

GENERAL PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS GIVING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The Estonian ENIC/NARIC (Academic Recognition Information Centre) evaluates foreign qualifications according to the Government of the Republic of Estonia Regulation No 89 of 6 April 2006 “Criteria and Procedures for Assessment and Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications and for Use of Title of Qualification Granted in Foreign Education System“.

In assessment and academic recognition the Estonian ENIC/NARIC is guided by the purposes and tasks of the NARIC Network of the European Commission and the ENIC Network of the Council of Europe and UNESCO and the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon, 1997) and the subsidiary documents.

The comparability of qualifications granted on the territory of the USSR before 20 August 1991 is established by the Government of the Republic of Estonia Regulation No 120. The qualifications not included in the regulation are assessed by the Estonian ENIC/NARIC.

1. The applicant for assessment

Anyone who holds a foreign higher education qualification, a qualification giving access to higher education or a credential certifying completion of a part of a postsecondary education programme at a foreign or international education institution may apply for assessment.

The request for assessment may also be submitted by an employer, by a higher education institution or by any other institution to which a foreign education credential has been presented.

2. The purpose of assessment

In the process of assessment a foreign qualification shall be compared to the qualifications in the Estonian education system.

The purpose of assessment is to establish a correspondence between the foreign qualification and a qualification within Estonian current system of education. The correspondence shall not be established if the qualification is not recognized in the country where it was granted or if it cannot be recognized in Estonia for some other reason.

The outcome of assessment enables the Estonian ENIC/NARIC to advise higher education institutions and employers and to make recommendations on:

- access to studies at the higher education institutions belonging to Estonian education system;
- access to the labour market in Estonia for people who have acquired their education in a foreign education system.

3. Required documents

3.1. If the holder of the qualification seeks assessment

Required documents:

- application (in Estonian, English or Russian);
- personal identity document;
- original diploma/certificate or a certified copy;
- authorized translation into Estonian, English or Russian if the diploma/certificate is not in one of these languages;
- original transcript and/or other additional documents or their certified copies;
- authorized translation into Estonian, English or Russian if the transcript or additional documents are not in one of these languages.

When seeking assessment for a higher education qualification, documents with supplements attesting to previous education, beginning with the first post-secondary qualification, should be attached.

The Estonian ENIC/NARIC may ask the applicant to supply any other related documents if they are relevant to the evaluation of the qualification and to establishing the correspondence.

3.2. If an educational institution or an employer seeks assessment

The educational institution or the employer, with the qualification holder's consent, shall submit the following documents to the Estonian ENIC/NARIC:

- all documents enumerated under 3.1. or their copies certified by the educational institution or the employer as "*KOOPIA ÕIGE*" ("TRUE COPY");
- a written request for assessment.

4. Assessment criteria

In assessment and establishing a correspondence the following criteria are taken into account:

- The educational or any other institution which has awarded the qualification

In the assessment the following criteria are considered: whether or not the home country of the institution has joined the relevant international agreements, the type of the institution, its status, accreditation or any other quality assessment decisions, and recognition by a competent authority in the home country.

- The qualification

In the assessment the following criteria are considered: the qualification and the level of education required by the programme completed, programme goals and content, specialization, learning outcomes and graduation requirements.

The formal rights of the holder of qualification for further studies or for access to the labour market in the system in which the qualification was issued are also considered.

In assessment the requirements for the completion of the same or a similar programme within the Estonian system of education are taken into account.

5. The outcome of the assessment

As a result of the assessment the Estonian ENIC/NARIC issues a written statement about the foreign qualification and the institution which has issued it, advising higher education institutions and employers as to the correspondence of the level of the foreign qualification to that within Estonian education system.

The Estonian ENIC/NARIC can make a recommendation for full recognition, partial recognition or for denial of recognition. In case of partial recognition or denial of recognition the applicant shall be notified in writing of the reasons for the decision, and recommendations for further studies in order to obtain a recognized qualification can be made.

If the recommendation is for partial recognition or to deny recognition, no correspondence to a qualification in the Estonian education system is established.

6. The status of the evaluation statement

The evaluation statement concerning a foreign educational qualification issued by the Estonian ENIC/NARIC is informative, giving advice both to the holder of qualification and to the higher education institution, the employer or any other institution to which the educational document confirming a foreign qualification is presented.

The final recognition decision about the foreign educational qualification rests with the higher education institution, the employer or, in the case of regulated professions, the respective competent recognition authority.

7. Application processing fees

The assessment of foreign educational qualifications by the Estonian ENIC/NARIC is free of charge.

8. Application processing deadlines

The Estonian ENIC/NARIC shall provide a written evaluation statement within 30 days, counted from the time all the necessary documents have been supplied. In case of delays in processing, the applicant shall be notified in writing of the reasons for the delay.

9. Appealing the assessment decision

The applicant has the right to appeal the outcome of the assessment of a foreign educational qualification if:

- assessment procedures have been violated;

- the applicant believes that the information contained in the evaluation statement is not correct;
- the applicant contests the decision regarding the comparability of the foreign qualification to the qualification in Estonian education system;
- the applicant contests the recommendation to recognize the qualification partially or to deny recognition.

The applicant shall file a written appeal with the Estonian ENIC/NARIC within 30 calendar days of the date of the decision, stating the reasons for the appeal.

10. Final clauses

The applicant has the right to request information from the Estonian ENIC/NARIC about the Estonian education system and the relevant legal instruments, including agreements with foreign countries, regulating the recognition of qualifications.

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