On the basis of Article 48, Paragraph 1 of the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina ("Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina" Numbers 57/07 and 57/09), Articles 6 and 12 of the Statute of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance in Bosnia and Herzegovina ("Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina" Number 86/09) and in reference to Articles 1 and 3 of the Decision on Adoption of Documents Required for Further Implementation of the Bologna Process in BiH ("Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina", Number 13/08), the Director of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance upon obtaining approval of the Steering Board of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance in BiH given at _____ session, held on ______ 2010, issues

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

I GENERAL PART

Article 1
Subject Matter

Aiming at promotion, assurance and permanent improving of the quality in higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, providing information to the public about the quality of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, further implementation of the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina ("Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina“ Numbers 59/07 and 59/09), application of the adopted Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in BiH ("Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina“ Number 13/08) and development of higher education in general in accordance with the strategic goals set out in the Bologna Declaration and further development of this concept in BiH, this document establishes the criteria for accreditation of higher education institutions in BiH, a manner of conducting the assessment and quality review of higher
education institutions and procedures of the Agency upon conducted assessment and review of the quality of higher education institutions.

**Article 2**

**Application of the Criteria**

(1) The established criteria for accreditation shall be applied in all higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(2) Monitoring of the criteria application shall be performed by the competent ministries of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the competent department in the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(3) The assessment and review of the quality of higher education institutions shall be conducted by special commissions consisting of local and international experts to provide assessment and conduct quality review and give recommendations on accreditation of higher education institutions (hereinafter: the Commission) in a manner determined by the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

II CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

**Article 3**

**Significance of the Criteria**

The criteria for accreditation of higher education institutions represent the basis for establishment of internal and external quality assurance in higher education institutions and they are established in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in BiH („Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina“ Number 13/08).
Article 4
Criteria for Internal Quality Assurance

The criteria for internal quality assurance are as follows:

1. The Strategy of a Higher Education Institution
2. Internal Quality Assurance System
3. Procedures for quality assurance of study programmes
4. Procedures for students’ assessment
5. Quality of the teaching staff
6. Quality of resources
7. Information system
8. Presentation of information to the public

Article 5
Indicators of the Criteria Fulfillment

The indicators of the criteria fulfillment referred to in Article 4 are provided in Annex 1 of this document and they make its integral part.

III ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW OF THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Article 6
Commission

(1) The assessment and review of the quality in higher education institutions shall be conducted by the Commission referred to in Article 2, Paragraph 3 of this document.

(2) The Commission shall be appointed by the Agency at the proposal of the competent ministries of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the competent department in the Brcko District of BiH.

(3) A person who is placed on the established list of experts can be suggested and appointed as a member of the Commission pursuant to Article 49, indented paragraph 4 of the Framework Law on Higher Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with the Decision
on the Criteria for Selection of Domestic and International Experts to Provide Assessment and Conduct Quality Review and Give Recommendations on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes.

(4) The Decision on the Appointment of the Commission shall be issued by the Agency within 15 days from the day of submitting the proposal by the competent ministry or department of Brcko District BiH.

Article 7
Composition of the Commission

(1) A Commission composed of at least five members shall be appointed for the quality assessment and review of higher education institutions with the university status and it shall be comprised of the following members: two domestic experts – representatives of the academic community in BiH, one international expert, one expert - representative of the economy and practice and one student.

(2) A Commission composed of at least three members shall be appointed for quality assessment and review of higher education institutions with the college status and it shall be comprised of the following members: a representative of the academic community in BiH, one international expert and one expert - representative of the economy and practice.

(3) The number and composition of the Commission members may be adjusted to specific needs of the Higher Education Institution at the proposal and explanation of the competent ministry.

Article 8
Independence of the Commission Members

(1) In performance of the work related to assessment and review of the quality of higher education institutions, members of the Commission are obliged to act professionally and independently from any political and other influences which shall be specifically regulated by the Code of Conduct for Experts to Provide Assessment and Review of the Quality of Higher Education Institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
(2) The Code referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article shall be adopted by the Agency in consultation with higher education institutions and competent ministries of education in BiH and the competent department of Brcko District BiH.

**Article 9**

**Constitutional Session of the Commission**

The members of the Commission shall elect the Chairperson of the Commission from among representatives of the academic community in BiH by majority vote at the first constitutional session. The Chairperson shall coordinate the work of the Commission and make all necessary communication with the competent ministry of education, department of the Brcko District BiH, a Higher Education Institution subject to assessment and review of the quality and study programme and the Agency.

**Article 10**

**Conflict of Interest**

(1) The members of the Commission cannot be persons with conflicts of interest with reference to the Higher Education Institution subject to assessment and review of the quality and study programme.

(2) The circumstances which refer to the conflict of interest shall be regulated by the Code referred to in Article 8, Paragraph 2 of this document.

(3) In case of circumstances showing a conflict of interest which question the objectivity and impartiality of a Commission member, the member shall resign at his/her own initiative or he/she shall be suspended from the Commission at the proposal of the competent ministry of education, competent department of the Brcko District BiH.

(4) A new member of the Commission shall be appointed in a manner set out by Article 6 of this document.

**Article 11**

**Remuneration for the Work in the Commission**

(1) The members of the Commission shall have the right to remuneration for their work. The amount and modality of payment of the remuneration shall be determined by the BiH Council of Ministers
at the proposal of the Agency.

(2) Besides the remuneration for the work, the members of the Commission shall have the right to reimbursement of the costs for accommodation, food and travel.

(3) Reimbursements from Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article shall be borne by the Higher Education Institution.

**Article 12**

**Application for Accreditation**

(1) The Commission shall conduct assessment and review of the quality of Higher Education institution following the Higher Education Institution’s application for accreditation.

(2) The Higher Education Institution shall submit an application for accreditation to the competent ministry of education or department of the Brcko District BiH, in a manner prescribed by the Republic of Srpska’s Law on Higher Education, cantonal laws on higher education and the Law on Higher Education of the Brcko District BiH.

(3) The Higher Education Institution shall submit a report on self-evaluation of the higher education institution together with the application for accreditation.

**Article 13**

**Justification of the Application**

Following examination of the justification and completeness of applications for accreditation, the competent ministry of education shall submit to the Agency a request for the Commission appointment with a proposal of members of the Commission in accordance with Article 6 of this document.

**Article 14**

**Appointment of the Commission**

The Decision on the appointment of the Commission from Article 6 shall be submitted by the Agency to the competent ministry of
education or department of the Brcko District BiH, the Higher Education Institution and members of the Commission.

**Article 15**

**Work of the Commission**

The Experts’ Commission shall conduct the assessment and review of the quality in three phases, which are as follows:

1. analysis of the self-evaluation report of the Higher Education Institution;
2. visit to the Higher Education institution;
3. drawing up a report on assessment and review of the quality of the Higher Education Institution;

**Article 16**

**Self-evaluation Report**

(1) The self-evaluation report of the Higher Education Institution which can be published on the Web page by the Higher Education Institution should contain at least the following elements: introduction with description and the actual situation of the Higher Education institution, considering the criteria for accreditation of the higher education institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(2) A proposal of the form and minimum elements of the contents of the self-evaluation report are provided in Annex 2 of this document.

**Article 17**

**Visit to the Higher Education Institution**

(1) After examination and analysis of the self-evaluation report of the Higher Education Institution, the Commission (a Ministry/the Agency) shall inform the Higher Education Institution about the plan of the Commission’s visit for the purpose of conducting assessment and review of the Higher Education Institution and the study programme.

(2) All Commission members shall take part in the visit to the Higher Education Institution.

(3) The visit to the Higher Education Institution shall last from two to five days depending on the need to confirm the self-evaluation report
or verify fulfillment of the criteria for accreditation of the Higher Education Institution.

(4) During the visit to the Higher Education Institution, aiming at assessment and review of the Higher Education Institution, the Commission shall organize a meeting with the management of the Higher Education Institution, academic and administrative staff and student representatives of all three cycles.

**Article 18**

**Report on Assessment and Quality Review**

(1) Following completed visit to the Higher Education Institution, the Commission shall make a report and review of the quality which summarizes the analysis of the self-evaluation report and the factual situation established by the visit of the Commission.

(2) The Report referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article contains the assessment of the fulfillment of criteria and opinion of the Commission on quality of the higher education institution.

(3) The Commission shall assess the fulfillment of each criterion providing description with conclusion and justification of the following:

a) criterion fully met,

b) criterion substantially met,

c) criterion partially met and

d) criterion not met.

(4) In the process of the report development, the Commission shall provide a part which refers to the factual situation of the Higher Education Institution for comments, suggestions and supplements.

(5) Final report of the Commission shall be submitted to the competent ministry, the Higher Education Institution and the Agency.

(6) Form and content of the report referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article shall be determined by the Agency in consultation with the
competent ministries of education or department of Brcko District BiH.

**Article 19**  
**Recommendation of the Agency**

(1) The Agency shall analyze the report within 30 days from the date of receiving the report from Paragraph 1 of Article 18 and based on the report of the Commission, it shall provide recommendation to the competent ministry of education or the competent department of the Brcko District BiH on accreditation of the Higher Education Institution.

(2) The recommendation from Paragraph 1 of this Article shall consider the assessment of criteria fulfillment from the report and the opinion of the Commission and it shall be issued according to the following:

a) Full or substantial fulfillment of all criteria;

b) Partial fulfillment of up to 4 criteria – recommendation for granting accreditation for a limited period;

c) Non-fulfillment of one or more or a partial fulfillment of more than 4 criteria – recommendation for rejecting the accreditation application;

(3) The report of the Commission and recommendation of the Agency shall be obligatorily published on the Web page of the Agency.

**IV REGISTER OF ACCREDITED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Article 20**  
**Decision on Accreditation**

(1) The competent ministry of education or department of the Brcko District BiH, based on the Commission’s report and the Agency’s recommendation as well as other information about the Higher Education Institution which is available to the ministry on the basis of official records shall issue:

(a) a decision on accreditation,
(b) a decision on accreditation for a limited period or
(c) a decision on rejection of the accreditation application

(2) Decision on accreditation shall be issued for up to four years, while conditional accreditation shall be issued for a period of one year at most.

(3) The Higher Education Institution shall be obliged to submit a new application for accreditation at least six months before expiry of the decision.

Article 21
Entry in the State Register

(1) The Decision on accreditation and Decision on accreditation for a limited period shall be delivered to the Agency by the competent ministry or department of the Brcko District BiH for making an entry in the State Register of Accredited Higher Education Institutions.

(2) The Agency shall also ensure publishing of the State Register of Accredited Higher Education Institutions on its Web page at least once per year in the "Official Gazette of BiH" and at least two times per year in three high circulation newspapers.

Article 22
Assessment of the Decision

(1) Before making an entry in the State Register referred to in Article 21, the Agency shall assess whether the decision is in line with the criteria for accreditation of the Higher Education Institution.

(2) In case the decision on accreditation is not in line with the criteria for accreditation of higher education, the Agency shall make a recommendation to the Steering Board of the Agency to take certain measures aiming at removing the incompatibility of the decision with the accreditation criteria, including the measure of canceling the decision.

(3) If the Steering Board of the Agency undertakes the measure to cancel the accreditation decision, the ministry of education which issued the decision or department of the Brcko District BiH may send an appeal to the Steering Board of the Agency within 15 days from the
date of receiving the decision to cancel the decision on accreditation of higher education institution.

(4) In case that the Steering Board based on the recommendation of the Agency determined other measure to remove the incompatibility of the accreditation decision with the criteria for accreditation of higher education institutions, the ministry of education which issued such decision shall act in accordance with the proposed measures and afterwards it shall submit to the Agency a new accreditation decision for higher education institution within 15 days from the day of taking the suggested measures of the Steering Board of the Agency. The Agency shall inform the Steering Board of the actions taken by the competent ministry and after obtaining the opinion of the Steering Board on compatibility of the decision with the suggested measures and accreditation criteria it shall make an entry in the Register referred to in Article 21.

(5) If the competent ministry does not act in accordance with the proposed measures of the Steering Board of the Agency, the Steering Board shall cancel the re-submitted decision for which it establishes that it is not compatible with the accreditation criteria and suggested measures of the Steering Board of the Agency.

Article 23
Subsequent Activities

(1) The accredited and conditionally accredited higher education institution shall develop an action plan for quality improvement at the institution within no later three months upon receiving the accreditation decision and it shall submit it to the ministry and the Agency.

(2) The action plan shall contain a list of activities in accordance with recommendations of the experts from the Commission’s report, timeframe for implementation of such activities and the implementers.

(3) The timeframe for activities related to quality improvement and meeting of the criteria by conditionally accredited higher education institution cannot be longer than one year until when the Higher Education Institution should fulfill the accreditation conditions.

(4) The Agency may ask the Higher Education Institution to make supplements to the action plan or amendments to some of its parts.
(5) A final version of the action plan shall be published on the Web page of the Agency.

Article 24
Annual Progress Reports

(1) The Higher Education Institution shall report to the Agency and the competent ministry about activities performed with reference to implementation of the action plan.

(2) The Report must contain the undertaken activities, level of implementation as well as possible variation from the action plan, as well as circumstances which led to the variation.

(3) The Agency shall monitor the reports of the conditionally accredited higher education institutions, providing advice on how to meet the criteria and improve the quality.

V TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 25
Coming into force

The criteria for accreditation of the higher education institutions shall come into force on the day of their publishing in the Official Gazette of BiH.
Annex 1

Criterion 1  Strategy of the Higher Education Institution

1.1. A Higher Education Institution should have a strategy developed in the process of public communication with all stakeholders, which is adopted in the manner prescribed by the main regulatory act of the Higher Education Institution and which is publicly available.

1.2. The Strategy contains:

   a)  *Mission and vision of the Higher Education Institution are in compliance with Articles 3 and 4 of the Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH.*

   b)  *Strategic goals which derive from the mission and vision of the Higher Education Institution.*

   c)  *Relevant plans and activities for implementation of the goals on the basis of an adequate analysis with defined implementers, deadlines and resources for their implementation.*

Criterion 2  Internal Quality Assurance System

2.1. The Higher Education Institution should have an established system for internal quality assurance which is determined by the official policy and procedures of quality assurance.

2.2. The Higher Education Institution should have an established formal body for quality assurance.

2.3. Functioning of the internal quality system, determination of the official policy and procedures for quality assurance as well as concrete responsibilities of the body
for quality assurance should be defined by a formally adopted regulation on internal quality system.

2.4. The students’ role in all three cycles within internal quality assurance system is clearly and institutionally defined and determined, with their agreement.

**Criterion 3 Procedures for quality assurance of study programmes**

3.1. Procedures for adoption of the study programmes should be established and applied for each study programme. They should regulate the following:

a) *Programme name and goals are compliant with the Strategy of the Higher Education Institution,*

b) *The expected learning outcomes, which are to be achieved by graduate students, are in accordance with the nomenclature of professions,*

c) *The conditions for enrollment in the study programme,*

d) *The type of study, mode of delivery,*

e) *The teaching coverage plan,*

f) *The credit value of each subject expressed in accordance with ECTS,*

g) *The method of subject grading,*

h) *The mandatory literature; subject coverage by relevant books which are known in advance and published at the beginning of the year,*

i) *The data on professors and associates for a subject,*

j) *The relevance of staff qualifications and resources.*

3.2. The Higher Education Institution should have an established procedure for the analysis of study programmes. The analysis should include:
a) An annual research on the number of employed students against total number of graduated students,

b) The programme’s popularity among students compared to previous years; applicants/enrolled students ratio,

c) Projects (scientific, research, development or art) which have been implemented by the Higher Education Institution within the specific study programme with the relevant domestic and international partners,

d) Total number and age structure of graduated students against the number of enrolled students in the last three years,

e) Graduation rate and average duration of studies.

**Criterion 4 Procedures for assessment of students**

4.1 The Higher Education Institution should have procedures for grading students, (formalized through a regulation which is adopted by the Senate). Students are included in their development.

The procedures define:

a) Minimum level of knowledge, skills and competencies adopted by a student for a corresponding grade,

b) Grading of students which is done in accordance with the learning outcomes,

c) Continuous monitoring and assessment of students’ progress during a semester for each teaching subject,

d) Grading methods (written, oral, essay, practical work, mid-term test, combined, etc) which are developed and adjusted for each teaching subject as a mandatory part of the syllabus,

e) Presence of other students during the assessment,
f) A schedule of exams with the date, location and name of the examiner is established at the beginning of the semester and it is publicly announced.

g) Possibility for students to have access to the examination papers and examination results following completion of the exam,

h) An appeal procedure which sets out a deadline for filing an appeal, the method of processing the appeal, outcomes of appeal resolution process and possibility of taking an exam before independent commission.

4.2 The Higher Education Institution should continuously collect information and analyze the students’ success (analysis of the passing rate) at the level of the study programme and take actions based on those analyses.

Criterion 5 Quality of the teaching staff

5.1. The Higher Education Institution should ensure a qualified teaching staff for each study programme with special focus on narrow professional subjects. The procedures for selection of the teaching staff are determined in advance, they are publicly available and they have to be harmonized with Articles 27 to 34 of the Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH. Commissions for appointments to teaching titles have to be competent in the relevant fields of science (areas and branches) in which candidates apply for a title.

5.2. The Higher Education Institution keeps staff records for the permanent and hired teaching and associate staff which contain information about their educational, professional, scientific and art references, mentoring of recent bachelor’s graduates, master’s and doctoral students, study visits abroad which is the basis for the teaching coverage plan for each semester.

5.3. The Higher Education Institution conducts student surveys and analyses them at the end of each semester with reference to the teaching staff in terms of quality of their teaching, availability, objectiveness during grading and undertakes measures
towards quality improvement which are transparent and publicly available. The surveys refer to each subject.

5.4. The Higher Education Institution issues its own publications (books, scientific and expert journals, collected papers, etc), the contents and purpose of which have to be in accordance with the strategic goals of the institutions.

5.6. The Higher Education Institution is a (co)organizer of scientific, professional or art gatherings (at the regional or international level), the contents and purpose of which are in accordance with the strategic goals of the institution.

5.5. The Higher Education Institution presents annually the publications of its own teaching staff made in the last year (names of papers with special focus on the relevance of the journal or conference where they were published or presented, published books, etc).

5.7. A significant number of the teaching and associate staff of the Higher Education Institution are included in the scientific-research, artistic and development projects for the last three years.

5.8. The Higher Education Institution has a long-term provision of financial resources required for the high quality implementation of the teaching and scientific processes, research projects, artistic and professional activities.

5.9. The Higher Education Institution regularly analyses the age structure of the teaching staff, permanent/visiting staff ratio and coverage of teaching by the competent staff on all study programmes, especially narrow professional subjects.

**Criterion 6 Quality of resources**

6.1. The adequacy of resources for the implementation of study programmes, their
functionality, age of resources etc. are assessed continuously through internal evaluations. The Higher Education Institution plans to invest financial resources so that one part of the annual gross income is invested in the improvement of resources.

6.2. Classrooms have to fit their purpose, they have be appropriately lit, physically separated and sufficiently distanced from the noise sources which disturb the teaching process. The minimum of required useable space per student at the Higher Education Institution has to be in accordance with the valid standards and norms.

6.3 The Higher Education Institution possesses adequate computer equipment which enables a good quality of teaching. The Higher Education Institution has a wireless network with at least one access point in each building within the Higher Education Institution.

6.4. The Higher Education Institution has a library equipped with the required number of library items in printed or electronic form and adequate space for the normal use of library services. The higher education institution adopts an internal act on textbooks accordingly, in view of modernity, correctness of content, structure (examples, questions, summary) and compatibility with the study programme.

**Criterion 7 Information system**

7.1. A Higher Education Institution should have a database (software) for collecting and analysis of the following information:

a) information on students per programme of study, cycles, years, sex and age breakdown, duration of studies, percentage of graduation, achievements, etc.

b) information on teaching staff (published works, level of engagement per subject, sex and age breakdown, appointment to scientific-teaching titles, etc.)
7.2. The database enables fast and precise search (pass rate for each subject, year and programme of study, examination terms, staff and students ratio, etc).

**Criterion 8 Presentation of information to the public**

8.1. The Higher Education Institution publishes the most important information about all study programmes on all cycles, at least in one of the official languages of BiH and in English language.

8.2. The Higher Education Institution encourages former students to organize alumni associations in an institutional manner.

8.3. The Higher Education Institution should have institutionally established public relations.

8.4. The Higher Education Institution issues annually, no later than six months before enrollment of the students, a guide for the future students in printed or electronic form or on CD. The guide is freely distributed to target groups.

**Criterion 9 International cooperation**

9.1. The Higher Education Institution should have an organized service for international cooperation through which it establishes contacts with other higher education institutions abroad, organizes student exchange programmes, joint projects, etc.