

The process of Authorization is comprised of the following stages: 1) Submission of authorization application; 2) Recognition of educational institution as an applicant for Authorization; 3) Creation of authorization experts' group; 4) Preliminary review of authorization self-assessment report and corresponding documents by the authorization experts' panel, and creating agenda for the site-visit; 5) Conducting an authorization site-visit; 6) Elaboration of the draft evaluation report and submission to the Center; 7) Introducing draft evaluation report to the institution; 8) Submission of evidence-based position of the educational institution on the evaluation report to the Center; 9) Development of the final version of the evaluation report by the group of experts, and submission to the Center; 10) Introducing the final evaluation report to the educational institution; 11) Submission of the authorization application, evaluation report, and evidence-based position of the educational institutions to the members of the Authorization Council;

12) Conducting the Oral Hearing on authorization issue and making the decision regarding the authorization by the relevant Authorization Council;

13) Publishing the substantiated decision on the web-site.

Decision on granting or refusing authorization is made within 180 calendar days after recognition of the institution as an applicant of authorization.

1. Authorization application The authorization application submitted to the Center for obtaining the status of an educational institution shall be attached to: 1) Completed self-assessment report of the applicant for Authorization, and related documents; 2) Document certifying payment of authorization fee.

1) CENTER, within three business days, verifies compliance of documents submitted along with authorization application with requirements stipulated in Authorization Regulation (October 1st, 2010,

99/N) 32th paragraph 1st point. 2) If the applicant fails to submit any of the documents listed in Authorization Regulation 32th paragraph 1st point, the CENTER gives the applicant at least 5 and maximum 15 days to fix the issue. 3) In case of submitting documents required by section 2 of this article in the given timeframe, CENTER issues individual-legal act to recognize educational institution as an applicant for Authorization. However, if the institution fails to submit requested documents within the given timeframe, the act is made on leaving the application without consideration. 4) Individual-legal act of the CENTER for recognizing educational institution as an applicant for Authorization is issued within 20 calendar days from the moment of submission of application, and additional documents. 5) If the educational institution does not pay authorization fee within 15 days after receiving the status of authorization applicant, CENTER issues administrative-legal act on terminating the administrative procedure. 3. Creation of authorization expert panel

1) Within 60 calendar days after payment of authorization fees, CENTER issues individual administrative-legal act based on the status of the educational institution, to create a panel of authorization experts and ensure authorization visit to the authorization applicant institution. 2) Authorization expert must recuse, if he/she has conflict of interests with institutions subject to the visit. 3) Applicant of the authorization is entitled to place a motion for preclusion of the expert(s) within 2 business days after receiving individual administrative-legal act indicated in point 1 of this article. 4) The institution is responsible for providing evidence for the preclusion of the authorization expert(s). Basis for

preclusion could be conflict of interests of the panel chair and/or panel member. 5) For the purposes of this charter, the conflict of interests is present in case of circumstances described in the Regulations for selection, activities, and termination of pool of experts, work, and Article 92 of the General Administrative Code of Georgia, in particular, if an expert:

- a) himself/herself is an interested side in the issue;
 - b) is a relative of an interested side (direct relative: such as spouse, brother/sister of a spouse and a relative of direct line, brother/sister of a direct relative of an ascending line, their spouse and children)
 - c) is an representative of an interested side in the issue;
 - d) is an expert in corresponding issue;
 - e) is in labor connection with an interested side in the issue;
 - f) himself/herself or his/her family member holds a share of the enterprise that represents an interested side in the issue.
 - g) is a family member of an interested side in the issue or its representative.
- 6) The CENTER reviews claim for preclusion within three business days. In case of satisfying the claim, the CENTER makes decision on changing composition of panel of experts. 7) In case if the CENTER does not satisfy the claim on preclusion, the panel of experts continues to work with the same composition.
- 8) Duration of the visit and number of experts in the panel is determined by the individual administrative-legal act of the CENTER described in section 1 of this article as well as volume and specifics of work to be undertaken, and Regulations for selection, activities, and termination of pool of experts. The CENTER is entitled to dispatch its employ on the visit for conducting the experts' activities effectively and containing the homogenous methods of evaluation.

4. Review of completed self-assessment form and attached documentation and determining agenda of the visit by the experts' group

Before the authorization visit, the group of experts reviews every completed form and attached documentation, and determines agenda of the visit based on such information, to be agreed with the CENTER and institution. In the process of agreeing on the Agenda, the Center considers arguments of the institution. The center sends to the institution final version of the agenda. 5. Authorization visit

1) Chair of the experts' panel is responsible for distributing duties between experts during the authorization visit. 2) Member of the panel participates in the work of the panel, ensures implementation of functions described in regulations for selection, activities, and termination of pool of experts. Authorization expert, based on the agreed agenda, is responsible for thoroughly reviewing all issues to create evaluation report, including: conducting interviews with stakeholders, requesting additional documents as needed, visual inspection, etc. If necessary, to carry out activities not covered by the agenda. 3) The institution is entitled to submit additional documentation to the CENTER on changes to the information reflected in self-evaluation report, within 5 calendar days after receiving individual administrative-legal act described in paragraph 1 of Article. In addition, if the change considers the need for substitution of any document, the institution shall submit a written description / explanation of the changes together with the mentioned document. After expiration of this deadline, changes to such information cannot be made. 4) In case

when the changes in relevant legal act(s) / assertion of new legal act(s) causes the changes in submitted self-assessment form and attached documentation of the educational institution, excluding the case which improves the state of the educational institution, the started administrative proceeding shall be carried out according the standing regulations in the period of submission and already submitted authorization documentation.

5) The institution is responsible for supporting experts throughout their visit, and in preparation of the evaluation report. They are responsible for submitting all additional documents, as necessary, and ensure interviews with persons requested by the experts.

6) Group of authorization experts presents main findings to the institution seeking authorization, on the last day of the visit. 7) In case of preventing implementation of duties by experts group, or expiration of the deadlines indicated in section 4 of this article for changes to authorization application and attached documents, the CENTER is entitled to issue individual administrative-legal act for terminating administrative proceeding.

8) If the 5 calendar days after receiving individual administrative-legal act described in paragraph 1 of Article are expired, submitting additional documentation to the CENTER on changes to the information reflected in self-evaluation report shall not be considered by the group of experts.

6. Preparing the Report

1) As a result of the self-assessment form and the attached documentation and authorization visit, a draft report of the authorization team is prepared and submitted to the Center. 2) The Center establishes formal compliance of the Authorization Expert Group Conclusion project and in case of defining the compliance the draft conclusion is sent to the institution. 3) Within 10 calendar days from the acquaintance of the draft report from the Authorization expert

group, status-seeker educational institution, shall submit in written to the Center an argumentative position related to the factual circumstances in the draft report which is sent to the Expert Group and the Authorization Council. 4) After its reading or in case of non-submission of the argumentative position, after the expiration of the period envisaged in paragraph 5 of this Article, the Authorization Group of Experts prepares the report in the final form and submits it to the Center. 5) The Center sends the report by the expert group of Authorization to the institution. 7. Oral Hearing 1) Authorization Council makes decisions on granting authorization based on the documents, evaluation report of the group of experts, argument-based position presented by the institution on the evaluation report, and oral hearing. 2) The session of the Authorization Council of Vocational Institutions is invited by the secretariat of the Council. 3) Stakeholders are notified about the oral hearing no later than 7 calendar days before the hearing date. Party of the administrative proceeding is entitled to participate in the hearing. The council is entitled to postpone the oral hearing considering the deadline of 180 calendar days. 4) The hearing is chaired by the Chair of the Council, and in case of his/her absence – deputy, while in case of absence of both Chair and the deputy – a member of the Council elected through majority of member votes. In case if the secretary of the Council is unable to perform duties, such duties are carried out by one of the members of the Council, as requested by the Chair. 5) The session is authorized, if it is attended by more than half of the members, but no less than 3 members. This number does not include a member of the Council, which has self-recusal or recusal towards the issue at hand. 6) Session of the Council is public. Chair of the Council is entitled to close the session in cases

described in the law. 7) Oral hearing does not consider documents of the authorization applicant, prepared after the visit. 8) Transcript of proceedings of oral hearing is formed within 10 work days after conducting the session with the signatures of chair and secretary of the Council. Based on the Transcript of proceedings of Authorization Council the individual administrative-legal act is issued, signed by chair and secretary of the Council. 9) Member of Authorization Council is obliged to report about existing conflict of interest with the educational institution and claim for preclusion within 2 business days after introducing the agenda of oral hearing. 10) No later than 7 calendar days before the hearing date the secretariat submits to the authorization council the agenda and following documents: the completed self-assessment form of the institution and attached documentation, evaluation report of the group of experts, argument-based position presented by the institution on the evaluation report. 11) The Council makes one of the following decisions: a) granting the authorization; b) refusing the authorization; c) terminating the authorization. 12) Decision on granting/refusing/terminating authorization is made if the session is attended by at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of its members. 13) Within 10 days after making a decision, it is published on the web-site of the CENTER. Together with the decision, evaluation report of the group of experts is also published on the web-site.