



## **Description of Kazakhstan's Quality Assurance System in Higher Education**

*by the Independent Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (IQAA)*

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Quality assurance of higher education in Kazakhstan is based on accreditation of higher education institutions and educational programmes in Kazakhstan by national and foreign quality assurance agencies listed on the National Register of Accreditation Agencies of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan retains other forms of quality control over higher education institutions through licensing and other regulations. According to the Article 54 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education”, state regulation in the field of education is carried out through legal support, quality management, standardization, and control.

In Kazakhstan, the process of establishment of the national quality assurance system can be divided into several stages:

In 2001, the state accreditation of higher education was first introduced in Kazakhstan. The state accreditation was based on 27 statistical indicators. In 2005, the National Accreditation Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan was established and accreditation of higher education institutions were launched. In 2008, the first independent quality assurance agency in Kazakhstan was established. In 2010, Kazakhstan signed the Bologna Declaration.

In 2011, the National Accreditation Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan was transformed into the Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Accreditation became independent and free of direct supervision by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Moreover, another independent quality assurance agency was established in 2011. The Procedure and Requirements for Maintaining the National Registers of Accreditation Agencies, Accredited Educational Organizations and Educational Programmes were established in 2011. Two national quality assurance agencies and several foreign quality assurance agencies were listed on the National Register of Accreditation Agencies of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2012.

In 2017, the state certification by the Committee of Control in the Fields of Education and Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan was completely replaced by institutional and specialized accreditation. Two quality assurance agencies from Kazakhstan became members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and were listed on the European Register for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EQAR) by 2017. In 2018, the National Register of Accreditation Agencies was expanded to include more national and foreign QA agencies.

According to the Article 9-1 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education”, accreditation of educational organizations is carried out on voluntary basis in quality assurance agencies listed in the National Register of Accreditation Agencies of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Higher education institutions that are accredited by recognized quality assurance agencies are eligible to receive state student grants.

The national registers collect and monitor data on quality assurance processes in Kazakhstan. *The Register of Accreditation Agencies* (Register #1) is a list of accreditation agencies that are authorized to conduct institutional and/or specialized (programme) accreditation. *The Register of Accredited Educational Organizations* (Register #2) is a list of accredited educational organizations. *The Register of Accredited Educational Programmes* (Register #3) is a list of accredited educational programmes.

The institutional and specialized (programme) accreditations are carried out based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The external review reports of national QA agencies that are listed on the European Register for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EQAR) are posted in the Database of External Quality Assurance Reports (DEQAR).

## **Description of the Responsibilities and Structure of the Independent Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (IQAA)**

30 September 2019

The Independent Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (IQAA) is a quality assurance agency in Kazakhstan, which conducts accreditation of higher education institutions and educational programmes. IQAA is a non-governmental, non-profit organization. IQAA is the first independent quality assurance agency in Kazakhstan, founded in 2008.

The **mission** of IQAA is to assist in improving the quality of educational institutions, increasing their competitiveness at national and international levels. The **values** of IQAA are independence and honesty, professionalism and responsibility, accountability and transparency, commitment to quality, ability to improve and cooperation. The main **objectives** of IQAA include helping educational institutions to achieve a high level of quality of education that meets international standards and ensures competitiveness in the age of globalization and providing relevant information to stakeholders about the level of quality of education in Kazakhstan.

IQAA conducts institutional and specialized (programme) accreditation of higher education institutions and educational programmes based on its accreditation standards, which are developed on the basis of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), national regulations and international experience.

In 2012, IQAA was registered in the first National Register of Accreditation Agencies of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and was re-registered again in 2017. In 2017, after an external review, IQAA became a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and was listed on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

IQAA is a full member of several international QA networks in higher education: the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA), the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and the CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG).

### **IQAA's activities include:**

- Development of standards and criteria of institutional and specialized (programme) accreditation in higher education, technical and vocational education, and secondary education;
- Organizing and carrying out institutional and specialized (programme) accreditation of educational institutions based on the ESG in Kazakhstan and abroad;
- Informational and methodological support of educational institutions in accordance with the ESG;
- Organizing national, regional and international conferences, workshops, forums in the field of quality assurance in higher education;
- Organizing and conducting trainings, courses, round tables in the field of quality assurance in higher education, management and administration of educational institutions; expert training and certification;

- Participation in international projects on quality assurance in higher education;
- International cooperation with accreditation agencies and membership in international QA networks in higher education;
- Scientific-research activities in the field of quality assurance in higher education.

The **structure** of IQAA is specified in the Charter and other regulations:

*The Supervisory Board* is an elected, collegial body, composed of representatives of the academic community, employers and an international expert. The Supervisory Board is responsible for determining priority areas of the Agency's activities, approving its strategy of development, long-term activity plans and annual reports.

*The Accreditation Council* is an elected public professional body that includes representatives of the academic community, employers, students and an international expert. The Accreditation Council is responsible for approving regulatory documents and making decisions on accreditation.

*The Appeals Committee* considers appeals of educational institutions about decisions on institutional or specialized (programme) accreditation by the Accreditation Council.

*The Complaints Commission* considers complaints of educational organizations with the aim of identifying breaches of the Code of Conduct during external reviews. Considerations of complaints allow monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of accreditation procedures, ensuring integrity and transparency of external reviews.

*The Expert Council* is a collegial body, representing experts on institutional and specialized (programme) accreditations. The main tasks of expert councils include assisting in organizing assessments of external review reports, expanding the database of qualified experts and coordinating expert groups in external reviews.