirements".

Article 27⁶ of the [Accreditation Charter](#) which is provided in the [4.1 section](#) of this guideline.

-The Accreditation Council decides to set a deadline for the institution to submit a report on the implementation of the received recommendations, which is reflected in the minutes of the Council session.

It should be noted that the deadline for submitting the report does not exceed one year, and the calculation of the deadline starts from the day the decision enters into force.

4.1. Procedures for submission of a report on the fulfillment of the recommendations of the Accreditation Council

A report shall be presented in the following manner according to the Accreditation Charter:

- The higher education institution shall submit a report filled in the respective form (if necessary with respective the annexes) to the NCEQE within the term set by the Accreditation Council.
- Within 3 working days, the NCEQE shall examine the compliance of the report submitted by the institution with the requirements envisaged by the report form. In case of non-compliance of the latter, the NCEQE shall identify the shortcoming and set a deadline for the educational institution to correct it.

- After correction of the shortcoming, a respective field expert, a member of the accreditation expert's pool, will be assigned to evaluate the report based on the order of the Director of the Center.
- The evaluation deadlines for the accreditation expert shall be indicated in the part of the terms of evaluation of the Order.

- During evaluation of the report, the accreditation expert can receive additional documentation from the institution for examination of the report. In case of the request from the accreditation expert, the NCEQE shall request respective documentation from the institution.
- The accreditation expert elaborates a draft report while the NCEQE determines the formal compliance of it. If necessary, to ensure the formal compliance, the report is returned back to the expert.
- The report elaborated by the accreditation expert shall be submitted to the Accreditation Council and sent to the education institution for familiarization.
- The report submitted by the educational institution and report of the accreditation expert shall be reviewed at the Council session.
- The decision of the Accreditation Council shall be made within 90 calendar days upon issuance of the Order of the Director of the NCEQE.

4.2. Decisions of the Accreditation Council on the report

The accreditation Council shall be authorized to:

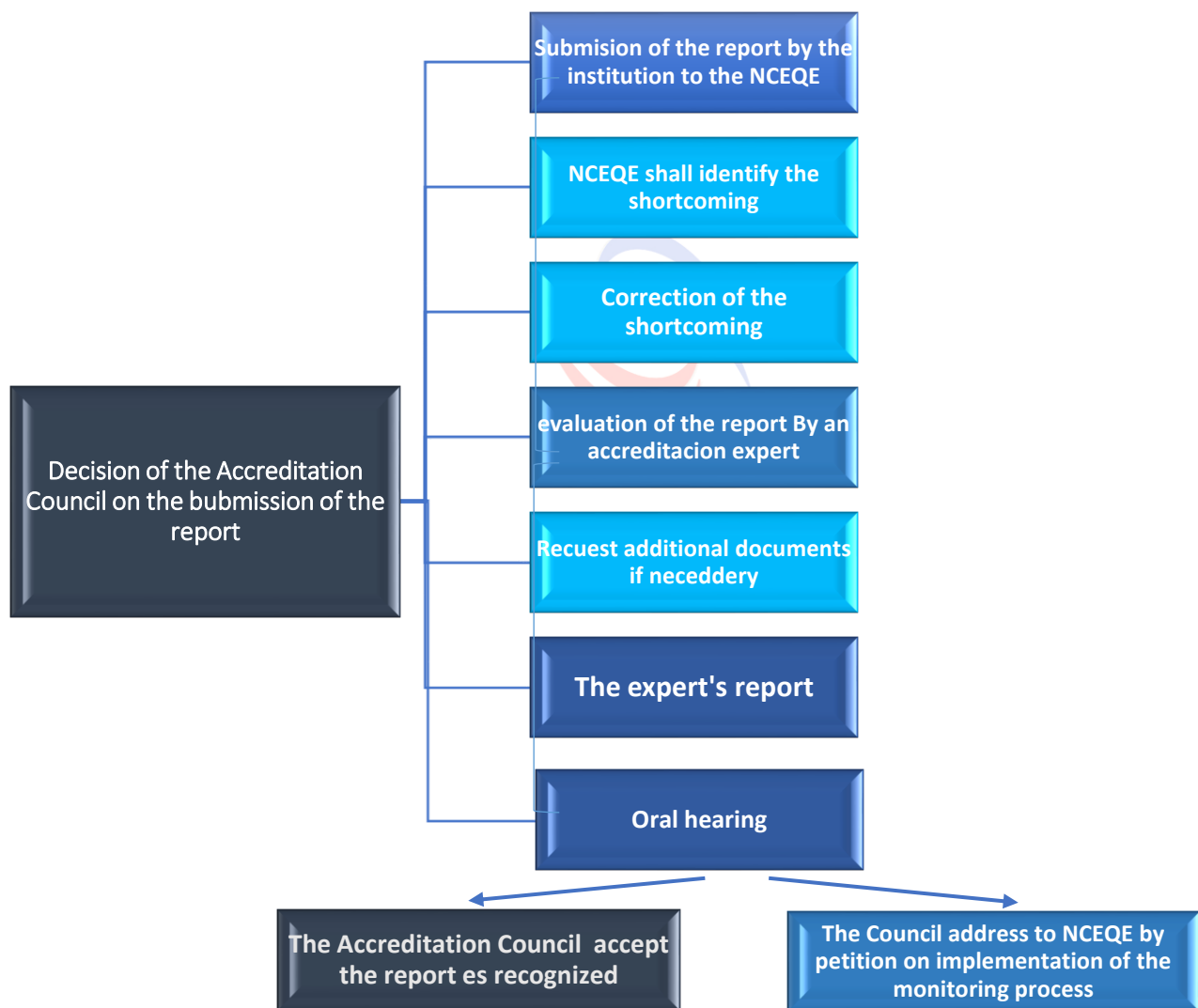
- Accept the report as recognized;

- Address the NCEQE by petition on implementation of the monitoring to inspect the fulfillment of the accreditation conditions by the educational programme; (the Decision of the Councils reflected in the minutes of the session).

Oral Hearing:

The representatives of the institution and the accreditation expert that evaluated the report shall participate in the oral hearing at the Accreditation Council session. Based on the oral hearing, the Accreditation Council is able to be reassured about the fulfillment of the recommendations provided in the accreditation expert’s report and about development of the educational programme.

See the Diagram on Examination, Evaluation and Review of the Report:



5. Self-Evaluation Report of the Higher Education Institutions for the Accredited Educational Programmes Submitted at least in Three Years

5.1. Self-evaluation report

The higher education institution shall submit to the NCEQE the higher education institution self-evaluation report to inspect the conditions of the accreditation of the higher education programme at least once in three years after obtaining an accreditation. Terms for submission of the self-evaluation report shall be determined by an individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the NCEQE, which is public.

A goal of the process is to conduct a self-evaluation in an interim period of the accreditation of the educational programme and confirm the compliance of the ongoing programme with the accreditation standards. The institutions shall analyze the development of educational programmes and define those problems that hinder the development of the programme and the ways for their resolution. This approach gives the NCEQE and the system, in general, the opportunity to analyze the systematic problems/challenges and promotes planning of the developmental and supporting activities based on the needs of the higher education institutions.

The institutions provide the following information in the self-evaluation report according to standards:

- Identifies the opportunities for development of an educational programme;
- Analyzes consideration of external and internal evaluation results received during the accreditation period of the educational programme;
- Provides information on the fulfillment of the recommendations obtained as a result of external quality assurance evaluation implemented after the accreditation of the educational programme and the results of their consideration (if any);
- Provides information on strengths and areas for improvement.

It should be considered that:

Submission of a self-evaluation report shall not be obligatory for the following educational programmes:

- a) granted the conditional accreditation;
- b) granted the accreditation for the term of 4 years;
- c) granted the accreditation for the term of 7 years and where the accreditation conditions are monitored based on the petition of the Council;
- d) granted the accreditation by the foreign organization recognized by the NCEQE;
- e) granted the accreditation in the terms of updated Accreditation Standards (updated standards were approved by the Order N09/n of 31 January 2018 issued by the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia - website, 01/02/2018);
- f) under administrative proceedings related to the accreditation application during the period of the submission of the self-evaluation report.

5.2. Expert panel

To evaluate the self-evaluation report, an expert panel shall be created by the Order of the Director of the NCEQE; the composition of the accreditation expert panel includes the following members of the expert's pool: administrative/academic/scientific/invited staff (field experts) of other higher educational institutions, also composition may include a student, employers. In case of a regulated educational programme it may also include representatives of the relevant regulatory body or/and professional association and other persons having relevant qualification. Based on the request from the accreditation expert panel, the NCEQE is authorized to request respective documentation from an institution.

5.3. Evaluation process

- Based on examination of the documentation the accreditation expert panel elaborates a draft report.
- The NCEQE determines the formal compliance of the draft report (if required);
- If compliance is established, the draft report shall be sent to the institution in order for the institution to submit an argumentative position;
- Within 5 working days after getting familiarized with the draft report, the higher education institution shall submit an argumentative position in written form to the NCEQE and it then shall be sent to the expert panel;¹³
- Based on the argumentative position sent to the expert panel, the panel elaborates a report, which also reflects the information on whether it shares or not the institution's argumentative position;
- The experts' report shall be sent to the institution.

It should be noted that:

Evaluation of the interim self-evaluation report is developmental, the results are not reviewed at the educational programmes Accreditation Council session. It shall promote more openness of the educational institutions, better demonstration of the areas for improvement and planned measures for their resolution. It also promotes planning of the support mechanisms for the resolution of the shortcomings by the NCEQE.

¹³If the institution does not submit the argumentative position to the Center within the specified period, the expert panel will be notified to submit a report;

See The Diagram on Examination, Evaluation and Review of the Self-Evaluation Report:

