REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISË

AGJENCIA E SIGURIMIT TË CILËSISË NË ARSIMIN E LARTË

No. _____ Prot. Tirana, on ____.____.2026

OPEN CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
for the selection of members and alternate members of the Independent Complaints and Appeals Committee

1. Legal basis

This call is issued pursuant to:

a) Article 14, paragraphs 1 and 4, of Law No. 80/2015, "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania", as amended (hereinafter "Law No. 80/2015");

b) Articles 13, 14, 30, 31, 32 and 136, paragraph 1, of Law No. 44/2015, "Code of Administrative Procedures of the Republic of Albania" (hereinafter "CAP");

c) Points 4(a), 5, 6, 11(c), 17 and 21(dh) and (g) of Council of Ministers Decision No. 109, dated 15 February 2017, "On the organisation and functioning of the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the Accreditation Board, and on the determination of fees for quality assurance processes in higher education", as amended (hereinafter "CMD No. 109/2017");

ç) Standard 2.7 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter "ESG").

2. Subject of the call

The Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter "ASCAL"), as part of its efforts to strengthen mechanisms for transparency, impartiality and safeguarding the rights of higher education institutions in external quality assurance processes, hereby issues this open call for expressions of interest for the selection of members and alternate members of the Independent Complaints and Appeals Committee (hereinafter "the Committee").

3. Scope and duties of the Committee

3.1. The Committee examines complaints and appeals submitted by higher education institutions (hereinafter "HEIs") against decisions of the Accreditation Board on institutional accreditation and the accreditation of study programmes, solely with regard to:

a) whether the Accreditation Board complied with the accreditation procedure prescribed by the applicable laws and regulations during the process leading to the contested decision;

b) whether a conflict of interest existed for one or more members of the Accreditation Board who participated in the decision-making, pursuant to point 17 of CMD No. 109/2017 and Article 30 of the CAP.

3.2. The Committee does not reassess compliance with quality standards, the professional and academic judgement of external evaluation experts, or the substance of the Accreditation Board's decision, which, pursuant to Article 15, paragraph 2, of Law No. 80/2015, remains within the Board's competence.

3.3. The Committee issues a reasoned act stating whether the complaint or appeal is well-founded and forwards it to the Accreditation Board, which takes a decision pursuant to point 21(dh) of CMD No. 109/2017 and Article 136 of the CAP.

3.4. Review by the Committee does not prejudice the HEI's right to bring the matter before the competent court, pursuant to point 21(g) of CMD No. 109/2017 and the applicable legislation.

3.5. The Committee performs its functions independently and impartially, in accordance with the CAP and the ESG.

4. Composition of the Committee

4.1. The Committee consists of 3 (three) members, as follows:

a) **Category 1** – an international expert in quality assurance in higher education;

b) **Category 2** – an Albanian legal expert;

c) **Category 3** – a student enrolled in a third-cycle doctoral study programme, with experience or knowledge in quality assurance in higher education.

4.2. To ensure the Committee can function in cases of conflict of interest, objective inability to serve or a vacancy, alternate members for each category shall also be selected through this procedure.

4.3. Applicants shall specify in their application the category for which they are applying.

5. Eligibility criteria

5.1. **Category 1 – International expert in quality assurance in higher education**

The candidate must:

a) have higher education qualifications and experience in higher education or quality assurance;

b) have experience in external evaluation, accreditation, institutional or study-programme review, or other quality assurance processes;

c) have a very good command of English.

The following will be considered an advantage:

– experience working at one or more quality assurance agencies;

– experience in the evaluation of agencies or in processes related to ENQA or EQAR;

– experience in handling complaints, appeals, reviews or similar processes;

– knowledge of higher education quality assurance systems in different countries.

5.2. **Category 2 – Albanian legal expert**

The candidate must:

a) have completed university studies in law;

b) have experience in external evaluation, institutional or study-programme accreditation, or other quality assurance processes in higher education;

c) have knowledge or experience in administrative law, administrative procedure, public law or higher education legislation;

ç) be able to assess matters independently, objectively and impartially;

d) have a very good command of English.

The following will be considered an advantage:

– experience in higher education;

– experience in reviewing administrative complaints or in similar procedures;

– knowledge of the ESG and the European quality assurance framework.

5.3. **Category 3 – Student enrolled in a third-cycle doctoral study programme**

The candidate must:

a) be actively enrolled in a third-cycle doctoral study programme at the time of application;

b) have knowledge or documented experience in quality assurance in higher education;

c) have experience in at least one of the following areas: student representation, quality assurance structures, university governance, evaluation of study programmes or HEIs, or other activities related to higher education;

ç) be able to perform the role independently and impartially.

Experience as a student expert in quality assurance processes will be considered an advantage.

6. Independence, impartiality and conflict of interest

6.1. Committee members perform their duties in an individual and professional capacity and do not represent the institution or organisation where they work or study.

6.2. The following persons may not serve as Committee members:

a) current members of the Accreditation Board;

b) employees of ASCAL;

c) employees of the ministry responsible for education;

ç) persons in respect of whom other circumstances exist that may compromise their independence and impartiality in performing the role.

6.3. For each case, members shall declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

6.4. A member who was involved in the process that is the subject of the complaint or appeal, or who has a conflict of interest with the relevant HEI, shall not participate in the review of the case and shall be replaced by the alternate member from the same category, in accordance with Articles 31 and 32 of the CAP.

7. Term of membership and nature of engagement

7.1. Members and alternate members are selected for a three-year term, with the right to reapply and be reselected through an open procedure.

7.2. During the term of membership, a member's appointment may not be terminated because of positions, assessments or conclusions expressed while performing the role.

7.3. A member who is reviewing a case at the end of their term shall continue to serve solely until that case is concluded. For a Category 3 member, a change in academic status while a case is under review shall not prevent completion of the review.

7.4. The Committee convenes only when a complaint or appeal falling within the scope defined in Section 3 of this call is submitted. Members are engaged only for the cases they are called upon to review.

7.5. Before reviewing each case, members shall confirm in writing their independence, impartiality, absence of conflicts of interest and obligation to maintain confidentiality.

8. Application documentation

8.1. Candidates shall submit:

a) an application specifying the category for which they are applying;

b) an up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV);

c) copies of documents certifying the relevant qualifications;

ç) documents or information demonstrating the experience required for the relevant category;

d) a declaration concerning independence, impartiality and conflicts of interest in relation to higher education institutions in Albania and the Accreditation Board;

dh) for Category 3 candidates, confirmation of current enrolment in a third-cycle study programme.

8.2. ASCAL may request additional information or documentation solely to verify information declared in the application.

9. Evaluation and selection

9.1. Applications shall be evaluated on the basis of the criteria set out in this call. The evaluation shall take into account:

a) fulfilment of the mandatory criteria;

b) relevant experience and expertise for the category;

c) experience in quality assurance, where applicable;

ç) the ability to analyse and exercise independent judgement;

d) knowledge of the legal framework or the ESG, depending on the category;

dh) motivation to participate;

e) fulfilment of the requirements for independence and impartiality.

9.2. The evaluation and selection procedure shall be documented.

9.3. Committee members and alternate members shall be appointed by order of the Director of ASCAL, pursuant to point 6 of CMD No. 109/2017. Candidates shall be notified of the outcome after the procedure is completed. The composition of the Committee shall be published on ASCAL's official website.

10. Method and deadline for applications

10.1. The application and supporting documentation shall be submitted electronically to aplikime@ascal.al, with the subject line: "Application – Independent Complaints and Appeals Committee – Category [1/2/3]".

10.2. The application deadline is 9 November 2026, at 16:30.

10.3. Applications submitted after the deadline or without the required documentation will not be considered.

11. Personal data protection

Candidates' personal data will be processed solely for the purposes of this procedure, in accordance with the applicable personal data protection legislation.

12. Additional information

For questions or clarifications regarding the application procedure, candidates may contact ASCAL at info@ascal.al.

DIRECTOR GENERAL

Assoc. Prof. Anisa Subashi