



The Desk Review Report

Of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR)

Desk Review Time: Nov. 20-Dec.20, 2019

The Panel of the APQR Desk Review to IAAR:

Prof. Dr. Jianxin Zhang (Chair and Facilitator): APQN President, Chief Expert of Yunnan Higher Education Evaluation Center (YHEEC) and tenured professor of Yunnan University, Kunming, China 948661302@qq.com

Dr. Maiki Udam (panelist): Director of Development and International Cooperation, Project Coordinator, EKKA, Estonia; Former Board Director of INQAAHE maiki.udam@archimedes.ee

Oksana MATVEEVA (panelist): Deputy Head of Accreditation Office of the National Centre for Public Accreditation (NCPA), Russia, ncpa2013@mail.ru

Chairperson of APQR Desk Review to IAAR:

Dr. Jagannath Patil, Chairperson of APQR

The Asia-Pacific Quality Register (APQR) and The Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)



CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	2
II. BASIC INFORMATION OF THE 11 CRITERIA.....	4
CRITERION 1: ORGANIZATION.....	4
CRITERION 2: OPERATIONS.....	5
CRITERION 3: MISSION AND OBJECTIVES.....	6
CRITERION 4: STAFF AND REVIEWERS.....	7
CRITERION 5: INDEPENDENCE.....	8
CRITERION 6: RESOURCES.....	8
CRITERION 7: PROCESS AND CRITERIA.....	9
CRITERION 8: APPEALS.....	10
CRITERION 9: QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	10
CRITERION 10: MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	11
CRITERION 11: AGENCY LINKAGES.....	11
III. COMMENDATIONS.....	13
VI. SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE WITH CRITERIA.....	17
V. SIGNATURES.....	18
VI. APPENDICES.....	19
1. APQR DESK REVIEW SCHEDULE.....	19
2. SWOT ANALYSIS FROM IAAE'S SELF-EVALUATION REPORT.....	20
3. CONCLUSION BY ENQA REVIEW.....	22

I. INTRODUCTION

The Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR) in the Republic of Kazakhstan expressed its interest to the Asia-Pacific Quality Register Council (APQRC) to be considered for inclusion on the Asia-Pacific Quality Register (APQR).

In the beginning of 2017 IAAR had registered at the EQAR (the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education). Based on *“The Inclusion of Other Quality Assurance Organizations’ Review onto the Asia-Pacific Quality Register”* approved in 2016 by the APQR Council, acceptance onto the Register is based on an external quality assurance agency (EQAA) being found to be **“substantially compliance”** against 11 APQR criteria, incorporating the Chiba Principles. The APRQ Council decided to adopt **desk review** (instead of site visit) to IAAR.

IAAR submitted APQR Council *“Self-Evaluation Report (SER)”* and *“Final Report of ENQA Agency Reviews to IAAR in 2016”*.

A review panel of three experts, Prof. Dr. Jianxin Zhang (Chair and Facilitator) from China, Dr. Maiki Udam (panellist) from Estonia, Oksana MATVEEVA from Russia conducted desk review from Nov. 20 to Dec. 20, 2019. The SER of IAAR and *“Final Report of ENQA Review”* are viewed. The SER is a thorough and critical examination of IAAR taking account of all its QA functions and activities carried out during its 8-year development (2011 - 2019) and touching on some other functions of IAAR.

The hyperlinks and appendices to the SER included the following documents referred to by the review panel:

1. National reports and documents, such as Law of RK "On Education", State Program of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020, Strategy for internationalization and academic mobility in Kazakhstan till 2020, Education Institutions and Education Programs, Regulations on the Republican Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, etc.

2. IAAR regulations and internal documents, such as IAAR organizational structure, IAAR Strategic Plan for 2016-2020, Certificate for inclusion in the National Register 1, IAAR Annual Action Plans and Strategy Implementation Plans, IAAR Annual Reports, List of AC Members, List of Accredited Educational Organizations, List of Accredited Programs, Regulation for training, retraining and advanced training of external experts, Regulation on post-accreditation monitoring of the educational institutions and educational programs, Regulation on the control of the external



expert activities, Regulations on the Accreditation Council, Accreditation Council Members' Code of Ethics, Accreditation Council Decisions, Regulations on the Commission on Appeals and Complaints Consideration, Regulations on the Expert Councils, Expert Council for Higher Education – membership and terms of reference, Expert Council on Medical Education - membership and terms of reference, Expert Council on TVE - membership and terms of reference, etc..

3. **Final Report of ENQA Agency Reviews to IAAR in 2016**, and Standards for specialized accreditation of educational programs of higher education institutions (ESG 2015), Standards of institutional accreditation for institutions of higher education implementing higher and postgraduate educational programs (ESG 2015), etc.

Based on its review of documents in the *“IAAR's Self-Evaluation Report”*, the review panel finds IAAR is either “fully” or “substantial” compliance with the APQR criteria. **The Panel therefore recommends to the APQR Council that IAAR be accepted onto the Register.**

II. BASIC INFORMATION OF the 11 CRITERIA

Criterion 1: Organization

The QAA is a full member of APQN or is a QA body which is valid entity recognized by the appropriate authority in the relevant country/territory/region, and is accountable to stakeholders.

The Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR) is a non-profit accreditation agency established in 2011 with the aim of improving the national system for quality assurance in education, right after that the changes were made into the Law of Kazakhstan "On Education", which clearly stated independence and voluntariness of accreditation in Kazakhstan.

The legal framework of IAAR and the responsibilities and duties of the founder are defined by IAAR Statutes. IAAR is guided by the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK), the Law "On education", the Civil Code of the RK, the Law of RK "On Noncommercial Organizations" and other applicable laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of education.

IAAR is included in the National Registry 1, formed in accordance with the Regulations of Recognition of Accreditation Bodies, Including Foreign Ones, and Formation of Registers of Recognized Accreditation Bodies, Accredited Educational Organizations and Educational Programs.

IAAR has a Certificate for inclusion in the National Register 1 according to the order of the MES RK dated by March 14, 2017, № 112. This certificate is valid until March 14, 2022 and gives the full right to carry out quality assurance activities in Kazakhstan. This certificate confirms that IAAR quality assessment results are recognized by the system of higher education, government, stakeholders and the public.

On April 6, 2017 IAAR was included in the register of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. Thus, IAAR became a transnational accreditation body and was recognized in the Kyrgyz Republic as an international body for the accreditation of HEIs and study programs.

IAAR is a full member of: APQN; INQAAHE; ENQA; IREG; AQAAIW; CIQG; and CEENQA.

IAAR was an intermediate member of APQN since 2011. From that time, IAAR was always interested in confirming its compliance with the APQN requirements in order to get a full member status and in 2017 after the review procedure IAAR became a full member of the APQN. For the purposes of the study and application of best practices, IAAR representatives takes part in conferences and seminars organized by foreign partners and international networks in the field of quality assurance, including APQN events.

In 2016, IAAR is accredited by the Ministry of Education and Science of RK as a subject of scientific activity, which confirms its recognition at the national level.

The Agency is accountable to the stakeholders of education, provides reporting through a variety of internal quality assurance mechanisms.

Criterion 2: Operations

The quality assurance agency undertakes quality assurance activities (at institutional and/or program level) on a cyclical basis.

IAAR was created to improve the competitiveness of HEIs and other education organization (EO) at the national and international levels through a process of institutional and specialized accreditation. According to IAAR Statutes, its main activities are: 1) to organize and conduct the procedures for institutional and specialized (program) accreditation; 2) to develop and revise the standards and guidelines, as well as the necessary regulations for carrying out those or other procedures in order to ensure the quality of education.

The main activity of IAAR is related to conducting procedures of institutional and specialized accreditation of educational institutions on a cyclical basis - higher education institutions, research organizations, implementing educational programs of postgraduate education, training institutes, educational institutions, implementing educational programs of technical and vocational, post-secondary education, international schools.

IAAR is also actively involved for quality assurance procedures not only in Kazakhstan, but also in Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Moldova, and Republic of Tajikistan. In 2017 for the first time in Kazakhstan IAAR in collaboration with the German Institute for Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance (ACQUIN), conducted a joint international accreditation based on ESG.

IAAR performs its activity in accordance with the Law "On Education" and the Regulations of Recognition of Accreditation Bodies, Including Foreign Ones, and Formation of Registers of Recognized Accreditation Bodies, Accredited Educational Organizations and Educational Programs.

Institutional Accreditation (IA) and Specialized Accreditation (SA) are focused on continuous improvement of the education quality, and the formation of EO's competitive and developing the culture of quality, public awareness on the quality of institutions and study Programme (SP). The HEIs are evaluated for compliance with the accreditation standards through the study of the self-assessment reports on IA / SA, conducting external evaluation, EEC site visit to the EO, EEC final report, the AC decision on the accreditation of EO and / or SP.

Two factors are taken into account in institutional and specialized accreditation procedures: 1) Load level and the cost of the accreditation procedure for EO; 2) Further improvement of EO activities.

As for Institutional accreditation of EO, during 2012-2019, 171 educational organizations from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Moldova, and Republic of Tajikistan (including 75 HEIs, 83 colleges (TVE) and 6 international schools, 7 institutions of additional education) were accredited by IAAR within the institutional accreditation.

As for Specialized accreditation of study programs, during 2012-2019, 2614 study programs from 145 educational organizations (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Moldova, and Republic of Tajikistan) were accredited in IAAR within the specialized accreditation.

IAAR also rates research in the higher, postgraduate, technical and vocational education.

Criterion 3: Mission and Objectives

The mission statement and objectives of the agency are understood consistently by its stakeholders.

IAAR has published its Development Strategy along with the mission statement on its webpage. The strategy has been developed with the involvement and discussion of key stakeholders - national and foreign experts of IAAR, Expert Council and Accreditation Council members, representatives of the academic community, students, state agencies and employers.

The Mission of IAAR is assistance in improving the quality and competitiveness of education organizations at the national and international scopes through an independent, objective and professional accreditation process, and promotion of the quality culture as a value of the global community.

The key objectives of the implementation of the mission of IAAR set out in Strategic Plan for the 2019-2023 are:

1. Development of the national system of quality assurance in education, taking into consideration the best international experience.
2. Strengthening IAAR's status in the market of accreditation services of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the states of Central Asia, Europe and the USA.
3. Development of IAAR's rating studies as a mechanism of influence on the improvement of the quality of education, science and innovation.
4. Enhancing the role of the analytical capacity of IAAR in improving the national and international system for quality assurance in education.
5. Increasing public awareness on outcomes of the quality assessment of academic programs and operations of education organizations.
6. Expansion of the base of candidates - experts and the formation of a pool of national and international experts.
7. Development of new international projects in the framework of the project office expansion.
8. Improving the effectiveness of IAAR in the quality assurance in education.

The key objectives are directly connected to the every-day operations of the agency and the stakeholders are informed about them via updated webpage, publications, seminars and conferences, direct mailing lists etc.

IAAR develops an action plan for each year and publishes it on its webpage.

Criterion 4: Staff and reviewers

The profile of the agency staff and the profile of the reviewers the agency uses are consistent with the Mission Statement.

According to the Statutes and Development Strategy IAAR has the task to ensure the quality both in higher, vocational and technical as well as in secondary and international education. For the implementation of the objectives of the Agency, IAAR currently has 20 full time members of staff. Most of the staff members have higher academic degrees (Master's and PhD) and their qualifications are appropriate and relevant to their tasks. The system for selection, review and training of staff is in place.

In addition, the agency draws upon the work of the members of its four councils: 17 members of the Accreditation Council and 26 members in total of the other three expert councils. Participation in the agency's councils is voluntary and unpaid.

Accreditation activities rely mainly on the contribution of experts appointed on a contract basis by the agency. IAAR management pays particular attention to the selection and training of experts. IAAR experts' database includes representatives of the higher education community, foreign experts, employers and students. For each

category of experts, there are specific selection criteria, which allow to attract the most experienced professionals to the assessment of quality.

Criterion 5: Independence

The quality assurance agency is independent and has autonomous responsibility for its QA operations. The judgments and recommendations of the agency's reports cannot be changed by third parties.

Based on the statutes of IAAR, the agency was established as a non-profit private foundation and a separate legal entity. IAAR has no formal links to any government or other external authority. Furthermore, the Kazakhstan Ministry of Education does not support agencies financially, and therefore IAAR is not even dependent upon state funds. According to the Law on Education, quality assurance agencies in Kazakhstan are free to develop their own methodology, standards and criteria.

IAAR Statutes defines exclusive decision-making competence with its Accreditation Council. The Council contains of representatives of government agencies, representatives from higher education, employers and student associations. Members act on an impartial personal basis and are required to sign the Accreditation Council Code of Ethics, which covers conflict of interest and independence of judgement.

The Council takes its decisions by a majority vote of its members and on the basis of the evaluation reports received from the agency's external expert commissions, without any possibility for interference either on the part of the ministry (or of any other organs of political influence) or on the part of HEIs.

It can be concluded that IAAR works as a fully independent agency whose decision-making is not influenced by any third party.

Criterion 6: Resources

The agency has sufficient resources to run its operations in accordance with its mission statement and objectives.

IAAR is a non-profit organization whose income is fully directed to the development of the Agency. Budget of IAAR in 2017 was 306.666.000 tenge (810.856,68 Euro as of 1 August), in 2018 it was 273.287.000 tenge (722.599,15 Euro as of 1 August). Thus, the budget is slightly decreased, although it seems still to be sufficient to run its operations in accordance with its mission statement and objectives.

IAAR premises – with the total area of 380 square meters, include the offices of management, staff offices, archive, conference hall for 20 seats with the possibility of video conferencing for holding a meeting of the Expert Council and the Accreditation Council, a relaxation area and a kitchen. Every employee in IAAR has a personal computer with high-speed Internet access.

Criterion 7: Process and Criteria

The description of the processes and criteria applied by the agency are transparent and publicly available and normally include: self-evaluation, site visit, public report and follow-up measure. The published standards and criteria are applied consistently and rigorously.

IAAR has provided a detailed description of its processes and evidence of its criteria for institutional accreditation and specialized accreditation. The standards and guidelines are available on the website in three languages: Kazakh, Russian and English. The institutional accreditation and specialized accreditation standards contain clear evaluation criteria, procedure description, including follow-up procedures (post-monitoring, re-accreditation) and are applied consistently.

According to the national context, IAAR practices cluster approach within specialized accreditation since this system approved itself in accreditation procedures for years. The cluster may include related programmes in one or related areas of training, including various levels (undergraduate, graduate, doctoral). According to the para 1.7 of Guidelines for the organization and conduct of external expertise in the process of accreditation of educational organizations one cluster includes no more than 6 homogeneous study programs and it is allowed to assess no more than 30 programs per site-visit. The review team thinks it is necessary to inform stakeholders about the approach of clusterization of study programmes under review via website.

The review team was satisfied with the decision-making procedure of study programmes in a cluster. In case when one or several programmes of the cluster are weaker than others, a separate assessment table is completed with different scales (strong/satisfactory/needs improvement/unsatisfactory) for that programme and attached to the Review Report as a separate annex together with separate reasons for different terms and separate recommendations for the programmes. The review team found this approach reasonable and evidential.

IAAR also provides standards for international accreditation of foreign educational organizations and educational programmes. The procedure for specialized accreditation held in Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Moldova and Republic

of Tajikistan is the same as for Kazakhstan. The standards and guidelines are open to public.

There is a discrepancy in the site-visit duration on the website and internal documentation (SER states that the site-visit in case of institutional accreditation lasts for 3 days and 3-4 days in specialized accreditation (p. 32, SER). While the website states the duration of the site-visit is 3-5 days). It is recommended that Regulations and local documents should be brought in line with this information. It is recommended that website, Regulations and other local documents should be brought in line with this information.

Criterion 8: Appeals

An appeals mechanism is available for the institutions.

ENQA review (2016) noted the absence of an independent appeals and complaint mechanism in IAAR which has been improved by now. IAAR has established a formal Commission for the Consideration of Appeals and Complaints and the appeal procedure is the same for institutional accreditation and specialized accreditation.

The Regulations on the Commission for the Review of Appeals and Complaints were reviewed in 2018 and are accessible through the agency's website. HEIs are informed about this mechanism during the conclusion of the agreement (contract).

Since 2016 IAAR has only one case of the appeal from higher education institution in 2019. The review team examined the case and came to the conclusion that the procedure was carried out in accordance with local regulations.

The Agency's website contains incomplete information on the Appeals Commission composition. Only 2 members of the Commission are mentioned: Deputy Chairman and the Secretary so it is recommended to clearly define it and publish up-to-date information including non-permanent members of the Commission.

Criterion 9: Quality Assurance

The agency has effective quality assurance measures in place to monitor itself and is subject to occasional review.

IAAR has provided evidence of thoroughly-documented IQA procedures and processes. IQA Manual is available on the website. As part of the IQA system IAAR has published the Strategic Plan of Development for 2019-2023, though the Action plan is available on the website only for 2018.

IAAR regularly collects feedback from stakeholders to inform its governance, its accreditation procedures and activities and their further development.

Criterion 10: Monitoring and Evaluation

The agency undertakes research on internal and external quality assurance and provides information and advice to the higher education institutions.

IAAR has provided evidence of the staff participation in national and international forums, webinars, seminars, workshops, conferences and use of a wide range of channels (journals, reports, media etc.) to provide information and advice to HEIs.

IAAR pays particular attention to monitoring and post-monitoring of the results of accreditation activities. The Agency provides HEIs with Regulations and schedule on post-accreditation monitoring and annually reports to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Agency regularly publishes reports that describe and analyze the findings of its external quality assurance activities including analytical reports on survey results from HEIs and experts and the analysis of the reports of external expert commissions. All materials are open to public in 3 languages - Kazakh, Russian and English. Moreover, IAAR carries out research, participates in Erasmus projects, creates the National Rating of Demand of HEIs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and publishes reference books on its results, presents the findings at national and international conferences, congresses, seminars and forums.

According to the recommendation of the ENQA Board (2018) IAAR reviewed its survey form for HEIs and included feedback on the priorities of the current areas for thematic analysis of the agency in the future.

Criterion 11: Agency Linkages

The agency cooperates and collaborates with other agencies and key players across national borders.

One of the key objectives of the implementation of the mission and vision of IAAR is the recognition of IAAR at national, European and international levels as a reliable partner for quality assurance. This strategic objective is realized with the help of the active position of IAAR in the international platform, commitment to European quality standards, the study and implementation of the best international

practices. Thus, IAAR strives to be a reliable authority to ensure the quality and win the trust of key stakeholders.

IAAR recognized as major international and regional quality assurance networks: 1) The Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) - full member; 2) The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) - full member; 3) The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) - full member; 4) The US Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) International Quality Group (CIQG) - full member; 5) The Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) - full member; 6) Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World (AQAAIW) - full member; and 7) International Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence (IREG) - full member.

Active work is underway on the development of mutually beneficial cooperation with the recognized world agencies for quality assurance in higher education. To date, agreements on bilateral cooperation with 15 such organizations signed, such as National Center of Public Accreditation (NCPA, Russia).

Over the past years more than 40 visits have been carried out by the expert committee under the IA and SA with experts from FIBAA, ASIIN e.V., NAA, ACQUIN, AKKORK, AIC, ANACIP, HEA and Natsaccredcentr. Professionalism, excellent training, high culture characterizes the experts nominated by the Agency's partners. In its turn, IAAR recommended from its base to foreign partners more than 40 experts.

III. COMMENDATIONS

The Panel’s commendations to IAAR are shown below and the criterion to which the commendation most closely relates.

CRITERIA	COMMENDATION
Criteria 1: Organization Category	1) IAAR is a non-profit accreditation agency established in 2011 with the aim of improving the national system for quality assurance in education - one of the leading international accreditation agencies in the accreditation of higher, technical, and additional education. 2) IAAR is a full member of: APQN; INQAAHE; ENQA; IREG; AQAAIW; CIQG; CEENQA.
Criteria 2: Operations	1) IAAR has conducted national and international institutional and specialized accreditation of higher and postgraduate, technical and vocational, medical and additional education, scientific organizations and international schools. During 2012-2019, 2614 study programs and 171 educational organizations from Kazakhstan and other countries were accredited by IAAR within the specialized accreditation and institutional accreditation. 2) IAAR has developed Standards and Guidelines for the quality assurance in education in compliance with the international standards and guidelines of the ESG and international regulations. 3) IAAR rates research in the higher, postgraduate, technical and vocational education.
Criteria 3: Mission and Objectives	IAAR can be commended for the systematic stakeholders’ involvement in the development of its strategy and mission statement.
Criteria 4: Staff and Reviewers	1) IAAR can be commended for the clear and transparent selection criteria for the reviewers. 2) IAAR can be commended for the number of the student members (3) in its Accreditation Council.
Criteria 5: Independence	IAAR can be commended for its well-framed regulations and codes of ethics which provide appropriate guidance to secure the independence of its Accreditation Council and expert panels.
Criteria 6:	IAAR can be commended for its modern and well-equipped

CRITERIA	COMMENDATION
Resources	working environment.
Criteria 7: Process and Criteria	1) IAAR is commended for open publication of its accreditation procedure and criteria on the website in 3 languages - Kazakh, Russian and English. 2) IAAR is commended for provision of HEIs' interim reports on recommendations obtained from experts and Council as part of the on-going enhancement process.
Criteria 8: Appeals	IAAR is commended for its clearly documented procedures for appeals and complaints which are available on the website.
Criteria 9: Quality Assurance	1) IAAR is commended for its clearly documented IQA system. 2) IAAR internal processes are in line with the Strategic plan and the Action Plan.
Criteria 10: Monitoring and Evaluation	1) IAAR is commended for carrying out systematic monitoring and post-monitoring of the results of accreditation activities and regular surveys of different stakeholders (experts, HEIs, employers, students) as part of the on-going enhancement process. 2) IAAR is commended for its provision and dissemination of good practices and trends in the national quality assurance system through multiple channels (media, website, analytical journal «Education. Quality Assurance» etc.). 3) IAAR is commended for its provision of information and advice to HEIs via the National Rating of Demand of HEIs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
Criteria 11: Agency Linkages	1) IAAR has been recognized by major international and regional quality assurance networks, such as APQN, INQAAHE, ENQA and other 7 networks. 2) IAAR cooperates with foreign partner-agencies for the mutual exchange of experts; and agreements on bilateral cooperation with 15 such organizations has been signed, 3) IAAR conducts international accreditation of HEIs together with leading foreign accreditation agencies.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The panel's recommendations to IAAR are shown below and the criterion to which the recommendation most closely relates.

CRITERIA	RECOMMENDATION
Criteria 1: Organization Category	It is recommended that IAAR should take more measurements and timely inform the Ministry of Education and Science as well as the public about the accredited institutions of education and educational programs.
Criteria 2: Operations	It is recommended that IAAR supply more chances to its staff and experts to improve their level of English (foreign) language skills because of the active international cooperation.
Criteria 3: Mission and Objectives	IAAR is recommended to enhance its analytical capacity to inform public about the trends in the system (Strategic Plan, objective 4).
Criteria 4: Staff and Reviewers	1) The voluntary and unpaid contribution by the Accreditation Council members might diminish their long-term commitment. IAAR is recommended to consider introducing a small financial (or other type) reward to its council members. 2) IAAR is recommended to widen the pool of experts to avoid over-exploitation of the same people.
Criteria 5: Independence	In the situation of growing competition among the quality agencies in Kazakhstan, there is a threat to lower the quality standards for educational institutions. IAAR should make every effort to keep its standards and safeguard its independence.
Criteria 6: Resources	IAAR is recommended to analyse the decrease of the budget 2017-2018 and conduct the risk analysis for the future.
Criteria 7:	1) IAAR is recommended to bring in line the information on the

CRITERIA		RECOMMENDATION
Process and Criteria		<p>website concerning the duration of site-visit in case of institutional and specialized accreditation.</p> <p>2) IAAR is recommended to inform stakeholders about cluster approach within specialized accreditation via website or other channels.</p> <p>3) IAAR is recommended to inform HEIs and publish criteria for granting different terms of accreditation especially for a reduced term of accreditation on its website.</p>
Criteria Appeals	8:	It is recommended to update information on the agency's website concerning Appeals Commission composition including non-permanent members of the Commission.
Criteria Quality Assurance	9:	<p>1) It is recommended to provide feedback on adjustments in internal documentation to those stakeholders who provided the feedback leading to this adjustment.</p> <p>2) It is recommended to clearly define the principle of combining of study programmes in a group (cluster) in internal documentation in case of specialized accreditation.</p>
Criteria Monitoring and Evaluation	10:	It is recommended to publish the results of post-accreditation monitoring since 2017.
Criteria Agency Linkages	11:	It is recommended that IAAR strengthens more cooperation with the HEIs of Turkmenistan and China.

VI. SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE WITH CRITERIA

Criterion	Description	Compliance			
		Fully	Substantial	Partially	Non
1. Organization	The QAA is a full member of APQN or is a QA body which is valid entity recognized by the appropriate authority in the relevant country/territory/region, and is accountable to stakeholders.	X			
2. Operations	The quality assurance agency undertakes quality assurance activities (at institutional and/or program level) on a cyclical basis.		X		
3. Mission and Objectives	The mission statement and objectives of the agency are understood consistently by its stakeholders.	X			
4. Staff and reviewers	The profile of the agency staff and the profile of the reviewers the agency uses are consistent with the Mission Statement.		X		
5. Independence	The quality assurance agency is independent and has autonomous responsibility for its QA operations. The judgments and recommendations of the agency's reports cannot be changed by third parties.	X			
6. Resources	The agency has sufficient resources to run its operations in accordance with its mission statement and objectives.	X			
7. Process and Criteria	The description of the processes and criteria applied by the agency are transparent and publicly available and normally include: self-evaluation, site visit, public report and follow-up measure. The published standards and criteria are applied consistently and rigorously.	X	X		
8. Appeals	An appeals mechanism is available for the institutions.		X		
9. Quality Assurance	The agency has effective quality assurance measures in place to monitor itself and is subject to occasional review.	X			
10. Monitoring and Evaluation	The agency undertakes research on internal and external quality assurance and provides information and advice to the higher education institutions.	X			
11. Agency Linkages	The agency cooperates and collaborates with other agencies and key players across national borders.	X			
The Panel's Assessment	Acceptance onto APQR is based on "substantial compliance", which requires either full or substantial compliance with each criterion. The panel agree that IAAR has been accepted onto APQR.				

V. SIGNATURES

1. Signatures of the APQR Review Panel



Prof/Dr. Jianxin Zhang (Chair & Facilitator): APQN President, Chief Expert of Yunnan Higher Education Evaluation Center (YHEEC) and tenured professor of Yunnan University, Kunming, China <948661302@qq.com>



Dr. Maiki Udam (panelist): Director of Development and International Cooperation, Project Coordinator, EKKA, Estonia; Former Board Director of INQAAHE
maiki.udam@archimedes.ee



Oksana MATVEEVA (panelist): Deputy Head of Accreditation Office of the National Centre for Public Accreditation(NCPA), Russia, <ncpa2013@mail.ru>

Place: China; Estonia; Russia

Date: Dec. 5, 2019

2. Signature of the Chairman/Director of the QA Agency:

Dr. Alina Zhumagulova: IAAR Director, Kazakhstan



Place: Nur-Sultan city, Kazakhstan

Date: Nov. 9, 2019

Seal of the QA Agency (if applicable)

VI. APPENDICES

1. APQR Desk Review Schedule

#	Time	Items /Tasks	Responsible panelist
1	August, 2019	IAAR Submitted expressed its interest to APQR and submitted "Self-Evaluation Report" & "Final Report of ENQA Agency Reviews to IAAR in 2016".	Dr. Timur Y. Kanapyanov
2	December, 2019	The APQR Council decided "Desk Review" and a panel of three reviewers was formed.	Dr. Jagannath Patil (APQR Chairperson)
3	Nov. 20	E-mail IAAR' SER and ENQA Agency Reviews to IAAR (final report) to the panelists and distribute the tasks of the 11 Criteria among the panelists	Jianxin Zhang (Chair and Coordinator)
4	Nov. 20-30 (10 days)	The panelists e-mail back the first draft of "4 Items for the panelists to complete": 1)Description of the 11 Criteria; 2) Commendation of the 11 Criteria; 3) Recommendation of the 11 Criteria; and 4)Summary of Compliance with Criteria	Jianxin Zhang, Maiki Udam and Oksana Matveeva(panelist)
5	Dec.2	Edit and Complete the first draft of the "Report of the Desk Review" and e-mail to the panelists for comments	Jianxin Zhang
6	Dec.2-7 (5 days)	The panelists e-mail back the Comments of the Report, with the signature of approval	Jianxin Zhang, Maiki Udam and Oksana Matveeva
7	Dec. 7-17 (10 days)	1) The chair e-mails the "Report of the Desk Review" to IAAR for comments and signature of approval 2) IAAR communicate with the panel if they have some clarifications.	Jianxin Zhang (Chair and Coordinator)
8	Dec. 18	The chair submits the final Report to the APQR Council for decision.	
9	Dec.18-30 (12 days)	The decision made, and the electronic certificate is issued if the proposal by the panel is agreed.	Dr. Jagannath Patil (APQR Chairperson)
10	Apr. 19, 2020	The paper certificate will be awarded to IAAR at 2020 APQN Award Ceremony	The APQR Council

2. SWOT Analysis from IAAE’s Self-Evaluation Report

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>1) Recognition and authority of IAAR in the Republic of Kazakhstan and abroad;</p> <p>2) Full membership in ENQA, inclusion in the EQAR and recognition by the WFME;</p> <p>3) inclusion in the National Register of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic;</p> <p>4) Harmonization of IAAR standards with the ESG standards revised in 2015 and the WFME revised in 2012;</p> <p>5) IAAR participation in ERASMUS + international projects;</p> <p>6) Copyright state registration of IAAR Standards Guidelines for the institutional and specialized accreditation;</p> <p>7) Elaboration and approval of the Standards and Guidelines for carrying out initial international ex-ante accreditation for new study programs;</p> <p>8) Wide cooperation with the stakeholders of education, government and non-governmental organizations in the framework of the Bologna and Turin processes;</p> <p>9) Cooperation with foreign partner-agencies for the mutual exchange of experts;</p> <p>10) Conducting international accreditation of HEIs together with leading foreign accreditation agencies;</p> <p>11) Experience in conducting international institutional and specialized accreditation of foreign HEIs;</p> <p>12) Considerable experience in accreditation of educational organizations, organizations of additional education, MBA, DBA education programs, medical education;</p> <p>13) The positive impact of accreditation on the development of all areas of activity of accredited educational organizations;</p> <p>14) Experience in developing a methodology and technology for conducting national ranking of educational programs of the Republic of Kazakhstan by the levels of specialist training;</p> <p>15) Professional and cohesive IAAR team;</p> <p>16) Professionalism and competence of national and foreign experts of IAAR;</p> <p>17) High reputation of IAAR in the market of accreditation services;</p> <p>18) Opening of a representative office of IAAR in the European Union in Riga, Latvia;</p> <p>19) Quarterly issue of the scientific informational and analytical journal “Education. Quality Assurance”;</p> <p>20) Annual organization and holding of the Central Asian Forum on Quality Assurance of Education.</p>	<p>21) Insufficient level of cooperation with HEIs of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, lack of interaction with HEIs of Turkmenistan, China;</p> <p>22) Insufficient base of experts of the first category;</p> <p>23) Insufficient base of experts from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Belarus;</p> <p>24) Insufficient level of English (foreign) language skills of IAAR staff and experts;</p> <p>25) Frequent involvement of the same experts in the EEC reduces the expert’s work and entails negative consequences.</p>

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>26) Amendments to the legislation in the field of education, which open up new possibilities in the field of education quality assessment;</p> <p>27) IAAR support by international networks and quality assurance organizations (ENQA, EQAR, INQAAHE, IREG, APQN, WFME, CHEA);</p> <p>28) Support for a system of independent assessment of the quality of education and the state authorized body in the field of education;</p> <p>29) WFME support in activities to develop a national accreditation system for medical and pharmaceutical education;</p> <p>30) Implementation of the principles of the Bologna and Turin processes at the national level;</p> <p>31) Expanding the base of potential accrediting organizations: HEIs, TVE organizations and additional education;</p> <p>32) Conducting IAAR international accreditation abroad;</p> <p>33) Opening of representative offices (branches) and offices abroad;</p> <p>34) Inclusion of the journal “Education. Quality Assurance” in the Russian Science Citation Index (RSCI) and in the List of journals of the Committee for the Control of Education and Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan;</p> <p>35) Distribution of the journal “Education. Quality Assurance” through a subscription of Kazpost, distributors of Eureka-Press, etc., for its consistent translation into self-sufficiency and wide recognition of IAAR publication.</p>	<p>36) Economic situation in the country;</p> <p>37) Unstable situation in the international financial market;</p> <p>38) Not timely informing of the Ministry of Education and Science the public about the accredited institutions of education and educational programs, in accordance with the procedure of formation of the National Register 1, 2 and 3;</p> <p>39) The lack of a complete list of professional standards for the industry sectors;</p> <p>40) Weak involvement of employers and students in the educational process of educational organizations, as well as in the quality assessment procedure;</p> <p>41) Increased competition in the market of accreditation services in Kazakhstan and the emergence of new accreditation agencies in the Register of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.</p>

3. Conclusion by ENQA Review

The following 4 pages are abstracted from “Final Report of ENQA Agency Reviews to IAAR in 2016”:

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS

ESG 3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY, AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

The review panel commends IAAR on the commitment it has made to include international experts in its work, most particularly in its Accreditation Council and in its expert commissions.

ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE

The review panel found that IAAR has taken care to introduce well-framed regulations and codes of practice which provide appropriate guidance to secure the independence of its expert panels and of its Accreditation Council.

ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The review panel commends the agency for its ongoing commitment of to transparency and the publication of information, and for the quality of its three-language website.

ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The review panel commends that agency on the preparation and publication of its comprehensive IQAS Manual which outlines and brings together all aspects of its internal quality assurance.

ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

The review panel commends the detailed attention give by IAAR in its accreditation procedures and in its standards and criteria to the implementation of the 2015 ESG.

ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES

The review panel commends the agency for its arrangements in supporting institutions in developing a self-assessment.

The review panel commends the agency on its systematic and thorough procedures for post-accreditation monitoring.

ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS

The review panel commends IAAR on its systematic and well regulated processes for the recruitment and training of its experts.

The review panel finds the consistent inclusion of employer representatives in the accreditation work of the agency, together with the training programme for them, to be a particularly notable strength.

The review panel commends the agency on establishing the pool of international experts and on the substantial level of representation of these experts in its accreditation processes.

ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES

The review panel commends the agency on the quality of the documentation defining the standards and criteria that upon which its accreditation processes are based.

ESG 2.6 REPORTING

The review panel commends IAAR on the publication of its reports in English translation.

OVERALL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**ESG PART 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES****ESG 3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY, AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE****Panel recommendation**

In order to strengthen the contribution of students to as a stakeholder group to IAAR's governance and work, the panel believed that the IAAR Accreditation Council would benefit by increasing the student representation in its membership.

Panel conclusion: substantially compliant

ESG 3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS**Panel recommendations**

The panel recommends that, in the medium term, the agency should consider how it can use the information contained in its accreditation reports so as to inform general developments in higher education policy and practice. In this context, it would be appropriate to consult with HEI's to seek their views on areas of information or guidance that would be most relevant and valuable to them. The panel recommends that the agency further develops its current work to communicate to institutions and to the public more widely the significance of its quality assurance activities, and provides further guidance in understanding the significance of the outcomes of accreditation.

Panel conclusion: Substantially compliant

ESG 3.5 RESOURCES

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**Panel recommendations**

The panel recommends that IAAR, as it implements fully its internal quality assurance procedures, maintains regular internal reviews and reports concerning the level of performance against the measures that it has defined for internal quality assurance.

The panel recommends that the agency's periodic surveys of experts and institutions be reviewed with the aim of increasing their usefulness, and that the agency should consider ways in which the resulting information could be shared more widely. In addition, evaluative feedback and comment on individual accreditation events should be introduced.

The panel recommends that in the interest of public information, IAAR makes a more concise and accessible statement regarding its internal quality assurance available on its website, possibly in the form of an executive summary of the IQAS Manual.



Panel conclusion: Substantially compliant

ESG 3.7 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG PART 2: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel recommendations

The agency may wish to review its checklists of criteria with a view to making them more manageable within the duration and scope of an accreditation event.

The review panel considered that to improve further the reporting on HEI's internal quality assurance it would be desirable for IAAR now to review its *2011 Guidelines for organising and conducting the external expertise in the educational expertise of the education organisations*. The review should aim to give the agency's experts more detailed guidance on how to use the IAAR 2015 standards and how to ensure that these were adequately covered in the main body of accreditation reports as well as in the concluding checklists.

Panel conclusion: Substantially compliant

ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE

Panel recommendation

The panel recommends that the contribution of student views to the design and review of the agency's quality assurance methodologies should be strengthened.

Panel conclusion: Substantially compliant

ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES

Panel recommendations

The panel recommends that the agency ensures that its planning ensures that there is sufficient time for the proper preparation and confirmation of accreditation reports before their consideration by the Accreditation Council.

The panel recommends that IAAR review its use of 'cluster' accreditation events. The review should define the maximum practical size of a cluster, taking into consideration the effect of such arrangements on the participation of single stakeholder experts, and the adequacy of the information on subject programmes contained in the resulting reports. In particular, the agency should ensure that in designing 'cluster' accreditations, a student panel member is able to participate and contribute fully to the procedures with regard to individual subject programmes.

Panel conclusion: Substantially compliant

ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 2.6 REPORTING**Panel recommendations**

The review panel recommends that IAAR review its guidelines with a view to providing a more developed specification of the format of the report, perhaps including a standard template for different types of accreditation.

In this context, the panel further recommends that reports on 'clusters' of programmes be redesigned so as to provide a detailed statement on each individual programme

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**Panel recommendation**

IAAR is recommended to review the constitution and membership of its Commission for the Consideration of Appeals and Complaints. The review panel advises that its membership should not include members of the Accreditation Council, and that the membership should be broadened to include appropriately experienced members of the academic community.

Panel conclusion: Partially compliant

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The review panel would like to make some general suggestions, extending beyond strictly interpreted ESG which IAAR may wish to consider when reflecting on its further development.

Regarding its governance and management structures, IAAR may wish in the medium term to review its Statutes. Such a review should seek to make completely transparent the separate responsibility and authority of the Accreditation Council for all academic-related matters in the accreditation activity of the agency. There should be a clear differentiation between the role of the Accreditation Council and the role, responsibilities and authority of the Founder Director of the agency.

The agency might also wish to consider the value of appointing a new overarching governance body, which can advise IAAR on the broader policies, management, and strategic direction of the agency, thus freeing the Accreditation Council to concern itself primarily with accreditation matters.