



«АККРЕДИТТЕУ ЖӘНЕ РЕЙТИНГТИҢ
ТӘУЕЛСІЗ АГЕНТТІГІ» КЕМ

НУ «НЕЗАВИСИМОЕ АГЕНТСТВО
АККРЕДИТАЦИИ И РЕЙТИНГА»

INDEPENDENT AGENCY FOR
ACCREDITATION AND RATING

TO SUPERVISORY BOARD

PROGRESS REPORT

on the activities of the Independent Agency for
Accreditation and Rating
for 2018

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Nur-Sultan, 2019

In 2018, the IAAR created a Supervisory Board to further improve the system of independent accreditation, its transparency and effectiveness, as well as to implement IAAR Development Strategy for 2016-2020. Following the recommendations of professional and public associations of Kazakhstan and international partners, the Council includes government officials, representatives of employers and an international expert. The Supervisory Board's core competence is to monitor and generate recommendations to the IAAR management on matters of strategic management. Based on the Supervisory Board's regulations the Director of the Agency reports to the Supervisory Board once a year on the IAAR operational results.

Strategic operational guidelines for the IAAR in 2018:

- ✓ development of the quality assurance system using the best international experience;
- ✓ development and improvement of accreditation standards and criteria;
- ✓ international institutional and specialized (program) accreditation of educational organizations;
- ✓ rating research;
- ✓ professional development of experts in the field of quality assurance.

The IAAR has been conducting international institutional and specialized (program) accreditation in the Central Asian region, which is recognized at the national scope in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and rating research in the Republic of Kazakhstan since 2014 and in the Kyrgyz Republic since 2018. On April 6, 2017, the IAAR was added to the Register of accreditation bodies of the Ministry of education and science of the Kyrgyz Republic. In 2018, the IAAR was recognized at the national scope by the Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The IAAR's activity complies with ESG and WFME standards. IAAR Standards and Guidelines have the exclusive copyright.

On December 14, 2018, the IAAR's representative office was opened in the European Union in the city of Riga (Latvia). Under the strategic development framework, the representative office contributes to:

- ✓ enhanced international activities;
- ✓ intensive work in the European Education Area;
- ✓ expanded partnership in innovative projects.

The IAAR works closely with foreign quality assurance agencies: Rosakkredagentstvo, National Accreditation Center, Education Quality Assurance Agency, FIBAA, ASIIN, ACQUIN, AAC-DEVA, A3ES, RAEX Analytics, ISIT, AIC, ACBSP, etc.

The IAAR applies the best quality assurance related world practices, introduces effective quality enhancement mechanisms, helps to improve the efficiency and quality of educational and scientific activities of educational organizations. The IAAR views its purpose of activity in rendering support to educational organizations in identifying key priorities, potential opportunities and prospects for their development; in promoting the qualitative update of educational programs taking into account future professions and meaningful trends of national and international development, wider integration of Kazakhstan into the global education area and learning activities of Kazakhstani educational institutions on the external market for academic study services.

Core activity of the IAAR is related to institutional and specialized (program) accreditation of educational organizations - higher education institutions, scientific organizations running academic study programs of postgraduate education, advanced training institutes, educational institutions implementing programs of technical and vocational, post-secondary education, as well as international schools. The IAAR independently develops accreditation standards and criteria, as well as conducts rating studies of programs for higher and postgraduate education, technical and vocational education organizations by levels and course areas.

Responding to new challenges of the time, the IAAR, via its accreditation activities, standards and procedures, directs educational organizations to meet the

diverse students' interests and capabilities, broadly use international experience, modern education and digital technologies, and increase responsibility for the quality of services provided.

Additions and amendments to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Education", introduced on July 4 in 2018, served as a new impetus to the development of education and accreditation activities. The processes aimed to broaden academic and managerial independence of HEIs, develop a real competitive environment, apply learning outcomes and competencies' recognition procedures acquired beyond the framework of formal training programs have been further developed.

Closer to the end of 2018, the IAAR developed a new IAAR Development Strategy for 2019-2023 based on the trends analysis of the global higher education and its development in the Republic of Kazakhstan, IAAR Development Strategy for 2016-2020 implementation results and following international experience. The "IAAR Development Strategy for 2019-2023" defines its mission, vision, strategic directions, goals, objectives and key performance indicators for the medium and long term. The main strategic objectives serve as the basis for the design of annual action plans and the IAAR's strategy implementation plans.

IAAR Development Strategy has been developed taking into account national education policies and legislation. To achieve strategic goals, the priority is to ensure that the Agency's accreditation procedures comply with ESG requirements, as well as the policies of European quality networks.

The IAAR organized and formalizes the internal environment for the full involvement of both employees and stakeholders in achieving its strategic goals.

Thus, the IAAR continuously satisfies current demand for an independent, objective, professional external review of education activities.

1. IAAR's QUALITY ASSURANCE ACTIVITY IN EDUCATION BASED ON INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



The strategic guidelines of the IAAR activities aim to strengthen the status of a recognized, internationally competitive agency for quality assurance in education. The IAAR strives for excellence and sustainable growth of its potential on quality assurance in education.

The IAAR activities are also based on the goals and objectives set for the national education system, formulated in the program documents: Strategic Development Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2020; State program for the development of education and science of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2016-2019; State program of industrial and innovative development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and educational organizations focused on the graduates' employment and graduate demand in the regional and national labor markets, introduction of distance learning technologies, expansion of e-learning resources and digitalization of HEIs. An important priority was the managerial and academic independence of HEIs (Law "On Education" of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated July 4, 2018 No. 172-VI LRK) and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

In 2018, the IAAR performed its operations under the IAAR Development Strategy for 2016-2020 and the Agency's work plan for 2018, designed taking into

account the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in education, the state's and the European Higher Education Area educational policy. The year of 2018 is especially important for the IAAR as the Agency entered the international market and for the first time conducted international accreditation of a foreign HEI in the Kyrgyz Republic. Also, for the first time, the IAAR conducted institutional accreditation of the additional education establishment - the Republican Center for Professional Development "Sanat" and primary (ex-ante) accreditation of study programs.

The IAAR demonstrated high competitiveness and directed its activities to continuous satisfaction of the Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan demand for an independent, objective, professional assessment of educational activities. Educational organizations were accredited in accordance with standards and guidelines, harmonized with European and international standards for quality assurance in education. In 2018, **62** educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, **2** foreign HEIs from the Kyrgyz Republic, **484** study programs of various levels of education in Kazakhstan and **4** educational programs at HEIs of the Kyrgyz Republic were accredited under the international institutional and program accreditation procedures correspondingly.

The Agency's quality related policy is focused on the continuous development and provision of quality services for consumers at all levels: the state, society, the educational system, educational organizations, and students. Work with customer services is targeted to satisfy their requirements and is based on the principles of feedback and mutually beneficial partnership based on maximum responsibility for the assumed obligations.

1.1 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The accreditation process is implemented under the IAAR's standards and provisions. The IAAR's standards take into account the principles of the Bologna process (objectivity, transparency, mobility, public information) and are used by

HEIs under their self-assessment procedures, as well as for harmonization of the national system of education quality with the international requirements of the European Higher Education Area.

The IAAR's standards are developed based on the principles of quality assurance:

- ✓ HEI's responsibility for the quality of education services provided;
- ✓ conformity of quality to the needs of various higher education systems in the international educational market;
- ✓ HEIs' focus on the development of a quality culture;
- ✓ acknowledgment of students', other stakeholders', economy and society needs and expectations of the services provided.

In 2018, sustained efforts have been made to ensure the IAAR's operations in terms of improved regulatory and methodological documentation of the Agency, introduced additions and amendments in compliance with the updated legislative framework and international practice. Moreover, in 2018 aiming to implement recommendations of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA), the IAAR systematized review procedures and enhancement of the standards for institutional, specialized (program) accreditation aligning them with relevant educational legislation and ESG requirements. To ensure the quality and spread the best European practice, the IAAR standards were harmonized with the WFME standards. The standards were revised in full compliance with the "Instructions for the Development and Improvement of IAAR Standards" with due account of recommendations from HEIs, academic experts, employers, representatives of studentship and professional organizations. In the course of the experts and HEIs survey, the Agency recognized the need for optimization and reduction of standards criteria.

In 2018, the following new standards were developed:

- Standards and guidelines for program accreditation in the Kyrgyz Republic jurisdiction; Kyrgyzpatent certificates for copyright have been received.

- For international accreditation procedures of foreign HEIs, the IAAR has developed the following standards that take into account national legislation in the field of higher education:

1) for institutional accreditation of medical organizations - “Standards and guidelines of the IAAR for international accreditation of medical organizations of education (WFME / AMSE based)” (approved and enforced by the IAAR order No. 68-18 / 1-OD as of 25/05/2018).

2) for specialized (program) accreditation of medical organizations - “Standards and guidelines of the IAAR for international accreditation of basic medical and pharmaceutical education (WFME/AMSE based)” (approved and brought into force by the IAAR order of No. 68 / 1- 18-OD dated 25/05/2018).

3) for institutional and specialized (program) accreditation of non-medical educational organizations - “Standards and guidelines of the IAAR for the international accreditation of foreign educational organizations and educational programs (ESG based)” (approved and enacted by the IAAR order No. 68 / 1-18-OD as of 25/05/2018). “Standards and guidelines of the IAAR for international accreditation (ESG based)” are developed based on international accreditation standards to comply with European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG-ENQA). Under these standards, the IAAR performs evaluation and recognizes operational quality of foreign HEIs and their academic study programs.

The stages and basic principles of international accreditation procedure are presented in the above Standards, which take into account the international accreditation and the Bologna process experiences, and also correspond to the ESG and WFME standards.

The standards of international institutional and program accreditation are published on the IAAR website at the following link: <http://iaar.kz/en/accreditation/standards>.

The IAAR has also designed the following:

- The Standards for primary HEIs' program accreditation (ex-ante) (approved and enforced by the NI IAAR Director's Order No. 68-18 / 1-OD as of May 25, 2018) and the Self-assessment guideline for primary HEIs' program accreditation (ex-ante). Under the studied international experience, and analysis of national higher education systems, including the analysis of the HEIs and experts survey outcomes, the IAAR has been conducting primary accreditation (ex-ante) of new educational programs since 2018.

- Standards for primary accreditation of basic medical education programs (approved and enforced by NI IAAR Director's Order No. 68-18 / 1-OD as of May 25, 2018).

- Standards for institutional accreditation of continuous education. Since the adoption of the Sorbonne and Bologna declarations, major changes have occurred in the higher education systems of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In the updated version of 2015, ESG standards (second generation) stipulate objective recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior education, including recognition of non-formal education. The final European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference - Paris Communiqué (May 2018) defines the goal of ensuring that the comparable qualification requirements of higher education of one EHEA country are automatically recognized on the same basis in other countries allowing access to further education and the labor market. Another area of the IAAR's interest is the international experience on recognition of non-formal learning. Lifelong learning implies a new approach to learning, a person's ability to be engaged in a continuous process of potential growth and learning opportunities in a wide variety of formal and informal situations. Non-formal education is acquired at various courses and at the workplace and is confirmed by an official document (certificate). In 2018, Kazakhstan searched for methods of objective recognition of higher education qualifications, correspondent periods of study and prior education, including recognition of non-formal education. Accordingly, all these trends in the EHEA and the higher education system of individual states are reflected in the

IAAR's accreditation standards. Since 2018, the IAAR, under the accreditation standards of organizations that implement non-formal education curricula, has been conducting institutional accreditation of continuous adult education institutions. Potential customers of an external quality assessment are lifelong learning organizations and capability development institutions for education and healthcare experts.

1.2 INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN



In the context of globalization and integration of education systems, the role and importance of international accreditation as an essential tool for quality assurance in education and enhanced competitiveness of educational institutions, primarily Kazakhstani HEIs, in the national and international

educational services market has sharply increased. An important area of IAAR's activity in 2018 was the organization and conduct of international institutional and / or specialized accreditation (re-accreditation) and procedures for HEIs, TVE, medical educational institutions, capacity development institutes, international schools, etc.

Institutional Accreditation. Under the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education” institutional accreditation is the quality assessment procedure in the organization of education by the accreditation body for compliance with the declared status and established standards of the accreditation body.

The quality assessment procedure of educational organizations was performed based on standards and guidelines for institutional accreditation of higher, vocational, basic and postgraduate medical education, medical colleges, additional education organizations for adults, schools implementing international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education.

In 2018, the IAAR accredited **62** educational organizations under the institutional accreditation procedure including **17** HEIs, **42** TVE organizations (including medical colleges), **2** international schools and **1** additional education organization (Appendix 1-2). Quantitative indicators for the entities of international institutional accreditation of educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Quantitative indicators of accredited educational organizations for 2018 (institutional accreditation)

	7 years (with re-accreditation)	5 years	3 years	1 year	Not accredited	Total
HEIs						17
National		1				1
State	1	3				4
Incorporated						
Private		6	3	2		11
Medical HEIs		1				1
TVE organizations						42
TVE medical		10		1		11
TVE		27	4			31
International schools		2				2
Continuous education organizations			1			1
Total	1	50	8	3	0	62

The data in Table 1 indicates that of the 62 IAAR accredited educational institutions about 80% (50) of EOs are accredited for 5 years, about 13% (8) for 3 years, and about 0.5% (3) for 1 year and only 1 EO - for 7 years. Thus, the vast majority of educational organizations have demonstrated compliance with the IAAR standards of institutional accreditation.

HEIs were recommended to pay attention to the implementation of a student-centered approach to teaching, expansion of internal and external academic mobility of students and teachers, harmonization of the content of educational programs with the educational programs of leading Kazakhstan and foreign HEIs, as well as professional certification of students, conducting an external assessment and examination of educational programs, etc.

Colleges accredited under the institutional accreditation were advised to give attention to ensured connection between the educational program and subsequent stages of professional training or production, improved mechanisms for continuous activity enhancement based on the analysis results of the satisfaction degree of the needs of teachers, staff, students and employers; introduction of the modern information technologies systems and innovative teaching methods based on monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of their use; improved system of information and methodological support for teachers, the system of academic students counseling and the provision of social and financial support for students; meeting the educational, personal and career needs of students.

In 2018, the IAAR conducted the first institutional accreditation of continuous education institution - the Republican Center for Professional Development “Sanat”. The center’s learning activities were evaluated under the Standards for Institutional Accreditation of the organization of additional education, harmonized with international standards.

Specialized accreditation. In compliance with the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education”, specialized accreditation is an assessment of the quality of individual study programs implemented by the educational organization.

Independent specialized accreditation facilitates:

- state funding by the organization of education received as education grants and a state order for accredited specialties;
- permission to EOs for the issuance of state diplomas for accredited educational programs;
- expansion of international cooperation in the development of joint educational and double degree programs, joint research projects with foreign partner HEIs;
- further implementation of the academic mobility of students and teaching staff in the framework of accredited educational programs;
- implementation of international agreements on the mutual recognition of academic degrees and education related documents;
- further overseas studies and graduates' employment.

The quality of educational programs is evaluated based on standards and guidelines for specialized accreditation of higher, vocational, basic medical and postgraduate medical education, medical colleges, continuing education programs for adults, schools implementing international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education.

Under the framework of specialized (program) accreditation in 2018, a total of **484** educational programs were accredited, including **209** EPs of civilian HEIs and **11** EPs of medical HEIs, **264** EPs of TVE, including medical colleges. **3** academic study programs of medical colleges were not accredited (Appendix 3-4). The quality of educational programs is assessed based on the Standards and guidelines of the IAAR for specialized accreditation of HEIs of educational programs harmonized with the ESG - 2015 standards.

According to the IAAR's general statistics, in 2018 **25** Kazakhstan HEIs and **220** educational programs, including medical, were accredited under the specialized accreditation procedure. It is the highest indicator by the quantity of HEIs since 2012. Of the **25** Kazakhstani HEIs that were accredited under the specialized accreditation procedure, 3 national universities, 5 - state universities, 1 - incorporated, 13 - private

HEIs, 3 - medical. Indicators of international specialized accreditation of EPs of the Republic of Kazakhstan are given in table 2.

Table 2. Quantitative indicators of accredited educational programs for 2018 (specialized accreditation)

	7 years (with re-accreditation)	5 years	3 years	1 year	Refused in accreditation	Total
HEI	4	131	63	11		209
BA	4	92	50	6		152
MA		30	11	5		46
PhD		9	2			11
Medical HEIs		11				11
BA		2				2
MA						
PhD		3				3
Residency		6				6
TVE		211	17	1		229
TVE Medical		25	6	4	3	35
Total accredited	4	378	86	16		484

The data in Table 2 demonstrates that the vast majority of the EPs of HEIs and TVE have been accredited for 5 years.

For the purposes of a quality analysis of accredited study programs, identification of urgent problems in the development of HEIs in Kazakhstan, the IAAR annually analyzes the external expert panel reports under the specialized accreditation procedure.

The analysis results allow the IAAR to stay informed on the outcomes of the EEP activities, to identify the most important trends in the development of educational organizations, new approaches to quality assurance in education, and enhance the IAAR's work effectiveness as a whole.

In 2018 the IAAR analyzed **57** External Expert Panel (EEPs) reports on **209** educational programs (For more details, refer to the Analysis of the External Expert Panel Reports for 2018 under specialized accreditation procedure. Astana, 2019).

Of the 209 accredited educational programs, 73% were undergraduate programs, 22% were graduate programs, and 5% - doctoral programs; 4 programs were accredited for 7 years (Aktobe Regional State University named after K. Zhubanov), 131 academic study programs run by 18 of the 22 HEIs are accredited for a period of 5 years.

Therefore, 63 academic study programs were accredited for 3 years, 11 academic study programs for 1 year.

The ratio of accredited academic study programs run by state and private HEIs to the overall quantity is approximately the same - 40% and 38%, respectively, 12% of accredited academic study programs belong to national HEIs and 10% of accredited academic study programs to universities - joint-stock companies.

Accreditation results indicated that many HEIs have a positive practice of developing educational programs in compliance with national and international requirements.

HEIs approved the requirements for the content of educational programs, the algorithm for their development and implementation mechanism. At the same time, the specifics of educational programs are secured, and regional characteristics and interests of stakeholders, primarily employers and students, are taken into account. A number of HEIs are implementing joint / double-degree educational programs.

The attention of HEIs has been drawn to the implementation of the student-centered learning principle, the use of various digital technologies and innovative teaching methods that encourage students' motivation and critical reflection, and the expansion of their academic freedom; attracting foreign experts to introduce the best practices in the local educational and scientific process.

The experts recommendations aim to improve the quality of educational programs and their practical orientation, taking into account the labor market

requirements and professional associations of employers, competitiveness and graduates demand in the national and international labor markets.

In 2018, for the first time, primary (ex-ante) accreditation of educational programs of HEIs of Kazakhstan was conducted. For instance, the educational programs of the University of International Business - 6M030200 International Law for 3 years (December 20, 2018- December 19, 2021), and the South Kazakhstan Medical Academy: 5B130300 - Pediatrics, 5 years (December 20, 2018- December 19, 2023), 5B130200 - Dentistry, 5 years (December 20, 2018- December 19, 2023) and 6D110400 - Pharmacy, for 5 years (December 20, 2018- December 19, 2023) were accredited.

1.3 IAAR's INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

The year of 2018 is especially important for the IAAR as it reached international level and for the first time conducted international accreditation of a foreign HEI. The first among the accredited foreign educational organizations were Kyrgyzstan HEIs.

On April 6, 2017, the IAAR was recognized as an accreditation body under the “Procedure for the Recognition of Accreditation Agencies in Education” (Governmental Decree of the Kyrgyz Republic dated September 29, 2015 No. 670) and included to the National Register of the Kyrgyz Republic. The inclusion of IAAR in the Register of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic is an indicator of the agency's sustainable development with its major regulatory and methodological base, professional composition of the expert community and the focus on promotion of a quality culture in Central Asia.

This recognition opened in 2018 new opportunities for accreditation of higher educational institutions and academic study programs in Kyrgyzstan. As such, during 2018, the IAAR discussed accreditation issue with Kyrgyz educational institutions, and proactively interacted with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as organized various informational and educational events on international accreditation and ranking of HEIs.

As such, in 2018, the IAAR held a seminar on the preparation for international accreditation and familiarization of higher educational institutions of Kyrgyzstan with the IAAR's ranking principles and methodology. The seminar was attended by K.G. Kozhobekov, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. The seminar program covered issues of ensuring a quality culture in the system of higher and postgraduate education. The IAAR presented the ranking criteria applicable for HEIs in the Kyrgyz Republic.

In order to discuss topical issues on quality assurance in higher and postgraduate education, taking into account ESG - 2015, the IAAR held a Regional seminar "The role of accreditation on quality assurance in HEIs" (October 3-4, 2018, the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek) within the framework of the Erasmus + program. During the seminar, key areas of further cooperation related to quality culture development were identified, and brought together experts from Spain, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Russian Federation. The seminar was attended by ENQA Director Maria Kelo, who presented the European Association experience on Higher Education Quality Assurance.

On May 2018, the IAAR conducted an external assessment of education quality in one of the classical, state HEIs of the Kyrgyz Republic - Osh Technological University named after Academician M.M. Adysheva, who has a great history of training engineering personnel, since 1963. External expert panel, chaired by the 1st category expert, Professor K.Sh. Shunkeev, conducted the procedure for assessing the compliance of Osh Technological University with the criteria of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating. The quality of academic services at the University was assessed under the IAAR standards, developed specifically for HEIs of the Kyrgyz Republic taking into account national legislation. Osh State University was accredited under the international institutional and program accreditation procedures (the latter in reference to 532300 Chinese studies (undergraduate program)). Quantitative indicators for the entities of international institutional and program accreditation of the main educational programs of higher and postgraduate education of the Kyrgyz Republic are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. IAAR’s International accreditation procedure (Kyrgyz Republic)

	Educational organization	Type of accreditation / EP (course title)	Accreditation period
2018			
REPUBLIC OF KYRGYZSTAN			
	Institution “Osh State University”	<i>Institutional accreditation</i>	5 years 14/06/2018- 13/06/2023
		<i>Program Accreditation:</i> 532300 - Chinese Studies (bachelor’s degree)	5 years 14/06/2018- 13/06/2023
	Institution “Osh Technological University”	<i>Institution “Osh Technological University”</i>	3 years 31/05/2018- 30.05.2021
		<i>Program Accreditation:</i>	
		640200 - Electricity and electrical engineering (bachelor’s degree)	3 years 31/05/2018- 30.05.2021
		580100 - Economics (bachelor’s degree)	3 years 31/05/2018- 30.05.2021
		710100 - Informatics and computer engineering (bachelor’s degree)	5 years 31/05/2018- 30/05/2023

1.4 POST-ACCREDITATION MONITORING OF ORGANIZATIONS AND / OR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Post-accreditation monitoring is part of accreditation process from the accreditation day until the next independent external assessment, the purpose of

which is to maintain compliance with accreditation standards. Post-accreditation monitoring is meant to monitor implementation of the external expert panel recommendations by the accredited organization of education and / or educational programs under the criteria of the corresponding type of accreditation.

Accredited educational organizations submit to the IAAR an interim report that contains information on such institution's activities related to implementation of the external expert panel recommendations for the entire period from the moment of accreditation and other data on all changes in the organization of education following the IAAR's standards and accreditation criteria.

Regularly, under the work plan of the Accreditation Council a Chair of the Expert Council on Higher Education reports on the outcomes of post-accreditation monitoring of educational organizations and / or study programs.

In 2018, the IAAR conducted post-accreditation monitoring of **2** HEIs and **328** EPs, **5** colleges and **17** EPs, the first organization of secondary education. In total for 2018 - **8** organizations and **345** study programs. Post-accreditation monitoring quantitative indicators related to organizations and / or study programs are given in table 4.

Table 4. Post-accreditation monitoring of educational organizations and / or study programs for 2018

Educational organization		Institutional accreditation	Specialized / Program accreditation
HEIs	Civil	2	212
	Medical	0	116
Colleges	Civil	5	17
	Medical	0	0
Organizations of secondary education		1	0
Total		8	345

The vast majority of educational organizations and EPs successfully passed post-accreditation monitoring, and decisions of expert commissions were approved by the Accreditation Council. However, for instance, during post-accreditation monitoring at the State University named after Shakarim, Semey city on October 29-30, 2018, Panel experts noted weak efforts made to improve education and science related activities under the accredited education programs. An analysis of the HEI's reports and action plans to implement the External Expert Panels recommendations revealed the failure to comply with a number of recommendations and low dynamics in the development of seven educational programs. The Accreditation Council decided to withdraw the certificates of accreditation of the following education programs: 5B073100 - Life Safety and Environmental Protection; 5B080300 - Hunting and animal husbandry; 5B071200 - Mechanical Engineering; 6M071200 - Mechanical Engineering; 5B011900 - Foreign language: two foreign languages; 5B060100 - Mathematics; 6M060100 - Mathematics.

1.4 RATING STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION



One of the most significant IAAR activities is the organization and implementation of rating studies. The IAAR's ranking is an assessment of the quality of educational programs by levels and course areas meant to improve the quality, thus to foster enhanced competitiveness of education services and provide the general public and stakeholders in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan with information

on the extent that the quality of learning services offered by HEIs complies with modern requirements of the labor market, and signifies recognition of the teaching staff and the effectiveness of research efforts at the HEI.

Ranking study is conducted in the following areas:

- Rating of the Republic of Kazakhstan HEIs by study programs, in accordance with the levels and course areas;
- Rating of the Republic of Kazakhstan HEIs by course areas and by levels: BA - MA - PhD;
- General rating of the Republic of Kazakhstan HEIs by course areas;
- General rating of the Republic of Kazakhstan HEIs' faculty members (TOR-50).

Under the IAAR Charter, rating studies are conducted separately from the accreditation process and do not affect accreditation outcomes.

Under the HEIs ranking study the IAAR uses publicly available sources of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and international e-resources: information on institutional and specialized accreditation of HEIs, data related to study grants, Altyn Belgi sign holders, state grant “The Best University Teacher”, state awards and scholarships for the science development in the Republic Kazakhstan, scientific grants, patents and inventions, as well as publications on the Hirsch Index (ISI Web of Knowledge, Thomson Reuters and Scopus). The core competitive advantage of the IAAR's rating is maximum objectivity and transparency.

The IAAR was strongly attentive to explaining to the pedagogical community and HEIs leaders the specifics of ranking study methodology and techniques at the training workshops. As such, the IAAR held a workshop at the L.N. Eurasian National University Gumilyov on January 19, 2018 for vice-rectors, heads of structural divisions in order to clarify the technology for the national HEIs demand ranking. The training workshop was attended by representatives of more than 50 organizations of higher and postgraduate education. On February 2018, a training seminar was held on the IAAR rating for representatives of the western and central regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the Aktobe State University named after K.Zhubanov.

The IAAR conducts ranking studies using an electronic program (technology) of academic ranking, which is backed by pertinent quantitative theory of quality assessment of study programs.

As part of the ranking study efforts, the IAAR developed and implemented the HEIs ranking technology based on international experience and national specifics. This technology is universal and enables to set the ranking of HEIs in general and differentially for academic study programs by the course areas at the same time in the format of a three-level structure of undergraduate-master-doctor of philosophy (PhD). The technology excludes expert judgment and generates an objective picture, earning the trust of educational organizations. The objectivity of the methodology is explained by the technology that sums up the indicators of five criteria that are identical across all three levels, taking into account the information provided by the HEI itself.

Programs ranking, backed with the positive trends in the field of higher and postgraduate education, enables to view those areas of the national system of expert training that require updating and / or revision of strategic tasks focused on satisfying demands of society, national and international labor markets. The broad scientific and pedagogical community becomes more interested in the IAAR rating studies as reflected in the publication on ranking issues in the republican educational socio-political newspaper “Bilimdi El / Educated Country”, which widely discussed functions and significance of the rating under the topic “Quality of university education” in the Online program of the national television channel Khabar on October 30, 2018 (<https://newsvideo.su/video/9596408>). The growing regional interest was also witnessed during the Agency’s presentation on the International Accreditation and Rating of the IAAR - Factors for the Development of a Quality Culture at the Educational Forum “Quality of Higher Education - the main condition for sustainable development of the country ”, hosted by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Association of Higher Education Institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic and as the special interview shows for the Kyrgyz

television channel Kabar, Bilim AKIpress
(<https://www.edu24.kg/ky/news/1307.html>) .

The IAAR's rating study outcomes are presented in the published directory Independent Rating-2018 and published on the IAAR's webpage (<http://www.iaar.kz/ru/rejting>), as well as since 2018 they have been published on the Republic of Kazakhstan Prime Minister webpage, Kutbilim newspaper website (<Http://kutbilim.kg/2019/06/25/nezavisimyj-rejting-vuzov-kyrgyzstana-2019/>), and least but not last on the IREG observatory webpage (<http://ireg-observatory.org/en/1004-kazakhstan-top-20-ranking>).

The dynamics of indicators of the HEIs study programs, which participated in the ranking of 2018 is available in the following print media: on HEIs of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the newspaper "Kazakhstanskaya Pravda" dated May 15, 2018, the National Republic of Kazakhstan Higher Education Demand Rating - 2018 (<https://www.kazpravda.kz/news/obshchestvo/nazvani-lideri-natsionalnogo-reitinga-vostrebovannosti-vuzov-rk-2019>)

The IAAR's rating system was adapted and approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, and was first applied in 2018 to determine positions of HEIs of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The ranking of the Kyrgyz Republic HEIs was published in the Qutbilim newspaper dated June 19, 2018 (<http://bilim.akipress.org/en/news:1456307>). For the first time, in 2018, the ranking program for personnel training made it possible to determine the level of programs competitiveness in **31** specialties of **11** course areas of **17** HEIs in Kyrgyzstan. The first ranking of the Kyrgyz Republic HEIs showed that the largest number of competitive programs relates to "Pedagogical Education" (6 of 8 specialties), "Culture and Art" (4 of 9 specialties). The analysis results of the first ranking of HEIs of the Kyrgyz Republic were discussed at a meeting of the National Accreditation Council chaired by the Minister of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic G.K. Kudaiberdiyeva (dated June 8, 2018).

The IAAR's ranking by the Ministry of Education and Science is included in the list of indicators for Kazakhstan HEI's activity assessment, added as one of elements

in the study program passports and is taken into account in the distribution (of grants) of state applications to HEIs for training personnel at the BA, MA, PhD level programs.

The independent rating of IAAR takes into account all the variety of HEIs and their features, contributes to their competitiveness and ensures public awareness of the quality compliance degree of learning services to market requirements.

An independent IAAR rating for higher education organizations focused on improving the quality of education is an effective tool for measuring their own success and positioning in the national education services market. The IAAR rating, as a measure of the extent of the quality assurance in education, also allows HEIs to develop in compliance with the OECD requirements and contributes to them getting global education area approach.



1.5 INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP



The IAAR has full membership in a number of European, Asian and American networks and quality assurance agencies for education (INQAAHE, IREG, CEENQA, CIQG, AQAIIW,

APQN) and is the first and only organization from the CIS to be recognized by the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME) - an international organization that sets the standards of medical education for all countries. It also gives the IAAR the right to conduct international accreditation of medical education organizations and programs.

Development of international cooperation with foreign agencies. An Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating conducted joint activities to exchange and train experts, implement joint study projects and exchange experiences with most foreign accreditation agencies under the signed memorandums of cooperation.

European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). Since 2005, EQAR is a key organization that ensures further development of the European Higher Education Area through the enhanced transparency of quality assurance and provision of information about agencies operating in European countries. On June 20, 2017, the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating, by resolution of the Registration Committee, was included in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). Joining the EQAR is the highest achievement and recognition for accreditation bodies.

On March 12, 2018, the IAAR jointly with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) held the International Workshop on Professional Development of IAAR Experts. The international IAAR and EQAR

workshop was hosted at the Kazakh National Academy of Choreography in Astana. The keynote workshop speakers were EQAR President, Mr. Karl Dittrich, Director of Higher Education of the Netherlands Education Inspectorate, Mr. Hendrik Michael (Erik) Martijnse, IAAR Director, Mrs. Alina Zhumagulova and IAAR Expert Council Chair, Mrs. Skiba Marina et al. More than 150 experts attended the workshop, including rectors, Vice-rectors of HEIs, members of the expert community, scientists, professors, teachers involved in the quality of education. The main goal of the international workshop was to shape a professional community for the external assessment of HEIs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the capacity development of IAAR experts to explain the latest trends of the Bologna process. This international workshop demonstrated the expert community how to assess educational programs at a higher level and apply their professional skills in the process of independent international accreditation.

The prospects for cooperation in higher education quality assessment between IAAR and EQAR were discussed on March 13, 2018 during the visit by EQAR President, Mr. Karl Dittrich and Professor Sundara (Sam) Lingam to the office of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating. During the visit, colleagues met with the agency staff and got familiarized with the organization of work. During the meeting, a useful exchange of views was followed by deliberations on outcomes of the past workshop on professional development of IAAR experts and the possibilities of joint cooperation.

For quality assurance purposes education, the IAAR proactively collaborated with the European Association for the Assurance of Quality in Higher Education (ENQA). On May 31 - June 1, 2018, representatives of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating participated in the ENQA training for experts on evaluation of quality assurance agencies (Madrid, Spain). The training enabled to improve professional qualifications and exploring European approaches to expert training. This has expanded the opportunities for IAAR to participate in international reviews as part of external evaluations of European agencies for compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education

Area (ESG). More information about ENQA training is available at <http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/events/enqa-agency-reviews-training-of-reviewers-2/>.

On October 18-19, 2018, the 9th General Assembly of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was held in Astana. The meeting of the General Assembly was attended by 55 organizations of the accreditation and quality assurance, from 36 countries of the European Higher Education Area. In the General Assembly the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating was represented by its Director, Mrs. Alina Zhumagulova and Head of International Projects and Public Relations, Mr. Timur Kanapyanov. The General Assembly discussed the development of quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, as well as quality assurance in e-learning. In the afternoon, the General Assembly continued with poster sessions on best practices used by ENQA members (full membership). The program of the second day was focused on discussions of current and promising issues: a work progress report, election of new members of the ENQA Board of Directors, discussion of the organization's development plans, holding of the Forum and ENQA General Assembly in 2019, and other organizational issues of the Association. Details of the IX General Assembly are available on the ENQA website.

In October 2018, the President of the European Association for the Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) Mr. Christoph Grolimund visited the office of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating. During the visit, ENQA President met with IAAR staff. IAAR Director Mrs. A. Zhumagulova told her foreign colleague about the main priorities and prospects of the agency. They have also exchanged views on the possibilities of expanding European and regional cooperation, including on methodological and information support for accreditation activities.

In November 2018, for the purposes of post-monitoring procedure and verification of the IAAR's compliance with the requirements of international standards, the ENQA Expert Panel consisting of Tove Blytt Holmen and Beate Tremml visited the IAAR headquarters. Agency's Director A. Zhumagulova informed the

Expert Panel members about the results of work, achievements and development prospects of the IAAR. During the visit, members of the Expert Panel met with the staff and got acquainted with the qualitative changes and IAAR's main development priorities. A constructive exchange of views took place on expanding international cooperation in the field of quality assurance in education. Upon completion of the visit, the ENQA Expert Panel highly valued the IAAR activities and confirmed its compliance with international standards for quality assurance in education.

Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network (APQN). On October 19, 2017, the IAAR received full membership in the Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network (APQN). Its mission is quality improvement in higher education of the Asia-Pacific region through the enhanced operations of quality assurance agencies and their extended mutual cooperation.

The annual General Assembly of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network was hosted in Nagpur (India) on March 22-24, 2018 under the framework of which the APQN International Conference "Capacity Building for Next - Generation Quality Assurance in Higher Education" was hosted as well and attended by representatives of the IAAR. The event brought together representatives of more than 35 countries of the Asian region, Russia, Europe (Great Britain, Croatia, Lithuania) under the auspices of improved quality of education and its accessibility for more students. During the conference, issues of building and developing the capacity of quality assurance agencies were discussed; best practices of accreditation agencies; challenges in quality assurance systems in Asia and Europe; program accreditation and institutional audit; management opportunities; quality assurance agents and professional auditors in Asian countries, their roles in recognizing the qualifications and mobility of students, etc.

CEENQA. The annual workshop and general assembly of CEENQA, organized by the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education ASCAL, was attended by the IAAR consultant on legal issues, Mr. Medetov B.E. (Tirana, Albania) on May 11-12, 2018. At the workshop "Evaluation of Quality Assurance Agencies for compliance with ESG-2015 Standards" CEENQA President, Mrs. Nora

Skaburskiene, Director Dhurata Bozo and Chair of the Accreditation Council Professor Arjan Gjonça (ASCAL, Albania) delivered speeches. The workshop was attended by Mr. Karl Dittrich, EQAR President, Mrs. Christina Rozsnyai (ENQA). At the workshop, CEENQA members - the Estonian Agency for the Quality of Higher and Professional Education (EKKA) and the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE, Croatia) presented best practices of thematic analysis. On the second day Tempus / ERASMUS + projects implementation reports and CEENQA board members reports were presented. The General Assembly also addressed the organizational issues of CEENQA. Further information on CEENQA is available at www.ceenqa.eu

An important mechanism for ensuring the high quality of educational services in the world, including Kazakhstan, is the rating institute. IAAR as a member of the International Observatory of Academic Ranking and Excellence IREG is actively involved in the events of this international organization. In 2018, IAAR representatives attended the IX IREG Conference “Ranking and Accreditation - two roads to the same goals?), which took place at the University of Hasselt, Belgium. The conference brought together representatives of quality assurance organizations, scientists and experts in the field of accreditation and ranking of higher education from more than a hundred countries, including the USA, France, Italy, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Turkey, Russia, India, Qatar, China, Kazakhstan and etc. The Conference agenda was focused on discussing key issues of improving the quality of higher education at the national, regional and international scopes, as well as the role of the rating and accreditation system in achieving the planned results of education and determining further areas for improvement. Such issues as the role of rating and accreditation in the development of the quality of higher education in various regions of the world, accreditation and rating in university strategy management, rating as a tool for determining benchmarks and recent achievements in academic ranking were examined.

IAAR maintained close partnership with international organizations leading in the field of education and science. For this purpose, the IAAR Director Mrs.

Zhumagulova A.B. and Head of International Projects and Public Relations Mr. T. Kanapyanov participated in the UNESCO Regional Consultation Meeting on Quality Assurance for Western Europe on the Role of Quality Assurance in Higher Education: challenges, development and trends on February 15-16, 2018 in Geneva. The purpose of the event was to obtain information on the problems faced by this region, and thereby determine the range of issues for discussion at the final Conference in November 2018 in France. On April 23 - 24, 2018 in Moscow (Russia) - Agency Director Mrs. A. Zhumagulova and adviser to the agency Mrs. Yanovskaya O.A. took part in the UNESCO Regional Meeting for Eastern Europe and Central Asia - "The role of quality assurance in higher education: problems, achievements and prospects". At the meeting Mrs. Zhumagulova A.B. made a presentation on the topic: "Development of the quality system of education in the Republic of Kazakhstan: IAAR experience". The target audience consisted of education quality assurance agencies, HEIs, government agencies, companies and stakeholders in higher education. During the meeting attendees identified main opportunities and tasks for the development of the quality system of higher education, discussed the role of higher education and quality assurance for sustainable development and best experience on quality assurance in higher education.

Under the Agency's initiatives to extend its international partnership profile IAAR conducts constructive cooperation with state authorities and educational organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic. On May 18, 2018, the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic hosted a Bishkek international forum "Accreditation - a new vector for quality assurance in educational organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic", dedicated to topical issues of quality improvements and competitiveness of higher education in Kyrgyzstan taking into account international standards. The forum was attended by the Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic Mr.

K.G. Kozhobekov, deputies of the Parliament's Senate of the Republic of Kazakhstan, chair of the IAAR's Accreditation Council Mr. K.K. Bozymov,

corresponding member of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic Mr. E. Mambetkunov, expert representative of the IAAR in the Kyrgyz Republic, Director of the Institute of Natural and Technological Sciences of Batken State University M. Tairov, heads of higher educational institutions of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, IAAR experts and representatives of the academic community. The forum was attended by more than 150 people. The main goal of the forum was to create an effective and productive communication platform on issues of quality assurance in education, on the IAAR international accreditation procedure, sharing experience and ideas on modernization and development of the higher education system in the Kyrgyz Republic. At the Plenary session attendees discussed issues of quality assurance in education under the international standards, modern approaches to assuring openness and transparency of higher education. The forum allowed extending the Agency's international framework and deepening understanding and significance of learning services' quality assurance issues in the Central Asian region.

On November 23, 2018, Bishkek hosted an Education Forum "Quality of higher education - main condition for the country's sustainable development", organized by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Association of Higher Education Institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic. Representatives of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating participated in the forum and discussions of the role and opportunities of the HEI's community in the country development, and implementation of the basic principles of the national strategy for quality assurance in higher education.

For public awareness and networking purposes among top managers of Central Asian universities, the IAAR organized a study tour to the Nazarbayev University in October 2018 to view its campus, library, and laboratories of the engineering school. A delegation also visited the Higher School of Education.

International projects involvement. In 2018, the IAAR took an active part in the implementation of international projects: "Review of best practices with a view to develop a systematic approach to aligning the National Qualifications Framework with professional and higher education programs", funded by the World Bank; as

well as in the project “Implementing an Education Quality Assurance System through University-Business-State cooperation in HEIs (EDUQAS) ”; in the implementation of a number of Erasmus + projects targeted to enhance the quality assurance system in education, as well as in various activities under the framework of the EU, Erasmus +, etc.

Thus, in 2018, during the implementation of the International Project “Review of best practices with a view to develop a systematic approach to aligning the National Qualifications Framework with professional and higher education programs” (KZSJ - 1.2 / CQS), the IAAR developed mechanisms for accreditation systems and agencies operating in the Republic of Kazakhstan jurisdiction to ensure the sustainability of the implementation of the competency-based approach in TVE and higher education. The project is focused to improve the methodology of designing academic study programs in the context of labor market requirements, as well as to elaborate a development strategy for the existing quality assurance system to bring the National Qualifications Framework in line with professional and higher education programs. It also directs to develop a strategy for transition of agencies to promote improvement from the control functions of adapting the tools of accreditation agencies for evaluation of the competency-based training programs, to improved experts’ skills and assured continuation of the process of working with HEIs on the internal quality assurance system.

In the framework of the project “Implementation of the Quality Assurance System for Education through University-Business-State Cooperation in Universities (EDUQAS)”, representatives of the IAAR participated in monitoring this project, which was held in the premises of the Kazakh University of Economics, Finance and International Trade (KazUEFMT) on April 27, 2018 in Astana. The IAAR is a national partner of the EDUQAS project. The aim of the project is to improve education quality assurance systems by developing effective internal quality standards leading to better job opportunities for students at universities in partner countries. The internal quality control system will be based on an analysis of the needs and capabilities of Kazakhstan and Ukrainian HEIs, the experience and best

practices of the quality system in the Bologna process. During the meeting, the progress of the project and the expected results were discussed.

On September 18, 2018 representatives of the IAAR - Chair of the Expert Council Mrs. M.A. Skiba and strategic development adviser G.K. Iskakova participated in the work of the International Conference: “New Approaches to Learning: Higher Education as a Process of Developing Employment Potential”, which was held in Almaty at the University of Narxoz in the framework of the Erasmus + program project “Creation of Competence and Employment Development Centers (Complete)”. The main objectives of the conference: creating a dialogue platform for employers, career centers, graduates, recruiting agencies, professional associations, representatives of public services and universities to discuss methods for identifying and updating the competencies needed by young people to build employment potential. The conference presented the IAAR approaches to enhance the role of employers in the quality assurance of the educational process and the results obtained by the consortium participants.

Cooperation in the framework of Erasmus + projects is unfolded through various joint events, participation in seminars and conferences held by the National Council of Erasmus + in Kazakhstan. On May 14, 2018, IAAR representatives took part in the Cluster meeting “Ensuring the Influence and Sustainability of Erasmus + Structural Projects to Improve Higher Education Potential in Kazakhstan”, held at the Kazakh National Agrarian University as part of the Erasmus + program, whereby in presence of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan representatives attendees were presented their projects and discussed project implementation problems. The purpose of this meeting is to familiarize with the goals and results of the structural projects of the Erasmus + “Capacity building in the field of higher education” in collaboration with HEIs and the IAAR; discuss measures to increase their impact at the national level, ensuring sustainability of results. During the round table, attendees discussed and adopted recommendations to participants and project partners, as well as the best practices and experiences for better introductions of recommendations.

The IAAR representatives were also engaged in the International Seminar “Recognition of the Results of Formal and Non-Formal Education and Training”, organized on June 19-20, 2018 by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan in cooperation with the National Council of Erasmus+ in Kazakhstan. The international seminar was aiming to enhance the cooperation of stakeholders in developing tools for recognizing the results of formal and non-formal education. The EU experience was presented by the European expert, Dr. Marek Frankowich as an example of legislative provision of financing and the introduction of formal and non-formal education. Seminar participants got acquainted and discussed the substantive aspects of non-formal education, creation of a system for recognition of study results.

IAAR collaboration with national partners. An important dimension of IAAR operations is constructive cooperation with national partners - state and non-governmental organizations and associations. To provide scientific, practical and methodological assistance to educational organizations, IAAR conducted a series of seminars and trainings to explain the standards and procedures for accreditation and to ensure the quality of education, spread best practices in the field of strategic planning, design and monitoring of educational programs. On April 3, 2018, in Almaty, IAAR held a workshop on the topic: “Accreditation of technical and vocational education organizations - imperatives of the time” with the goal of creating a dialogue platform for the exchange of experiences in accreditation of colleges. The workshop was attended by representatives of educational organizations, the President of the Association of Colleges of Almaty, the heads of organizations of TVE in Almaty and Almaty region. Over 150 people took part in the forum. The main goal of the workshop was to discuss current development issues of cooperation and the formation of a professional community for the external evaluation of colleges. As part of the workshop, training was held to discuss the main issues in preparation for the accreditation procedure, as well as approaches to enhance the responsibility of colleges for the quality of educational services.

In order to effectively cooperate in improving the quality of Kazakhstan's higher and postgraduate education, the IAAR and the Center for the Bologna Process and Academic Mobility of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan on November 2, 2018 signed a memorandum of cooperation. The parties expressed therein their interest in the effective implementation by Kazakhstan of the parameters of the Bologna process, joint participation in the European Higher Education Area events, and advisory support to Kazakhstan's HEIs on academic freedom, enhanced research and project activities, strengthened professional expert potential, and joint analytical research. The key areas of cooperation were determined as representation of interests in the field of quality assurance at the national and international scopes, expert support in establishing international relations and contacts. The Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Center under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan on November of 2018 conducted at the premises of L. Gumilyov Eurasian National University a seminar "Outcomes of the Paris Conference of Ministers of the EHEA Education: Institutional Development of Kazakhstan's HEIs – Outlook until 2020", whereby the IAAR representatives were proactively engaged. The Agency Director, Mrs. A.B. Zhumagulova made a report titled "Accreditation - a factor in improving the quality of education in the Republic of Kazakhstan", making remarks about changes in the educational and scientific activities of HEIs that have undergone accreditation. Particular attention at the seminar was given to such issues of quality assurance in higher education as the development of mutual trust, increased academic mobility and recognition of qualifications as well as study durations.

The priority areas in the implementation of the national partnership are civil society institutions, primarily youth organizations. On November 27-28, 2018, IAAR representatives took part in the VIII Civil Forum of Kazakhstan "Civil Society and State: Dialogue. Partnership. Confidence". Heads of Kazakhstani and international NGOs, deputies of the Parliament, representatives of state bodies, heads of business structures and educational organizations, experts exchanged best practices, and tried to identify common approaches to addressing the main agenda issue of the forum -

how to develop civil society in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Within the framework of the forum, 5 panel sessions, 35 venues, conferences, thematic sections and parallel industry sessions for NGOs with the participation of the first leaders of 13 central government bodies have been conducted. The section “The Role of HEIs and Schools in the Formation of a proactive civil society” was fruitful. The actual problem of how to overcome the “closeness” of universities and schools to society, not limited to traditionally scientific and educational activities was discussed. Participants of the discussion agreed that universities should become centers for generation of ideas and knowledge, as well as reproduction of critical thinking and autonomy, a model of civil society, a tool for changes and become a development institute of Kazakhstan society.

Collaboration with youth and student organizations. The Students Alliance of Kazakhstan is the largest organization that unites thousands of students across the country and strive to improve the quality of education in HEIs, ensure the observance of students’ rights, create conditions for the efficient implementation of the intellectual, creative, spiritual, innovative potential of students.

The IAAR while implementing its activities, has been cooperating with representatives of students, involving them in the external evaluation of HEIs and colleges, as well as in the Expert and Accreditation Councils of the Agency.

On April 19, 2018, the IAAR signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Republican Student Movement “Alliance of Kazakhstan Students ”. The IAAR’s and the Student Alliance activities are focused to rise the level of openness (transparency) and objectivity in the field of quality assurance in education; to create students’ awareness about the quality of academic learning services and study programs; to develop cooperation by involving students as experts and training of experts to evaluate the quality of education among students to participate in the independent accreditation procedures.

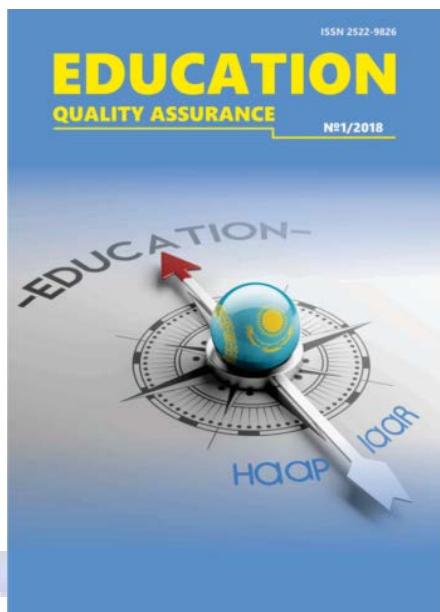
The collegial governing bodies of the IAAR have gained a wider representation of stakeholders represented by students who are proactively involved in decision-making on issues related to the accreditation of education organizations. Conclusion

of the Memorandum contributed to further raising the awareness and involvement of students in quality assurance processes and improving the system of domestic higher education. In May 2018, at a meeting of the IAAR's Accreditation Council (Minutes of the meeting No. 37 dated May 11, 2018), it was decided to expand the composition of the IAAR's Accreditation Council by including students representatives recommended by the Kazakhstan Student Alliance in the Council. Therefore, in the composition of the IAAR Accreditation Council there are 2 students from the Alliance of Kazakhstan Students (<http://iaar.kz/en/about/accreditation-council>), 1 student in the Expert Council for Higher Education (<http://iaar.kz/en/about/expert-councils/expert-council-for-higher-education>), 1 student is a member of the Expert Council for Technical and Vocational Education (<http://iaar.kz/en/about/expert-councils/expert-council-for-technical-and-vocational-education>). Following the recommendation of the National Medical Association, 1 student is included in the Expert Council for Medical Education (<http://iaar.kz/en/about/expert-councils/expert-council-for-medical-education>).

The aforementioned collegial bodies of the IAAR proactively participated in various areas of activity: from the development and revision of the IAAR's documentation and methodology on internal quality assurance to the implementation of accreditation and decision-making procedures. The expansion of the composition of the IAAR's collegial bodies by representatives of students provides more opportunities to incorporate students' views in the IAAR's activities.

In 2018, the IAAR, as a socially responsible organization, conducted charitable activities and supported socially vulnerable population groups represented by the children of the "SOS Children's Village" in Astana. Throughout the year, the IAAR team took care of children, provided school and office supplies, sports equipment and other goods necessary for children to study and rest.

1.6 PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT QUALITY ASSESSMENT RESULTS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND THE ACTIVITIES OF EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS



The priority area of the IAAR's activity in 2018 was to provide the general public with comprehensive, reliable and relevant information on its operations in the field of quality assurance in education, to foster formation of public opinion in terms of rising social significance of the accreditation institute, to highlight and popularize the best practices of educational organizations.

Work is continuously underway to widely attract public attention to the results and significance of the agency's activities to ensure the quality of education through the organization and participation in webinars, seminars, workshops, conferences and forums.

The public was informed via the Agency's external communication channels: website www.iaar.kz, social network pages, and its international scientific and analytical journal "Education. Quality Assurance".

As part of the expansion of information interaction, the IAAR actively works with the media and gives considerable attention to informational cooperation with foreign and national media, online publications, etc., the processes of informing the public about the activities of the quality assurance agency, as well as the accreditation results of HEIs and study programs (<http://iaar.kz/en/publications/newspaper>).

The IAAR, in the interests of public information, publishes on the website information on all the main activities of the Agency and ongoing events (forums, workshops, etc.) (<http://iaar.kz>). The IAAR's website provides documents and comprehensive information that, in a more accurate and accessible form, makes it

possible to inform the public about the main provisions of the quality assurance policy and the IAAR's activities (<http://iaar.kz/en/about/internal-quality-system>).

Important areas of cooperation with regional, republican and foreign media are publications of materials prepared by the staff and experts of the IAAR "Education. Quality Assurance". The papers of the agency's employees were published in the Journal of the International Academy of Education, the republican newspaper Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, the republican educational socio-political newspaper Bilimdi El: An educated country, and the socio-educational and popular science newspaper Kutbilim of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Higher Education Discovery (HED) journal and others. Aiming to raise the interest and awareness of the population about the IAAR activities, the following work has also been completed:

- Interview to a local TV channel in Kokshetau (March 13, 2018).
- Participation in the "It is important to know" program of the Khabar TV channel (May 24, 2018).
- Coverage of the meeting of the IAAR's Accreditation Council by Khabar TV channel (June 1, 2018).
- Interview of the Agency Director Mrs. A.B. Zhumagulova to a leading republican television channel "Khabar" (June 19, 2018).
- Interview to a Tajik television channel No. 1 on the quality assurance system in education in Kazakhstan and the prospects for the development of accreditation in the Central Asian region (June 19, 2018, Khujand, Republic of Tajikistan) as part of the IAAR's representative participation in the International Conference "International HEIs Cooperation as an important factor in improving the quality of education".

For further activities on quality assurance in educational services and to create awareness of educational and scientific organizations, the IAAR annually publishes the international scientific and analytical journal "Education. Quality Assurance". The journal is assigned the international standard serial number ISSN 2617-0493 and is issued in three languages (state, Russian and English), has e-versions. The Regulations about the journal, the Rules for the publication of papers were developed, the composition of the editorial board from among foreign scientists and

specialists was determined and approved. Considerable work is underway to widely disseminate the journal “Education. Quality Assurance” among educational and scientific organizations not only in the Republic of Kazakhstan, but also abroad.

The Journal “Education. Quality Assurance” is included in the Kazakhstan citation base (JSC “National Center for State Scientific and Technical Expertise”), the Catalog of periodicals of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and a subscription index has been received. From the second half of 2018, work was carried out to organize a subscription to the journal and its distribution in order to expand the information space. In order to improve the quality of published papers, the editorial board of the journal was revised and extended, and foreign members of the editorial board were included in its composition. The frequency of the journal’s publication has been increased from 1 to 4 times a year. A separate site for the journal “Education. Quality Assurance” <http://iaar-education.kz/> has been created. The journal serves as a dialogue platform for discussion of topical issues on quality assurance in education and identification of problems to increase the effectiveness of educational and scientific organizations. In 2018, in the annual 4 issues of the journal “Education. Quality Assurance” published 66 papers and submitted 7 interviews. The largest number of materials - **37** papers devoted to pressing issues of international accreditation, 9 papers on various issues of the development of vocational education, 7 - on the development of academic freedom of HEIs and 13 papers on quality assurance in education. Of the total number of papers, **19** were published by foreign authors and co-authors (9 - scientists from non-CIS countries, 5 scientific articles - from Russia and 5 publications - from Central Asian countries).

In 2018, work was actively conducted to widely attract public attention to the results and significance of the activities of the agency to ensure the quality of education by organizing and conducting seminars, workshops, conferences and forums.

2. DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IAAR ACTIVITIES

The activities of the Agency's management aim to create a quality culture and enhance organizational culture, achieve strategic goals, ensure professional and personal development of employees, identifying and satisfying the interests and requests of key stakeholders. Determination of the satisfaction degree of the IAAR services consumers is the Agency's priority task.

2.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

The IAAR's quality related policy is focused on continuous development and provision of high-quality services to consumers at all levels: the state, society, the education system and other stakeholders of Central Asian states. Work with consumers of services is targeted to satisfy their requirements and is based on the principles of feedback and mutually beneficial partnership based on maximum responsibility for the assumed obligations.

The Agency pays priority attention to: the formation of a quality culture; continuous improvement of the internal quality assurance system that meets the requirements of international and Kazakhstani recognition authorities; ensuring the unity of the Policy and Development Strategy.

General management of the internal quality assurance system is carried out by the IAAR director, who coordinates the content of the internal quality assurance system (IQAS). This system serves as a tool for the implementation of the Quality Policy through the achievement of quality goals.

The IAAR structure includes the following divisions: "Medical projects", "International projects", "Institutional and specialized accreditation project for HEIs", "Project for accreditation of TVE organizations", "Rating project" and "Information and analytical project", each responsible for its own activities. The

management is implemented by the director. The Agency has Expert Councils, the chairs of which are elected from experienced experts.

To make an objective and independent decision on the accreditation of educational organizations and / or study programs, the Agency has an Accreditation Council, which makes decisions on the basis of self-assessment of educational organizations and / or academic study programs and the EEP report. The composition of the Accreditation Council (changes in composition) is based on the recommendations of public or professional associations, government authorities (for instance, the National Medical Association, the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Atameken, the Center for the Bologna Process and academic mobility, etc.). To ensure objective decision-making, each member of the Accreditation Council (hereinafter - AC) signs the AC Member Code. The Regulations on the Accreditation Council and other regulatory documents that are publicly available have been prepared and adopted by the Agency.

For enhanced efficiency the IAAR has developed a Guideline to the internal quality assurance system, describing the internal quality assurance system developed to implement the Quality Assurance Policy.

In 2018, the IAAR introduced changes aiming to improve the management and governance structure, ensuring transparency and openness of the agency and its structural units. The IAAR reviewed its governance structure, the Charter and created a new governing body - the IAAR's Supervisory Board. These changes were discussed at meetings of the collegial bodies of the agency. The new version of the Charter more clearly defines the responsibilities and powers of the Accreditation Council on all academic issues related to the accreditation activities of the agency and delimits the powers of the Accreditation Council, the Founder and the Director of IAAR. To further improve the system of independent accreditation, its transparency and efficiency, as well as the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan for 2016-2020, the Agency established a Supervisory Board. According to the recommendations of professional associations and public associations of Kazakhstan and foreign partners, the Council included government officials, representatives of

employers and a foreign expert. The competencies of the Supervisory Board are based on the implementation of control and development of recommendations to the IAAR leadership in the field of strategic management and assistance in the development of the agency, and the performance of public control functions. The composition of the Supervisory Board is available on the IAAR's website <http://iaar.kz/en/about/supervisory-board>. Based on the Regulations on the Supervisory Board, the Director of the Agency reports to the Supervisory Board once a year on the results about the progress of the IAAR activities.

To ensure compliance of the activities of educational organizations and / or study programs with the standards of IAAR and for continuous improvement, post-accreditation monitoring is conducted, the rules of which are developed by IAAR in the Regulations on post-accreditation monitoring.

The IAAR strives to continuously improve its performance via annual plans for the implementation of the Development Strategy, involvement of staff and experts in working groups on continuous improvement of IQAS, internal audit of IQAS, management reviews, corrective and preventive measures.

Since 2018, the IAAR regularly conducts internal reviews and reports with the analysis of its performance. The IAAR updates materials related to periodic surveys of experts and educational organizations in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of its operations. Under the Strategic Development Plan of the IAAR for 2016-2020, the IAAR analyzes the national system for quality assurance in education, which meets the requirements of the ESG Standard for conducting a thematic analysis. The IAAR works on thematic analysis (case studies) to use the information contained in the EEP accreditation reports to inform educational organizations and the public about the development of the national quality assurance system and trends in higher education in general.

The ENQA Council recommendations implementation group revised the “cluster” approach to specialized accreditation of study programs based on the analysis of the national system of higher and postgraduate education. Amendments were made to the “Regulations on the rules of procedure for the specialized

accreditation of the educational organization”, “Regulations on the rules of the procedure for institutional accreditation of the educational organization”, “Guidelines on the organization and conduct of the external assessment procedure in the process of accreditation of the educational organization and (or) study program” with well-defined maximum practical cluster size and the number of study programs. An expert panel evaluates at most 30 study programs per visit. One cluster includes no more than 6 homogeneous study programs. Representatives of studentship are included in the panel for each accredited cluster. In the event of joint institutional and specialized accreditation, and accreditation of more than 3 clusters, at least 2 international experts and at least 2 employers are included in the EEP.

For joint international accreditation, the procedure for setting up an expert panel and clusters is governed by a separate Guideline developed jointly with a partner agency (amendments have been made to the relevant Regulations of the agency). The amendments introduced on the cluster approach were widely discussed in the Expert Councils (March 2018) and the IAAR Accreditation Council (May 2018).

In 2018, the IAAR reviewed the composition and membership of the Appeals and Complaints Review Commission in compliance with the recommendations of the ENQA Council. A specially created working group to amend and supplement the “Regulations on the Appeals and Complaints Review Commission”, having studied the documentation and experience of other agencies, made proposals for amending and supplementing the “Regulations on the Appeals and Complaints Review Commission”. The proposals were reviewed at meetings of the Expert Councils (March 2018), the Accreditation and Supervisory Councils (May 2018). Upon the recommendation of the Supervisory Board, it was decided to amend the “Regulations on the Appeals and Complaints Review Commission”. The amendments introduced are targeted to broaden the representation of professional associations of employers and students. Non-permanent members of the Commission are recommended by the chair of the Commission to be nominated from among employers, representatives of educational organizations as qualified specialists under the scope of educational organizations for a comprehensive and objective review of appeals and complaints.

The “Regulations on the Appeals and Complaints Commission” and the permanent composition of the Commission are available on the agency’s website <http://iaar.kz/en/about/appeals-and-complaints-commission>.

In 2018, for the “3.4 Thematic Analysis” ESG Standard’s implementation purposes the IAAR drafted an annual report on outcomes of accreditation activities, which includes: analysis of quality improvement proposals, suggested by expert commissions for higher education institutions; a review of best practices in accredited higher education institutions; proposals for IAAR to improve its internal quality, including review of standards and criteria; as well the data on international IAAR’s activities and cooperation; information on quality assurance activities organized by IAAR.

The report is annually submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and is published on the IAAR’s website <http://iaar.kz/en/about/iaar-reports/annual-reports>.

According to the Plan for a thematic analysis of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating for 2018-2023, in 2018 an analysis of Academic Mobility and Internationalization of Education Programs Implementation for 2012-2018 was carried out and the corresponding analytical report is posted on the IAAR website.

In order to define the satisfaction degree of education organizations with the implementation of the institutional and specialized accreditation process of IAAR and the degree of influence of accreditation on further development and improvement of the internal quality system of educational institutions, the IAAR annually prepares an analytical report on the outcomes of a survey of the IAAR accredited HEIs. The survey results are used to review and improve the internal quality assurance system of IAAR. At the meeting of the Expert Council on Higher Education (protocol No. 12 dated March 12, 2018), HEIs’ survey form was revised, HEIs 2017 survey outcomes were summarized, and HEIs’ recommendations on the topical issues of thematic analysis were taken into account. An analytical report on the HEIs survey results is annually posted on the agency’s website <http://iaar.kz/en/about/iaar-reports/analytical-reports>.

Aiming to define the development trend in the field of best HEIs practices, as well as ways to improve the quality of education following the EEP recommendations, the IAAR conducts an annual analysis of EEP reports. Monitoring is used to analyze and improve policies on quality assurance in education at the national level. Analysis of external expert panel reports is annually published on the agency's website (<http://iaar.kz/en/about/iaar-reports/analytical-reports>).

The IAAR, taking into account the ENQA recommendations, based on the revised and supplemented “Guidelines on the internal quality assurance system” for a more complete implementation of internal quality assurance procedures, completed work to update the internal reporting, mechanisms for the wider use of periodic feedback surveys to raise the efficiency of internal quality assurance system procedures (IQAS).

A specially created working group prepared the IQAS enhancement proposals and submitted them to the Expert Council for Higher Education for discussion (Minutes No. 12 as of March 12, 2018). After discussion of these proposals, the Expert Council sent them for review to the Supervisory Board, which made specific recommendations to the IAAR Director on amendments to the “Guidelines on the internal quality assurance system”. By executive order of the IAAR Director (No. 68-18 / 1-OD dated May 25, 2018), the “ Guidelines on the Internal Quality Assurance System” amended paragraph No. 8.2.2. regarding formalization of internal reporting to define performance and efficiency of procedures. According to these amendments, a working group on internal review is created at least once a year. The review outcomes are summed in a report and submitted for review of the Agency's Director, which allows for corrective and preventive actions for IQAS improvement.

Also, amendments have been made to paragraph No. 5.6 of the IQAS Guidelines, whereby a mechanism has been introduced for the wider use of surveys of accredited HEIs and agency experts to improve accreditation procedures and implement feedback practices.

In 2018, the IAAR developed a new IAAR Development Strategy for 2019-2023. The “IAAR Development Strategy for 2019-2023” defines the mission, vision,

strategic directions, goals, objectives and key performance indicators for the medium and long terms. The main strategic objectives serve as the basis for the design of annual action plans and the IAAR strategy implementation plans. The opinions and proposals of EC members, who are not only IAAR experts, but also representatives of HEI and the academic community, were taken into account in developing the new Strategy of the development of the IAAR. IAAR Development Strategy for 2019-2023 was discussed at the AC meeting in December 2018, where most of the members of the AC are represented by non-governmental organizations, associations and alliances of employers. IAAR Development Strategy was approved by the Director at the end of 2018 and published on the IAAR's website.

The IAAR has two types of surveys of accredited HEIs and experts: 1) after each visit; 2) once a year. When developing a survey form for an accredited HEI for feedback after each accreditation procedure, the ENQA Feedback Questionnaire for Agencies was used as a model of the questionnaire. The results of this survey are summarized and analyzed at least once a year by the staff of the Information and Analytical Project, and submitted for review to the Expert Councils and presented as recommendations to the IAAR Director for decision-making. This process is also governed by the IQAS Guidelines (paragraph No. 5.6.1). The outcomes of the internal review and stakeholder survey are taken into consideration when drafting annual activity plans and the IAAR strategy implementation plans.

On November 23, 2018, the IAAR completed its post-accreditation monitoring procedure conducted by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Based on the External Expert Panel report, measures to implement the ENQA recommendations planned by the IAAR for 2016-2018 were successfully implemented, signifying a high-quality culture rooted at the Agency to achieve the IAAR's Strategic Plan expected outcomes.

Thus, the IAAR systematically improves the internal quality assurance system under the requirements of international recognition organizations.

2.2. EXPERTS CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EFFICIENCY OF EXPERT ACTIVITY

An independent evaluation of educational organizations is conducted by the IAAR with the help of highly qualified experts. The database of domestic and foreign experts is being expanded and updated on an ongoing basis, which totaled more than 2,000 people in 2018.

Foreign experts are highly qualified and experienced specialists from Germany, the Netherlands, the USA, Hungary, Serbia, Turkey, Denmark, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Greece, Estonia and other countries.

The expert database is extended by engaging national and international representatives, a wider involvement of experts from students and employers during the accreditation procedure of educational institutions and study programs.

The IAAR systematically works to extend the qualitative composition of experts of all categories: national, students and employers and the database of experts of the first category, as well as to build-up the database of experts from the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and other countries via the following measures:

- IAAR provides training and certification of experts in line with the Regulations on the training, retraining and lifelong learning of external experts.

- IAAR conducts lifelong learning of experts through training seminars, also engaging in the venture specialists from international agencies and quality assurance networks. Trained external experts are entered into the agency database, which is used to form the External Expert Panel.

Training seminars for professional development of experts. In compliance with the Development Plan and to build up a high-quality expert staff of the IAAR from HEIs professors, representatives of employers and students, the IAAR conducted a series of training workshops and training sessions.

In 2018, 8 seminars on accreditation and rating studies were organized, some of which are presented in table 5.

Table 5. Information on training workshops of the IAAR on accreditation and rating studies in 2018

Date and venue	Organizer / Purpose	Participants
International Workshop on Professional Development of IAAR Experts (March 12, 2018, Astana)	IAAR in cooperation with EQAR Purpose: Further training of IAAR experts, acknowledgment of international experience in the external evaluation of study programs.	IAAR experts and staff
April 2-3, 2018, Almaty, IAAR	IAAR Workshop: “Accreditation of organizations of technical and vocational education - imperatives of the time”	Heads of TVE in Almaty city and Almaty region.
June 12-14, 2018, Taraz city	IAAR Seminar on clarification of methodological foundations and standards of institutional accreditation of HEIs	Representatives of HEIs of southern Kazakhstan
October 27-28, 2018 Shymkent city IAAR	IAAR Training seminar on the clarification of the methodological foundations and standards of institutional and specialized accreditation of vocational and technical education.	Heads, engineers and teaching staff of technical and vocational education organizations
November 23, 2018, Almaty	IAAR in collaboration with the Student Alliance Purpose: capability development of expert students of Kazakhstani HEIs, the formation of the EEP related work skills	40 students - IAAR experts of 8 leading HEIs in Almaty

During the year, in the cities of Karaganda, Taraz, Astana	IAAR in cooperation with the regional chambers of entrepreneurs “Atameken” Training seminar	Employers and company representatives
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On March 12, 2018, an international workshop on professional development of IAAR experts was held in Astana, organized jointly with EQAR. The workshop discussed leading trends on quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as qualification requirements for IAAR experts, etc.

The IAAR pays special attention to the training and professional development of experts from students and employers. Therefore, on November 23, 2018, the IAAR held a training seminar for student experts of the IAAR. The Almaty Students Alliance brought together 40 students - proactive members of student organizations from 8 leading HEIs of Almaty to participate in the seminar. During the seminar, students were trained on accreditation standards, quality assurance tools, and trends in the education system. Students got acquainted with the organization of the visit of the External Expert Panels and the ethical standards of the expert. The venue and platform for the seminar was the Narkhoz University premises. During 2018, the IAAR in cooperation with the regional chambers of entrepreneurs, Atameken regularly conducted training workshops for employers.

The IAAR brings new experts to conduct the accreditation procedure and to familiarize with the mechanisms of expert activity. In 2018, 6 teachers and 2 students from 5 HEIs of the Kyrgyz Republic were involved in the accreditation procedures of Kazakhstani HEIs as national and foreign experts (Kyrgyz National University named after Zh. Balasagyn, Osh Humanitarian and Pedagogical Institute named after A. Myrsabekov, Kyrgyz University of Economics named after M. Ryskulbekov, Kyrgyz-Uzbek University, International University of Kyrgyzstan).

The IAAR experts are proactively engaged in the development of methodological guidelines for accreditation and rating procedures, publication of

articles, analytical materials in the scientific-methodological and information journal of the IAAR “Education QA”. Permanent participants in training workshops organized to clarify the current IAAR standards and rating methodology are Professor, 1st Category expert Mr. K.Sh. Shunkeyev, Chair of the Expert Council for Higher Education Mrs. M. Skiba, expert Mrs. G.B. Tutkarayeva, representative of the Kyrgyz academic community of Kyrgyzstan, professor Mr. M.M. Taiirov.

National and foreign experts of IAAR participate in forums, congresses, conferences, round tables, workshops and trainings in order to exchange experiences and improve the quality assurance system. The IAAR staff and experts are proactive participants at various levels of quality assurance activities in education conducted by international agencies and networks on quality assurance, as well as the Ministries of Education of Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan).

The professional activities of external IAAR experts are governed by a set of regulatory documents that determine the ethical behavior of the expert and his competence in the procedures of external quality assessment. The statement of the IAAR’s expert on the absence of a conflict of interest and the Code of Ethics of the expert are published on the IAAR’s website in the section of “Experts”. Important tools to ensure internal quality are annual surveys of educational organizations that have been accredited by the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating and certified experts, which contribute to the continuous enhancement of the IAAR’s operations. During the year, it conducts a survey of IAAR experts and accredited educational organizations.

Based on the prepared Regulations on expert councils, the Agency forms Expert Councils from a database of certified experts. The Agency delegates certain experts to participate in the local and international events related to quality assessment.

The IAAR is the organizer of important international events on quality assurance. So, on October 16, 2018, the IAAR in cooperation with the Foundation of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Head of the Nation, hosted the **II Central Asian International Forum on quality assurance in education**, which was attended by more than 200 people from 15 countries. The forum was addressed by

deputies of the Republic of Kazakhstan Parliament's Senate and the Majilis, vice-ministers of education of Central Asian states, rectors of HEIs of Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Belarus, representatives of employers and students. Representatives of the professional community proactively participated in the forum. Key forum speakers were Mr. Carl Dietrich, President of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), Mr. Christopher Grolimund, President of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), as well as heads of foreign accreditation authorities in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Latvia, Moldova and Russia.

The main goal of the forum was to create an international dialogue platform on quality assurance issues in education, which would contribute to the dissemination of best practices on strategic planning, design and monitoring of study programs, academic mobility, development of cooperation between HEIs, the formation of a professional community for external evaluation. The Forum had a plenary session, 3 panel sessions (“Implementation of ESG 2015 in Central Asian countries”; “The role and influence of the Bologna process on improving the education system”; “International accreditation in the Central Asian region”) and a round table “Erasmus Projects” + in the Republic of Kazakhstan.” This international platform allowed to review the best practices of international accreditation, exchange views, determine the cooperation prospects for accreditation agencies, pool their potential and resources to ensure the quality of education.

SWOT- ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONS

The SWOT analysis reflects the implementation of strategic goals and serves as the basis for the annual planning of the IAAR's operations (table 6).

Table 6. SWOT - analysis of activities

S (Strenghts)	W (Weaknesses)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognition of the IAAR in Kazakhstan and abroad; -conducting international accreditation of HEIs of the Kyrgyz Republic; - cooperation with foreign partner agencies for the mutual exchange of experts; - IAAR membership in international networks for quality assurance; - harmonization of IAAR standards with the revised ESG and WFME standards; - state registration of copyright on the standards of institutional and specialized accreditation of the IAAR; - cooperation with educational stakeholders, state and non-governmental organizations in the framework of the Bologna and Turin processes; - monitoring the implementation of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - insufficient joint projects with foreign agencies; - insufficient experience in accrediting schools that run international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education; - shortage of participation experience in international projects for the development of education and quality assurance systems.

EEP recommendations of accredited educational organizations and / or accredited study programs;

- the availability of mechanisms for institutional and specialized quality assessment: HEIs; technical and vocational education organizations; schools implementing international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education; organizations of additional adults education.

- support to WFME in activities to develop a national accreditation system for medical and pharmaceutical education;

- implementation of the technology of national ranking of study programs of Republic of Kazakhstan HEIs by levels of study (bachelor, master, doctoral (PhD));

- timely public awareness (website, media, international scientific and analytical journal “EDUCATION”, publications).

O (Opportunities)

- changes and amendments to the legislation in the field of education (2018), which opened up new opportunities in the quality assessment

T (Threats)

- unstable policy of the authorized body in the field of education on the recognition of national and foreign quality assurance agencies;

of education in Kazakhstani HEIs;

- support of the IAAR by international quality assurance networks (ENQA, INQAAHE, IREG, APQN, WFME);
- support for an independent assessment of the education quality by the state and the educational authority;
- implementation of the principles of the Bologna and Turin processes at the national level;
- recognition by stakeholders of the importance of an independent quality assurance system;
- access to national, European and international educational and research resources.

- timely public awareness about accredited educational organizations and study programs, in line with the procedure for the formation of National registries 1, 2 and 3;
- weak involvement of employers in the learning process of educational organizations, as well as in the quality assessment procedure;
- growing competition (including unfair) in the field of accreditation.

The SWOT analysis made it possible to formulate in the form of a logically consistent scheme the interaction of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats for 2019. The IAAR seeks to overcome the weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis and neutralize possible threats with the help of strengths, to identify development directions that allow strengthening the Agency's positions.

Therefore, the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating, as a recognized international agency for quality assurance in education, conducted extensive work on the external quality assurance of higher and postgraduate, professional and technical, secondary education (international schools) in the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic in 2018. As part of its operations, the IAAR pursues proactive policy of continuous improvement of the quality of education by identifying and spreading international best practices and a quality culture.

The IAAR further plans to extend its operations geography to cover educational organizations of Central Asia in line with the requirements of international networks, the IAAR's and other national regulatory legal enactments.

An Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating spreads good practice at the institutional and specialized (program) levels for the development of the national system for quality assurance in education in Kazakhstan based on international experience related to the enhancement of mechanisms for institutional and specialized assessment of the quality of education and annual staff development in collaboration with the Agency partners.

Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating proactively engages stakeholders, and issues reports on various internal quality assurance mechanisms. The Agency annually reports on the results of post-accreditation monitoring procedures completed in relation to the accredited educational organizations and / or study programs. Members of the Accreditation Councils regularly take part in the discussion of important governing documents of the IAAR, including the IAAR Development Strategy, the Implementation Plan of the IAAR's Strategy of the Development, the annual Agency Activity Plan, appeal procedures, accreditation standards and criteria, offer recommendations and suggestions to improve the IAAR's operations.

The IAAR annually submits to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic reports with recommendations on improvements of the national quality assurance system, also regularly informs about accredited educational organizations and / or study programs, participates in the discussion of critical issues of development and improvements of the education quality and offers recommendations for its improvement.

The IAAR, as a full member of European, Asian and American networks and agencies for quality assurance in education and accreditation, proactively develops further international cooperation, builds constructive partnerships, constantly expands

the boundaries of interaction with international partners, and continuously strengthens its market position in the international education area.

