

Pursuant to point 5 of paragraph 2 of Article 58 of the amended Statute of School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica (SASS), the Senate of the SASS adopted the following document on 21 December 2018:

QUALITY MANUAL OF SCHOOL OF ADVANCED SOCIAL STUDIES IN NOVA GORICA

I. BASIS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Article (Basis and Content)

The School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica (the School or SASS) is committed to assuring quality in all fields of its activities.

The School carries out its activities on the basis of this Quality Manual and in accordance with:

- the act governing the field of higher education,
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area - ESG,
- the act governing the general administrative procedure,
- the act governing professional and academic titles,
- the act governing research and development activity,
- SQAA Criteria for the accreditation and external evaluation of higher education institutions and study programmes,
- SQAA Criteria for the Allocation of Credits to Study Programmes under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System,
- SQAA Criteria for Transferring between Study Programmes,
- SQAA Minimum Standards for the Election to the Title of Higher Education Teacher, Researcher and Faculty Assistant at Higher Education Institutions,
- Statute of the School,
- the current strategic plan of the School,
- internal acts of the School.

This Manual specifies the rules and procedures for quality assurance, monitoring and improvement of School quality, so that all employees, students and other participants at the School and its external stakeholders will be acquainted with the rules and procedures for carrying out the activities of the School, with the mechanisms and measures for monitoring, ensuring and improving quality a School, with the powers and responsibilities of different bodies of the School and with the quality cycle.

Article 2 (Purpose and objective of the quality system)

The purpose of the quality system is to establish a culture of excellence among all stakeholders of the School through continuous systematic planning, monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the system with the objective of achieving and going beyond the set standards. The objective of quality assurance is to improve the quality of all fields of activity of the School and to provide all necessary resources (human, financial, material, information and other

resources) for the realization of the quality system, business objectives, implementation and continuous improvement of the quality system and increased satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Article 3 (Fields and Criteria for Determining Quality)

Procedures for quality assurance and monitoring at the School aim to verify and ensure the achievement of standards in the following areas:

1. school operation;
2. human resources;
3. students;
4. material conditions;
5. internal quality assurance and improvement, modification, updating and implementation of study programmes.

The following aspects are taken into account as the criteria for quality evaluation at the School:

- compliance with the vision and mission of the School as a desired state,
- compliance with the values of the School,
- achievement of strategic objectives according to defined indicators
- the scope of implementation of measures and suggestions for improvement on the basis of self-evaluation reports.

Article 4 (Integration and Participation of Stakeholders)

All stakeholders of the School, who are also represented through its bodies, are integrated into processes of quality assurance, monitoring and improvement, namely:

- higher education teachers, associates and researchers who are represented by the Academic Assembly, Senate and its working bodies,
- practice mentors and holders or organizers of practical training at higher education institutions and in companies represented in the Board of Trustees;
- employed higher education teachers, associates and researchers and professional staff represented in the Academic Assembly, Quality and Evaluation Commission and in the Administrative Board;
- students who are represented in the Student Council, the Academic Assembly, the Administrative Board, the Senate and all its working bodies;
- founders, represented in the Administrative Board,
- clients and potential clients of scientific research and professional services of the School, represented in the Board of Trustees;
- employers and potential employers of School graduates, represented in the Board of Trustees,
- other relevant stakeholders in the local, regional and national environments, represented in the Board of Trustees,
- graduates and doctoral students represented in the Board of Trustees via the Alumni club.

In addition, members of all these bodies are included in the Strategic Conference, which is the largest consultative body of the School.

II. FIELDS OF QAULTY ASSURANCE AND MONITORING

Article 5

1. SCHOOL OPERATION

The School operates in accordance with the acts specified in paragraph 2 of Article 1 of this Quality Manual, which clearly define and publicly disclose the competencies, tasks and duties of individual bodies of the School, its employees, students and other stakeholders.

In accordance with its current strategic plan, the School laid down transparent educational, scientific, research, development and professional goals, which it pursues:

- by documenting the achievement of set objectives and updating its strategy and annual work plans on the basis of self-evaluation reports and external evaluations,
- by making progress in its operation, which is the result of the stakeholders of the School constantly making efforts to work within the quality circle,
- by ensuring equality, mutual cooperation and respect and taking into account the needs of all stakeholders of the School,
- by carrying out pedagogical, scientific-research and professional activities in accordance with the Strategic Plan and national and European guidelines and standards,
- by developing study programmes enabling the graduates to gain relevant skills that will be recognized in the labour market in the local, national and international environment,
- by successfully applying to demanding scientific research, development and professional public calls, with an emphasis on national and EU level, whereby the implementation of those projects enables the achievement of academic excellence, both of the School staff and its reputation,
- by participating in scientific research, development and application projects with prominent partners from academic and business worlds,
- by publishing the achievements of scientific research work in reputable, indexed journals and monographs,
- by annual organization of international scientific conferences of the School, which promote cooperation with other prominent higher education institutions, institutes and other organizations and individuals,
- by integrating the results of scientific research and professional work into education and by constantly revising and updating learning contents,
- by presenting scientific and pedagogical achievements to the general public and promoting scientific culture,
- with an internal quality system that is prescribed, appropriate and effective and comparable in the European Higher Education Area; it integrates all the processes that are important for improving the quality of the School and the implementation of study programmes, and enables to effectively close the circle of quality,
- by constantly and comprehensively planning School activities,
- by regular monitoring of the implementation of plans, elimination of errors and shortcomings,
- by regularly performing self-evaluation in all fields in accordance with SQAA standards,
- by informing students, higher education teachers and associates and other stakeholders about the results of self-evaluation,
- by enabling all stakeholders to propose measures for improvement and to monitor their implementation,

- by documenting the findings on the quality of the School's operation and analysing them and by proposing measures for improvements, which are made available and published in self-evaluation reports,
- by constantly encouraging the efforts of staff towards quality, and by taking appropriate action in the event of non-compliance with the set standards and criteria,
- by cooperating with representatives of the local self-governing community, the Chamber of Commerce, etc.,
- by disseminating the results and findings of scientific research and development work, especially in the economy and public administration,
- by organizing extracurricular activities (competitions for students in the field of School competencies, research presentations, study trips, conferences, social events, etc.),
- by enabling the recruitment of academic and professional staff and their further education, as well as their integration into social processes and public life,
- by raising the School reputation, informing stakeholders and the public about its activities and study programmes.

The School monitors and ensures the achievement of the following standards:

Standard No. 1

Successfully fulfilling its mission in the Slovenian and international higher education area. By achieving organizational and implementation objectives, it ensures quality higher education activities and their development. In doing so, it specifically monitors:

- a) the coherence of strategic planning, taking into account the mission, national and European orientations;
- b) the feasibility and integrity of strategic planning;
- c) the adequacy of the method for verifying the implementation of strategic planning.

Standard No. 2

Internal organization ensures the participation of higher education teachers and associates, researchers and non-pedagogical staff, students and other stakeholders in the management and development of the higher education institution activities.

Stakeholders are represented in the bodies of the higher education institution and exercise their rights and obligations.

Standard No. 3

The School demonstrates high-quality scientific, professional and research activity and related important achievements in its fields and disciplines. The quality, development and progress of scientific, professional and research activities are monitored.

Standard No. 4

The practical training of students in the work environment within professional study programmes is well organized and carried out. The resources for its implementation are provided. In doing so, the following is monitored:

- a) systemic regulation of practical training of students and its implementation;
- b) satisfaction of participants in practical training.

Standard No. 5

The School monitors the needs for knowledge and employment needs. It provides information on employment opportunities in the fields with regard to the skills or learning outcomes of graduates. In doing so, it monitors:

- a) cooperation of the School with the environment or of the employers and its graduates;
- b) development of a Career Center, Alumni Club or other organized forms.

Standard No. 6

The internal quality system enables a closed quality cycle in all areas of operation of the higher education institution by ensuring that:

- a) stakeholders are aware of the importance and role of the internal quality system;
- b) regular annual self-evaluations are carried out and recorded in the annual self-evaluation report, which includes measures to address any deficiencies identified in the completed self-evaluation period and an improvement plan for the future self-evaluation period, as well as an overview of the realization of the measures adopted on the basis of the previous self-evaluation report;
- c) the internal quality system enables and encourages development, integration and modernization of educational, scientific, professional and research activities and of the impacts of this activity on the environment.

Standard No. 7

The School regularly informs the stakeholders and the public about study programmes and its activities. It monitors the availability, content, reliability, comprehensibility and accuracy of information on the activities of the higher education institution, and in particular information on study programmes, their implementation and scientific, professional and research activities in the fields and disciplines of these programmes.

2. HUMAN RESOURCES

Since the appropriate number, competence and structure of higher education teachers and associates, researchers and professional associates is required to ensure successful pedagogical, scientific-research, professional work and management of the School, and presents one of the quality indicators, the School:

- publishes international vacancies for higher education teachers, higher education associates and researchers,
- effectively and transparently implements the procedures for election to titles, in accordance with the provisions of the act governing the field of higher education, the Statute of the School, the Criteria for election to the titles of higher education teacher, researcher and higher education associate at the School, which exceed the minimum criteria for election to the titles of higher education teacher, researcher and higher education associate at higher education institutions as laid down by the by SQAA, thus encouraging better quality of pedagogical and scientific research work,
- encourages and offers assistance to its employees to continuously educate themselves inside and outside the School and to transfer the newly acquired knowledge into their work and share it with others and raise the standards of good practice,
- keeps appropriate records on the career development of higher education teachers and associates and non-pedagogical workers, on their training and education,
- enables and encourages the implementation of sabbatical years in accordance with the current available options of the School,
- encourages scientific research and pedagogical cooperation between members of the Academic Board and external staff,
- implements a system of personal annual interviews and surveys of employees and on this basis, monitors the state of organizational culture and climate among employees and takes measures to continuously improve them,

- based on the results of the student survey, evaluates higher education teachers and associates, which is an important aspect in the recruitment plan for the next academic year,
- acts socially responsible,
- duly elects members of the Senate from among the higher education teachers and researchers so that they are equally represented all fields of study and disciplines of the School.

The School monitors and ensures the achievement of the following standards:

Standard No. 8

The school ensures higher education teachers, associates and researchers for the quality performance of pedagogical, research and other work, so as to:

- a) ensure the pedagogical and professional development of higher education teachers and associates;
- b) monitor the scientific, professional and research achievements of higher education teachers and researchers;
- c) ensure that the criteria of the higher education institution for elections to titles and fields for elections at the School exceed the minimum SQAA criteria;
- č) ensure appropriate forms and scope of employment of higher education teachers and higher education associates.

Standard No. 9

The School ensures professional, technical and administrative staff (hereinafter: non-pedagogical staff) for effective assistance and counselling, which includes:

- a) the relevant types and adequacy of assistance and counselling to students and other stakeholders;
- b) the appropriate number, field of work and educational structure of non-pedagogical staff;
- c) education and training of non-pedagogical staff.

3. STUDENTS

Due to the focus on students and their quality education, the School ensures the following:

- through a tutoring system, it systematically offers individual assistance to students during their studies and in their academic development,
- it gives students the opportunity or ensures that they are involved in scientific research and professional activities at the School,
- it encourages and provides assistance in the organized acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities at other higher education institutions in Slovenia and abroad,
- it recognizes the knowledge, skills and abilities acquired at other higher education institutions and non-formally acquired knowledge,
- it organizes compulsory practical training in a work environment outside the School for professional study programmes,
- through the project office, it provides assistance in student exchanges, encourages students to participate in exchanges and seeks to increase the number of exchanges;
- it provides students with information through various information channels for smooth and efficient studying as well as with information related to the operation of the higher education institution and the internal quality system,
- it conducts surveys among students in order to monitor student satisfaction with the services of the School and to determine the expectations and needs of students

regarding the implementation of studies and studying conditions, and to determine the quality of educational activities (material conditions, student office, library, etc.) and of higher education teachers and associates at the School,

- based on the results of the student survey, it updates the curricula and the number of credit points of the courses;
- it plans and achieves student learning outcomes and graduates' competencies,
- it updates study programmes or their implementation as appropriate on the basis of self-evaluation reports and external evaluations,
- it regularly monitors the progress of students in study programmes and the duration of studies and takes appropriate measures in case of insufficient advancement of students,
- it encourages students to become active in the Student Council and in extracurricular activities,
- it regularly includes student representatives in the activities of the School related to student affairs, and ensures the participation of students in the evaluation and updating of the content and implementation of the activities of the higher education institution,
- it encourages students to actively participate in the bodies of the School (Academic Assembly, Senate, Administrative Board, etc.), and ongoing cooperation with other students,
- it maintains an Alumni Club, which ensures connections and communication between graduates and higher education teachers and School associates, allowing the monitoring of graduates' employability that can be used as feedback by the School when determining the number of available enrolment places and updating and developing new programmes,
- it has a Career Centre, through which career counselling and career guidance of students takes place,
- it provides library and information support to students,
- it encourages the influx of foreign students to the School and provides appropriate programs and infrastructure for their rapid integration into our environment,
- it organizes or enables various extracurricular activities in order to enrich student life and the entire School and contribute to the development of graduates' skills.

The School monitors and ensures the achievement of the following standards:

Standard No. 10

The School provides students with appropriate assistance and counseling, which includes

- a) taking into account the diversity and needs of students in establishing and determining the content of counselling or assistance;
- b) timely and effective notification of students;
- c) monitoring student satisfaction with the services.

Standard No. 11

Students have appropriate conditions for quality studies, scientific, professional and research work and for extracurricular activities. This is ensured by:

- a) implementing the studies and providing the conditions thereof in accordance with the needs and expectations of the students;
- b) enabling relevant professional and research work of the students;
- c) providing appropriate conditions for extracurricular activities.

Standard No. 12

The School protects the rights of students by:

- a) ensuring the proper activities of the School bodies in this field;
- b) ensuring mechanisms to identify and prevent discrimination against vulnerable groups of students and discrimination based on students' personal circumstances and beliefs;
- c) cooperation of student representatives in the School bodies with other students.

Standard No. 13

Students participate in the evaluation and updating of the contents and School activities, whereby:

- a) students participate in the formulation of the mission, strategic orientations, in the self-evaluation of the School and study programmes and in their modification;
- b) students regularly and directly participate in self-evaluation and updating of activities.

4. MATERIAL CONDITIONS

The School is provided with premises and equipment that offer appropriate material conditions and a good basis for high quality implementation of all School activities.

The School:

- ensures that the premises and equipment are regularly upgraded and that they correspond to the number of enrolled students, the way of implementation of study programmes and the needs of staff,
- enables all stakeholders, in particular the students, to use modern information and communication and other learning technologies and equipment necessary for the implementation of the School activities;
- ensures appropriate library and information services, access to library materials from the fields of study programmes, scientific-research and professional fields of the School;
- makes its best effort to ensure that study materials and electronic databases correspond to the content and level of study programmes;
- ensures that the equipment is suitable for students with special requirements,
- regularly prepares plans for the provision of financial, material and other resources necessary for its operation for the accreditation period, and verifies their implementation.

The School monitors and ensures the achievement of the following standards:

Standard No. 14

The School provides suitable premises and equipment for carrying out its activities. The premises and equipment meet the needs for pedagogical, scientific, professional and research activities, the way of implementation of study programmes, the number of enrolled students and the needs of staff.

Standard No. 15

The students with different forms of disabilities are accommodated accordingly, which includes:

- a) adaptations of premises and equipment;
- b) accessibility of communication and information;
- c) adaptations of study materials and implementation of studies.

Standard No. 16

Adequate and stable financial resources are provided for the implementation and further development of higher education activity. The School prepares appropriate financial plans and is successful in their implementation.

Standard No. 17

The library of the higher education institution has appropriate academic, professional and scientific literature and provides high quality library services. This includes:

- a) the adequacy of academic, professional and scientific literature;
- b) library stock, availability of materials, information and bibliographic support and access to databases;
- c) professional assistance of library staff;
- č) development of library activity in the field of study programmes.

5. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT, MODIFICATION, UPDATING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

In internal quality assurance and improvement, implementation, development and modification of study programmes, the School takes into account the following standards:

Standard No. 1

The School evaluates and updates the content, composition and implementation of the study programme in accordance with the following:

- a) regular self-evaluation of the study programme enables its development and modernisation by maintaining its topicality and creating a high quality educational environment;
- b) the methods and procedures for collecting information or proposals for modifications of the study programme and their analysis are regulated;
- c) the School informs the stakeholders appropriately about the implementation of the planned tasks or about the results and findings in the self-evaluation of the study programme.

Standard No. 2

The implementation of tasks planned on the basis of the results of the study programme self-evaluation is evident from the self-evaluation reports.

The following is ensured in the implementation of the tasks related to the self-evaluation of the study programme:

- involvement of stakeholders in the adoption of improvement measures, monitoring of their implementation and the production of self-evaluation reports, and
- closing of quality cycle.

Standard No. 3

The School reviews and improves study programmes taking into account the development of academic, scientific, professional and research fields and disciplines (development of the profession) in which it is placed, evaluating the achievement of set objectives, competencies and learning outcomes, the needs for knowledge and objectives of the society - depending on the type and cycle of the study programme. Modifications and updates consider the basic objectives of the programme and maintain the coherence of its contents or courses.

Despite its development and modifications, the study programme shall remain complete in terms of content and composition, the connections between curricula and syllabi with the objectives and competencies of the study programme are maintained, and the contents remain connected along the horizontal and vertical axis, taking into account Article 17 of the

SQAA Criteria for Accreditation and External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes.

Standard No. 4

The manner, form and scope of the implementation of the study programme correspond to its content, composition, type and cycle, so that its contents, implementation practices and resources (personnel and material) are adapted with regard to quality and in such a way that they can be ensured. In the implementation of a study programme, special attention is paid to:

- a) methods and forms of teaching, their development and adaptation (including resources) to:
 - different groups of students,
 - different study needs and methods of study (student-centered studying and teaching),
 - the needs of higher education teachers and associates;
- b) the number of completed contact hours determined by the study programme, or of other forms of work with students;
- c) study materials and their adaptation to teaching methods and forms and to the needs of students;
- č) work of students in scientific, professional, research projects, taking into account the provisions of the law governing the field of higher education,
- d) practical education of students;
- e) the adequacy of schedules, the number of consulting hours or the availability of higher education teachers and associates to students;
- f) suitability and qualification of staff in accordance with human resources standards 8 and 9;
- g) material conditions related to the implementation of the study programme, in accordance with the standards No. 14, 15, 16 and 17 in the field of material conditions.

Standard No. 5

The study process ensures the protection of the rights of stakeholders, which includes the following:

- a) that all students who regularly fulfil the obligations set out in the study programme are enabled to smoothly advance and complete their studies;
- b) that all higher education teachers and associates are guaranteed their autonomy in teaching and research and assistance and counselling in developing their career paths;
- c) that stakeholders are informed in accordance with the standard no 7. on School operation.

III. QUALITY MONITORING AND ASSURANCE MECHANISMS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Article 6

General and specific quality monitoring and assurance mechanisms are in place.

General quality monitoring and assurance mechanisms include planning and reporting, external evaluations and self-evaluations, accreditations, extensions of accreditations etc.

Specific quality monitoring and assurance mechanisms aim at assuring the quality of personnel, students, studies, support for students, research and other work etc.

1. GENERAL MECHANISMS

Article 7

(General mechanisms)

The School provides planning and reporting through its **annual work plan (work programme) and annual report** within the prescribed period in accordance with the adopted Strategic Plan and the requirements of the competent ministry. The basis for the annual work plan are the strategic objectives and priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan and the measures for improvement outlined in the annual report and the self-evaluation report. The annual work plan covers the planning of all School activities.

The annual plan and the annual report of the School are adopted by the Administrative Board and the Senate on the basis of a preliminary opinion of the Quality and Evaluation Commission.

Internal evaluations or self-evaluations are carried out annually and always refer to the entire School operation and to all its study programmes. A respective annual self-evaluation procedure is completed by adoption of a final version of annual self-evaluation report at the Senate upon proposal of the Quality and Evaluation Commission.

The School is subject to **external evaluations** by SQAA in the procedures of re-accreditation or extraordinary evaluation.

The School can request an external evaluation, which can also be performed by foreign authorized agencies. This may apply to an institutional or a programme evaluation and accreditation in an international environment. In such cases, accreditations and evaluations are carried out in accordance with internationally recognized standards and procedures used by a specific foreign organization implementing the accreditation or evaluation.

Planning, formulation and accreditation of new study programmes are carried out in accordance with the standards and criteria set out in the acts listed in paragraph 2 of Article 1 of this Quality Manual. When planning and formulating a new study programme, the Dean appoints a work group that coordinates the implementation of all activities required in order for an application for accreditation to be submitted to SQAA. The opinions of internal and external stakeholders of the School, especially employers, and the performed statistical analyses or data on the development needs of the economic, social and cultural environment are taken into account. The work group submits the documentation on the new study programme to the Quality and Evaluation Commission, which submits it to the Senate, which makes the final decision on the adoption of a new study programme. After adoption by the Senate, the documentation on the new study programme is submitted to SQAA.

Modifications of existing study programmes are implemented in accordance with the standards and criteria set out in the acts referred to in paragraph 2 of Article 1 of this Quality Manual. Should the needs for modifications of an accredited study programme arise, the Dean appoints a work group that analyzes the existing study programme and prepares a diagnosis of the existing situation on the basis of the collected data, prepares possible solutions and proposes an action plan for implementing the necessary modifications. Students also participate in the procedure of modification of an existing study programme through their representative in the work group. The work group submits the proposed modifications of the study programme to the Quality and Evaluation Commission, which submits it to the Senate, which makes the final decision on the adoption of the proposed modifications to the study programme. After its adoption by the Senate, the School submits the documentation on the modifications of the study programme to SQAA. A modified study programme is monitored on

an annual basis in the same way as a new study programme with study programme self-evaluation procedures of the School.

The School must obtain **re-accreditation** from SQAA in legally prescribed deadlines and in the manner prescribed by law in order to ensure the public validity of study programmes and diploma documents. The planning and implementation of these activities must be in line with the procedure prescribed by SQAA.

Article 8 (Annual Self-evaluation Report of the School)

Every year, the Quality and Evaluation Commission, with the help of professional associates, students and other relevant stakeholders, prepares a proposal for the annual self-evaluation report on monitoring and quality assurance of SASS, which is presented and submitted to the School Senate for adoption. Students participate in the self-evaluation activities of the School, make suggestions for improvements and further development, and the School addresses their suggestions accordingly and takes them into account as appropriate. Students also participate in the process of evaluation of the implementation and modification of study programmes. Prior to final adoption by the Senate, the proposal for self-evaluation report is discussed by the Academic Assembly and the Student Council. The self-evaluation report adopted by the Senate is presented to the Board of Trustees and the Strategic Conference (when convened) for consideration.

Self-evaluation report is prepared in accordance with the standards for evaluation of activities of higher education institutions and study programmes specified in the SQAA criteria.

The purpose of the self-evaluation report is primarily to monitor and improve quality based on the annual report for the previous year, data analysis (enrolment, student surveys, graduate surveys, internship surveys, employee survey analysis, etc.) and calculated output indicators of the Strategic Plan.

The self-evaluation report displays the implementation of tasks based on the results of the self-evaluation report for the last completed self-evaluation period and the action plan for the future self-evaluation period. It is particularly evident from the self-evaluation report that the higher education institution assesses the following:

- contents of study programmes, their modification and modernisation,
- adequacy of the implementation of study programmes,
- student performance (progress, advancement, acquisition of competencies or learning outcomes ...),
- scientific, professional and research work of the higher education institution,
- adequacy and diversity of material and human resources and financial performance

and that it

- records identified shortcomings, errors and suggestions for improvements,
- eliminates the identified shortcomings and errors and improves the quality of academic, scientific, professional and research activities and other activities of the institute,
- analyses its achievements.

The self-evaluation report brings together all the collected data and indicators, on the basis of which it is possible to perform a critical assessment, verify the implementation of the Strategic Plan and strategic objectives of the School, determine stakeholder satisfaction with internal quality system and prepare necessary solutions for improvement and action plans, which enables all stakeholders to monitor the changes in the operation of the School and in the implementation of study programmes.

The self-evaluation report contains the following:

- evaluation of the entire activity of the School and
- evaluation of the implementation and modification of all study programmes.

Self-evaluation of a study programme and related tasks focus in particular on:

- updating the content of the study programme,
- assessing the adequacy of the implementation of the study programme, methods and forms of teaching activities and the activities of students,
- evaluation of students' workload, their progress, completion of studies and publicly valid documents,
- comparing the achieved competencies or learning outcomes with the planned ones or examining the justification of their modifications,
- examining the adequacy of verification and assessment of knowledge,
- assessment of the conditions for studying, study environment and advisory services,
- assessing the expectations, needs and satisfaction of students, higher education teachers and associates, and external stakeholders,
- identification of knowledge needs and employment needs on the market,
- analysing enrolment, advancement and completion of studies,
- assessment of scientific, professional and research activities and the topicality and scope of achievements in the field of study programme.

The School collects and analyses the information for the annual self-evaluation report from various sources:

- student surveys,
- internship surveys,
- employee surveys,
- graduate surveys,
- information collected through relevant external stakeholders,
- information collected through formal and informal interviews with staff and students,
- information collected at various meetings with students and staff,
- reports collected through the implementation of the tutoring system,
- feedback from participating organizations, practice mentors and providers of practical training at the School and in companies,
- statistical analyses,
- School activity evaluations,
- Other sources.

The self-evaluation report is published on the website of the School and thus available to all stakeholders of the School.

When collecting and publishing data on quality, the rules on personal data protection are taken into account.

2. SPECIFIC MECHANISMS

Article 9

(Specific Quality Monitoring and Assurance Mechanisms)

The quality of staff, study processes, student achievements and satisfaction, student assistance, research and other activities is ensured through specific mechanisms in addition to the other mechanisms listed in this Quality Manual. The specific mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of quality include, but are not limited to, the following:

(International) vacancy notices

The School publishes a vacancy notice on relevant domestic and foreign portals and websites when a higher education teacher, associate or researcher is needed. Vacancy notices published internationally enable the acquisition of the best staff and prevent narrowing the personnel selection of the School.

Habilitation procedures

Habilitation procedures at the School are carried out in accordance with the SQAA criteria and the internal acts of the School. They are a mechanism of the School for monitoring and verification of scientific, technical and teaching performance of teachers and researchers and they encourage the quality of work. They are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the School Statute and the Criteria for Election to the Titles of Higher Education Teacher, Researcher and Higher Education Associate.

Annual personal interview, individual annual report and annual work plan of an employee

Personal annual interviews monitor the progress in the quality of work, professional and personal development of individual employees. They are carried out in accordance with this Quality Manual and other relevant internal acts of the School.

All employees of the School prepare individual annual work plans and annual reports which they submit to the Dean as the basis for annual personal interviews and the assessment of employees. The form of individual annual plans and reports is determined by the Dean.

Employee and associate surveys on organizational climate and satisfaction

Primary data on organizational culture is obtained from employees or School associates by methods of qualitative or quantitative data collection (e.g. by questionnaires, annual personal interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus groups). This way, we obtain information on the extent in which the values of the School are reflected in everyday activities. We monitor the behaviour toward key stakeholders, employee commitment, cooperation between different groups of employees (teachers, non-teaching staff, managers, etc.), the quality of interpersonal relationships, motivation and other aspects of organizational culture. The purpose of organizational culture monitoring is to improve working conditions, employee relations, commitment and employee satisfaction.

Assistance that the School provides to higher education teachers, associates and non-teaching staff in the development of their career path

The School plans include the education and training of higher education teachers and associates and non-teaching staff. The School keeps appropriate records and evidence on these activities.

Training of teachers and of research and administrative staff takes place inside and outside of the School. The Dean, assisted by legal and personnel services, is responsible for meaningful participation in training and for appropriate qualifications of employees.

Tutoring system

The tutoring system of the SASS is defined in the Rules on the Tutoring System at the SASS. Tutoring improves the rate of advancement of students to higher years, the rate of finishing the studies and the quality of acquired knowledge. It enables to systematically provide assistance to the students in their studies and academic pursuits as well as in their personal growth. The tutoring system also promotes the integration of students entering our environment from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Career centre

SASS career centre operates within the Student and Academic Affairs Office. It provides enrolment candidates and students with information about studies, study paths, study practices, international exchanges and employment opportunities. It ensures in-depth career counselling, trains students for job searching and career planning, connects students and employers, monitors career paths of graduates and the like. This influences the quality of decisions to study, increases the performance of study path courses, of finishing the studies and of employment of graduates.

Student surveys

Student surveys are a part of regular annual monitoring of the quality of School's activities, the implementation of study programmes, individual courses, higher education teachers and associates, and general aspects of the study process. They aim to improve studying conditions, School activities, teaching and professional activities. They are used as a basis for implementation of habilitation procedures and annual personal interviews. The report on the results of the survey is also one of the starting points for the discussion on the quality of studies within the bodies of the School (Student and Academic Affairs Commission, Quality and Evaluation Commission, Senate, Academic Assembly, Student Council, etc.).

Enrolment analysis

By collecting and processing available enrolment data, the School monitors the enrolment in study programmes, student demographics and trends. The School uses the report on the findings as feedback in the management of the enrolment policy, in the improvement of programmes and integration into the environment.

Analysis of graduates' career paths

Monitoring of graduates aims to establish their employability, their career path course immediately after graduating and to evaluate the completed study programme. Monitoring of graduates is ensured with surveys among graduates. The survey provides feedback from graduates on the acquired knowledge and competencies, achieved learning objectives of the study programme and their suitability for professional and personal development, on higher education teachers and associates, on employment and employability and on satisfaction with the studies.

The report on the results of the survey is also one of the starting points for the discussion on the quality of studies within the bodies of the School (Quality and Evaluation Commission, Senate, Academic Assembly, Student Council, etc.). Analyses and findings are used to improve study programmes and School operation.

Monitoring the implementation of study programmes

Monitoring of the implementation is ongoing and periodic. The Vice-dean for student and academic affairs and Quality and Evaluation Commission are the main bodies in charge of ongoing monitoring. The School constantly collects feedback and opinions, which serve as a basis for the necessary modifications of study programmes, organization, implementation of education and School resources. All relevant internal and external stakeholders of the School, and students in particular, participate in the process of study programme monitoring. Feedback from stakeholders is presented at the meetings of the Quality Commission.

Course coordinators and lecturers must coordinate the implementation of the course with higher education associates.

Implementation monitoring is performed with various instruments and analyses, in particular with the following:

- planning the implementation of the course,
- self-evaluation report,
- monitoring the actual workload of students,
- monitoring the achievement of the expected competencies of students,
- surveys among students,
- surveys among employees,
- surveys among stakeholders involved in the implementation of internships,
- enrolment analysis,
- analysis of reports collected on the basis of the implementation of the tutoring system,
- research among graduates,
- monitoring the communication of all participants in the study process.

Extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities of the SASS consist of excursion programs, public discussions, social events and additional education that proceed outside of regular study programmes. Their fundamental purpose is to enrich the studies and the life of students and of the entire School. This way, the School complements the study programmes and contributes to the development of competencies of students, graduates and other stakeholders.

Provision of library and IT support

The library information system is based on the SASS Library, which operates in Nova Gorica and Ljubljana. The School ensures the adequacy of study literature, the stock of the library and the availability of materials, information support and access to databases, employs librarians with appropriate education and ensures their further training so that they are able to advise and help students and other stakeholders. In this way, the School makes sure that the library activity is constantly being developed.

The library operation is evaluated with student surveys.

Monitoring of research activities

The quality assurance of research activities financed by public funds is carried out in accordance with the rules of Slovenian Research Agency, which include a review of applied programs and projects, reporting on their implementation and evaluation of research achievements. The quality of international research projects is controlled by the financiers in accordance with calls and their evaluation procedures. The quality assurance of research and development activities for the market is controlled directly by clients. Measurable research achievements are monitored through publicly accessible base SICRIS according to the criteria of Slovenian Research Agency and through individual annual reports of employees.

Monitoring of the implementation of research activities is ongoing and periodic.

The Vice-dean for scientific and research activities, project managers and the Dean are responsible for continuous monitoring of all ongoing research projects.

Monitoring is carried out on the basis of the SASS Rules on scientific research and other relevant internal acts of the School.

Awards and recognitions

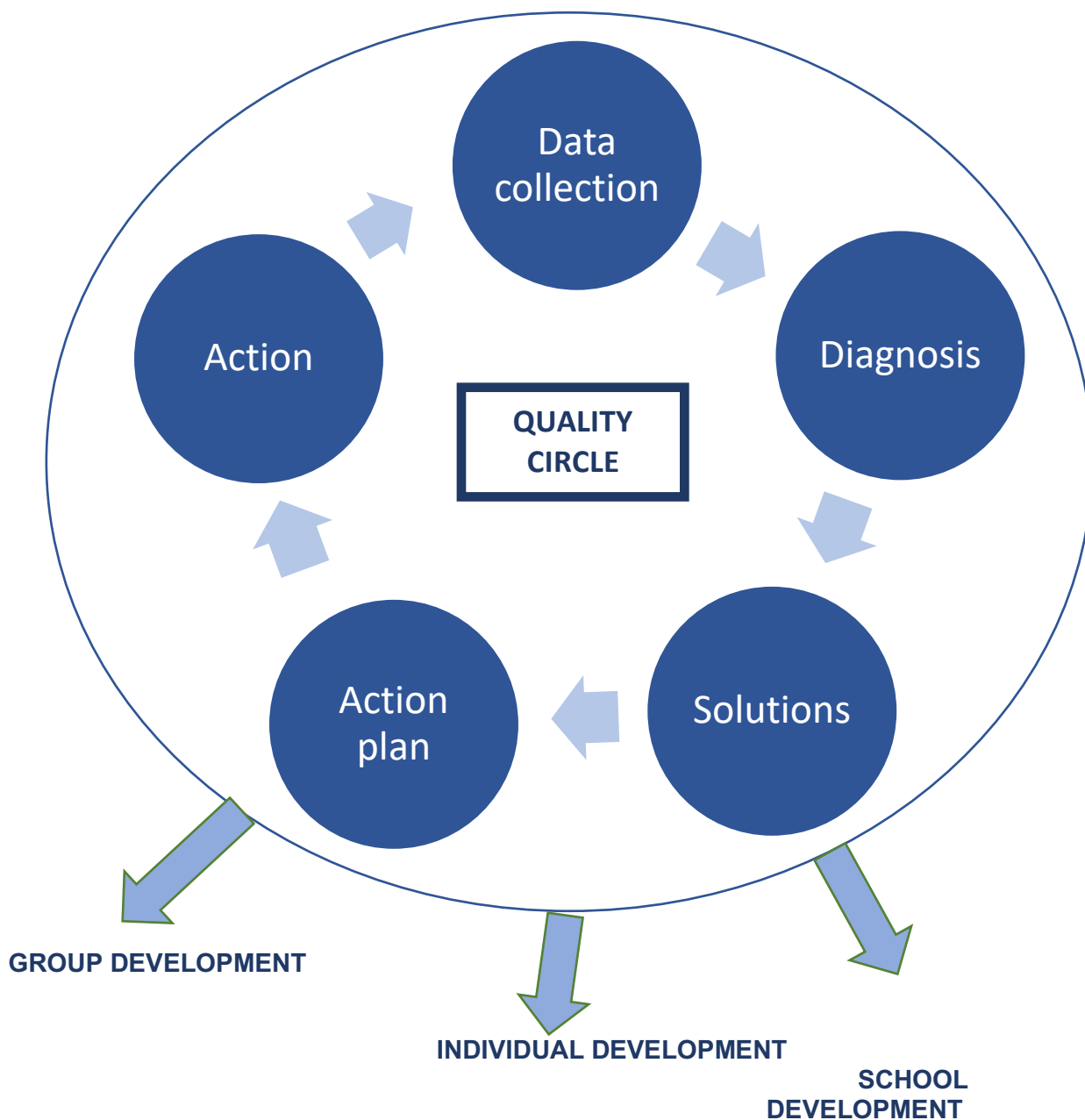
SASS gives awards and recognitions to the employees, students and external associates in accordance with the Rules on Gosar awards. SASS gives awards for excellent scientific and academic achievements and encourages employees and students to excel at their work.

Article 10 (Quality circle)

All the processes within the School activities must run in accordance with the basic quality assurance mechanism, inside a circle of procedures and ways for realizing the vision of the School.

The circle consists of the following elements:

- data collection,
- diagnosis,
- solutions,
- action plan,
- action.



IV. MANAGERS OF QUALITY MONITORING AND ASSURANCE AT THE SCHOOL

Article 11 (Responsible Bodies)

In accordance with the provisions of the SASS Statute and other acts of the School, all SASS employees and students, and especially the Dean and vice deans, the Senate and its working

bodies, the Administrative Board, the Student Council and the Strategic Conference are responsible for quality monitoring and assurance.

Article 12
(Dean)

Tasks of the Dean regarding the quality are in particular:

- development of quality monitoring and assurance mechanisms,
- implementation of regular of quality monitoring and assurance mechanisms at the School level and in particular: open calls, implementation of surveys among students, employees and graduates, synchronising the enrolment in accordance with the need for knowledge and employment possibilities, tutoring, improvement of administrative work and training of administrative employees,
- coordinating the preparation of annual self-evaluation reports and reporting on achievements to the Senate, the Academic Assembly and the Board of Trustees at least once a year, if necessary, also to the Strategic Conference,
- proposing and adopting measures to improve the quality within his responsibilities,
- nominating four members of the Quality and Evaluation Commission to the SASS Senate,
- convening the Strategic Conference.

Article 13
(Administrative Board)

In accordance with its competences based on the SASS Statute and other rules, the Administrative Board adopts financial measures for further quality promotion. The Administrative Board discusses the report on School activities and the programme of activities once a year.

Article 14
(Senate)

The School Senate is in charge of planning and quality of teaching, scientific and research and development activities.

At least once a year, the Senate discusses the self-evaluation report and adopts guidelines for improvement. The Senate elects the Quality and Evaluation Commission for regular quality monitoring and formulation of proposals.

After a preliminary discussion at the Strategic Conference, the Senate adopts a respective Strategic plan of SASS, generally for a period of five years, and its amendments.

Article 15
(Vice-dean for student and academic affairs)

Vice-dean for student and academic affairs is in charge of monitoring the quality of teaching activities in 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle study programmes. He is assisted by the Student and Academic Affairs Commission.

Article 16
(Vice-dean for scientific and research activities)

Vice-dean for student and academic affairs is in charge of monitoring the quality of SASS research groups and scientific research and development activities at SASS. He is assisted by the Commission for Scientific and Research Activities.

Article 17
(Quality and Evaluation Commission)

The Quality and Evaluation Commission (QEC) is a working body of the Senate which consists of:

- commission chairman,
- 1 member from among the higher education teachers or researchers appointed by the Senate on the proposal of the Dean,
- 1 member from among the higher education or research associates appointed by the Senate on the proposal of the Dean,
- 1 member from among the employees in administrative services appointed by the Senate on the proposal of the Dean,
- 1 member from among the students, appointed by the Senate on the proposal of the Student Council.

QEC is responsible for standards, quality and improvement of organization and implementation of education activities, for assuring and raising the quality of study programmes, for a suitable study experience of the students and for the quality of all other aspects of School activities.

For this purpose, the Quality and Evaluation Commission carries out the following activities in particular:

- analyses the proposals for implementation of new study programmes and the updates of existing study programmes;
- monitors and provides yearly analyses of student workload and proposes the curriculum amendments in terms of student workload. It monitors and promotes innovation in the implementation of study programmes and dissemination of good practice in the fields of teaching and learning as well as in quality management processes.
- It organizes regular self-evaluations of School activities and self-evaluation of all study programmes (annually). The students are particularly involved in the self-evaluation procedures.
- It keeps records of student enrolment, their advancement, completion of studies and employment or continuing of education – it assesses the data in terms of strategic development of study programmes as well as in terms of School's strategy and organization.
- It monitors the mechanisms that provide feedback from the students on the implementation and content of study programmes, teaching and other School activities.

- It monitors the cooperation with foreign partners.
- It regularly monitors, reviews and improves the quality, competitiveness and efficiency of teaching, scientific, research and professional activities.

A regular annual self-evaluation report plays a key role in the process of regular monitoring.

Within its working methods, the Quality and Evaluation Commission (QEC):

- reports and provides counselling to the Academic Assembly, the Senate and the Dean in the field of management and improvement of academic standards and quality of study programmes and in the field of studies and teaching,
- manages and monitors the system of creation of new study programmes.
- assesses statistical data on advancement and success rate of students and monitors the activities prepared on the basis of proposals in self-evaluation reports,
- monitors the fulfilment of objectives in terms of given strategy,
- regularly cooperates with student representatives and other stakeholders and collects, analyses, evaluates and uses student evaluations to improve the quality of study programmes and teaching,
- promotes development of a good and innovative practice in study programmes.

In addition to collecting data from regular records of the School, the Quality and Evaluation Commission prepares the following questionnaires to collect the data needed for analysis:

- student surveys,
- internship surveys,
- employee surveys,
- graduate surveys,
- other surveys, if necessary, according to the requirements of the Strategic Plan.

Article 18 (Student Council)

The Student Council of the School monitors the implementation of education activities and makes proposals for improvements on the basis of the Statute. The Student Council participates in the self-evaluation activities, in the evaluations of study programmes and in the formation and modification of study programmes. It addresses the report on the quality of the School operations on an annual basis. The Student Council participates in habilitation procedures and gives opinions on the election of higher education teachers in accordance with the Statute of the School and with specific rules. The student representative proposed by the Student Council participates in the Quality and Evaluation Commission, which prepares and carries out student surveys about internships and teaching.

Article 19

(Academic Assembly and Board of Trustees)

The Academic Assembly and the Board of Trustees are informed about self-evaluation reports every year and use it as a basis to make proposals for quality improvement.

Article 20

(Strategic Conference)

The Strategic Conference is informed about the Self-evaluation reports and addresses the Strategic plan of the School and proposed amendments before adopting or amending the Strategic plan at a Senate meeting. On this basis, it defines the criteria that need to be followed and monitored in the pursuit of quality at the School through procedures of self-evaluation.

Article 21

(Lecturer or the course coordinator)

The lecturer or the course coordinator is responsible for the quality and successful implementation of teaching activities in the course and for the quality work of the higher education associate in the course.

Article 22

(Person in charge of internship)

The person in charge of internship is responsible for the quality of the implementation of the internship.

Article 23

(Final Provision)

This Manual shall enter into force on the day following its publication on the School website.

With the entry into force of this Quality Manual, the Quality Manual of School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica from 30 March 2012 shall cease to be valid.

prof. dr. Borut Rončević
Dean