



«АККРЕДИТТЕУ ЖӘНЕ РЕЙТИНГТІҢ
ТӘУЕЛСІЗ АГЕНТТІГІ» КЕМ

НУ «НЕЗАВИСИМОЕ АГЕНТСТВО
АККРЕДИТАЦИИ И РЕЙТИНГА»

INDEPENDENT AGENCY FOR
ACCREDITATION AND RATING

PROGRESS REPORT

on the activities of the Independent Agency for
Accreditation and Rating
in 2017 for the Supervisory Board



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Astana, 2018

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Introduction

Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (hereinafter - IAAR) as a non-profit organization was established in 2011 to improve the competitiveness of educational institutions both at the national and international scopes through the accreditation procedure.

In accordance with the order of the Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 14, 2017 No. 112, the IAAR is repeatedly recognized as an authorized body and is one of the leading accreditation bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan in accreditation of higher, technical and professional education.

The core operations of the IAAR are associated with the institutional and specialized accreditation procedures of educational organizations – HEIs, research organizations, implementing educational programs of postgraduate education, institutes of professional development, institutions of education, implementing study programs of technical and vocational, post-secondary education, international schools. The IAAR independently develops standards and criteria for accreditation, as well as conducts rating studies of educational programs of higher and postgraduate education, as well as organizations of technical and vocational education by the levels and course study areas.

The IAAR operates in compliance with the strategic development plan for 2016-2020. The IAAR development strategy has been designed taking into account the national policy and legislation in education.

Strategic guidelines for the IAAR activities are defined based on the goals and objectives set for the national education system, stated in the following program documents:

- Strategy “Kazakhstan-2050”: a new political course of the established state;
- National plan-100 concrete steps;
- 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 for industrial and innovative development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019.

Aiming to achieve strategic goals, the Agency’s accreditation procedures must comply with the ESG requirements, as well as with the quality assurance policy of European networks.

While supporting the state’s strategic objectives the Agency’s Quality Policy is focused on continuous development and provision of quality consumer services at all levels: the state, society, the education system, educational organizations, and students.

Working with service consumers is directed to ensure compliance with their requirements and is grounded on the principles of feedback and mutually beneficial partnership, based on maximum responsibility for the obligations assumed.

The Agency gives priority to:

- formation of a quality culture;
- continuous improvement of the internal quality assurance system that meets the requirements of international and Kazakhstan recognition authorities;
- ensuring the unity of the development Policy and Strategy.

Accreditation procedure of educational organizations is implemented in accordance with standards and guidelines harmonized with European and international standards for quality assurance in education.

The IAAR is a recognized Agency for quality assurance in education at the national, European and international scopes.

The IAAR is a full member of a number of European, Asian and American networks and agencies for quality assurance in education and accreditation:

- 1) European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (**ENQA**);
- 2) Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (**CEENQA**);
- 3) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (**INQAAHE**);
- 4) International Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence (**IREG**);
- 5) Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World (**AQAIIW**);
- 6) United States Council for Higher Education Accreditation International Quality Group (**CIQG**);
- 7) Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network (**APQN**);
- 8) World Federation of Medical Education (**WFME**).

One of the statutory goals of the Agency is to organize and conduct a rating study of educational programs of educational organizations by levels and course areas. As part of the rating study, a technology for ranking HEIs and TVE organizations has been developed and implemented, taking into account world experience and national characteristics of the education system. This technology is uniform and allows to compile the rating of HEIs as a whole and differentially for educational programs in the course areas simultaneously in the format of the three-tier bachelor-master-doctor of philosophy (PhD), as well as the rating of Kazakhstani colleges as a whole and differentially for educational programs by course areas.

For the purpose of further development of quality assurance in education services and raising the awareness of educational and scientific organizations, the IAAR publishes the journal “Education” (certificate of registration of the periodical no. 13644-ZH as of 28/05/13 Ministry of Information and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan), which includes publications by foreign authors. The journal is published in three languages: Kazakh, Russian and English and has electronic editions. The Regulations on the Journal, Rules for articles publication have been adopted, and the composition of the Editorial Board consisting from foreign scientists and specialists was determined. Major efforts are being made to widely distribute the Journal among educational and scientific organizations not only in the Republic of Kazakhstan, but also internationally. The Journal serves as a dialogue platform for discussion of current issues on quality assurance in education and identification of problems for improving the efficiency of educational and scientific organizations.

1. Quality assurance system and methodological approaches development

1.1 ESG Standards and guidelines

For continuous improvements in independent quality assessment the IAAR's institutional and specialized accreditation standards have been harmonized in correspondence with the European ESG standards (2015). In addition, to fulfil recommendations of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA), the IAAR has established institutional and specialized accreditation standards review and improvement procedure, which stipulates building a quality culture at a higher level while preserving the best traditions.

For the newly revised standards and guidelines the Agency received certificates of state registration of rights to the copyright-protected item:

- Standards for institutional accreditation of higher education institutions implementing higher and postgraduate education programs (*approved by the order of the IAAR Director dated February 24, 2017 No. 10-17-OD*);
- Self-assessment Guidelines for institutional accreditation of higher education institutions implementing higher and postgraduate education programs (*approved by the order of the IAAR Director dated February 24, 2017 No. 10-17-OD*);
- Standards for specialized accreditation of educational programs of higher educational institutions (*approved by the order of the IAAR Director dated February 24, 2017 No. 10-17-OD*);
- Self-assessment Guidelines for specialized accreditation of educational programs of higher educational institutions (*approved by the order of the Director of the IAAR dated February 24, 2017 no. 10-17-OD*).

The IAAR standards take into account the trends of the Bologna process (objectivity, transparency, mobility, public awareness) and are used as a model for self-assessment of universities, harmonization of the national education quality system being formed with the international requirements of the European higher education area.

The IAAR standards are developed in accordance with the principles of quality assurance:

- the key responsibility of the HEI for the quality of educational services provided;
- quality compliance with the needs of various higher education systems (in the international educational market) of higher education institutions;
- the HEI's focus on the development of a quality culture;
- taking into account the needs and expectations of students, other stakeholders, the economy and society in the quality of services provided.

The standards include current requirements of the national education policy and legislation.

Also, the standards and guidelines for program accreditation on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic received Kyrgyz patent certificates for the copyright-protected item, namely:

- Standards for program accreditation of the main educational programs of higher educational institutions (*approved by the order of the IAAR Director as of October 17, 2016 No. 39-16-1-OD*);

- Self-assessment Guidelines for program accreditation of the main educational programs of higher education institutions (*approved by the order of the IAAR Director as of October 17, 2016, No. 39-16-1-OD*).

1.2 Quality Assurance Methodology

Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating is a leading and dynamically developing national agency on quality assurance in education at various levels. The accreditation decision is made by an independent Accreditation Council under the IAAR, formed by representatives of government agencies, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, employers and the student community. All members of the AC are highly qualified professionals and have many years of experience in the education system. Each of them was recommended by relevant professional organizations and associations, such as 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. The Regulations on the Accreditation Council and other regulatory documents that are publicly available have been duly prepared and approved.

The structure of the IAAR includes such divisions as “Medical projects”, “International projects”, “Project for institutional and specialized accreditation of HEIs”, “Project for accreditation of TVE organizations”, “Rating Project” and “Information and analytical project”, with each being responsible for its scope of activity. The management is carried out by the Director of the IAAR. The Agency has Expert Councils, whose chairs are elected from the experienced IAAR experts.

The methodology of the IAAR related to institutional accreditation and specialized accreditation is determined by the concept, principles and content of educational quality assessment.

The concept of accreditation, which is the basis of the methodology, is a social and professional assessment of educational organizations and/or educational programs.

The content of the assessment is to identify the compliance of educational organizations and/or educational programs with accreditation standards that are defined, developed, implemented and maintained up-to-date by the Agency.

External assessment of educational organizations and / or educational programs is based on the following **principles**: objectivity, integrity, openness, transparency, reliability of information sources, and compliance with moral and ethical standards.

Based on the “four-step model” of the quality assurance system, the IAAR defines the processes that formalize the **methodology of the quality assurance system**, which include the following stages:

1. Development of assessment procedures and criteria at its own discretion and independently of the state and educational organizations;

2. Self-assessment procedure of educational institutions and/or educational programs;
3. External review procedure by the expert panel with on-site visit to an institution;
4. Publication of the evaluation report.

1.3 Accreditation and implementation stages.

The procedure for both institutional and specialized accreditation includes the following steps:

- submitting application to the IAAR;
- admission to accreditation after establishing compliance with the threshold requirements;
- self-assessment of educational organizations and/or educational programs;
- preparing the EEP for a visit to an educational organization;
- EEP visit to an educational organization;
- accreditation decision in relation to the educational organizations and/or educational programs;
- post-accreditation monitoring;
- reaccreditation.

The steps and deadlines defined in the specified accreditation procedure for the EO and/or EP are shown in table 1.

Table 1. IAAR's Institutional and specialized accreditation procedures:

No.	Accreditation process stages	Recommended timeline (months)
1	An EO submits application to the IAAR	0
2	Submission to the IAAR of the EO's brief description of the EP	0
3	Assessment of compliance with threshold requirements	0
4	Signing of a bilateral contract between the IAAR and the educational organization on accreditation with an indication of the implementation terms	0
5	Training of the EO's staff and consulting with the IAAR experts on self-assessment procedure of an EO and/or an EP	+1
6	Planning and self-assessment of an EO and/or an EP	+6
7	Preparation of a self-assessment report on EO and/or EP, including Appendices, accompanying and supporting documents	+6
8	Preparation of the final self-assessment report of	+6

	an EO and/or an EP and its submission to the IAAR (2 copies in Kazakh, Russian and English)	
9	Review of the self-assessment report of an EO and/or an EP by the EEP members prior to the site-visit to an EO	+8
10	Request of necessary additional information from an EO by EEP members	+8
11	Drafting and approval of the EEP on-site visit program to HEI	+8
12	Visit to HEI to assess the reliability of the conclusions of the self-assessment of the EO and/or EP (3-5 days). The rules of work of an external expert group is based on and are used following the standards and Guidelines for the organization and conduct of external review in the process of accreditation of educational organizations.	+9
13	Drafting EEP report on the visit to an EO by external experts and submission of results to the IAAR. Drafting recommendations on accreditation of HEIs by external experts for decision-making by the AC.	+9
14	Review by the AC of the accreditation issue of an EO and/or an EP. Decision-making by the AC based on the self-assessment report of an EO and/or an EP, and EEP report on the site-visit to HEIs and recommendations.	+10
15	Award of an accreditation status to EO and/or EP after a positive accreditation decision of the AC with the issuance of an accreditation certificate for a period of 1/3/5 years	+11
16	Publication of a brief report on accreditation of the EO and/or EP on the IAAR's website in case of a positive decision	+12
17	The accreditation decision of an EO and/or EP is sent to the MES of the Republic of Kazakhstan for inclusion in the National register 2/3	+12
18	Post-accreditation monitoring procedures depending on the accreditation period	every 1,5 and 2 years
19	Reaccreditation after the expiration of the accreditation certificate	in 1, 3, 5, 7 years

При подготовке отчета по самооценке организаций образования и/или руководство образовательных программ проводится анализ динамики развития, определяются сильные и слабые стороны деятельности организации и работы структурных подразделений (офис, факультет, центр, институт), которые обеспечивают реализацию программы. Результаты данного анализа позволяют определить соответствие организаций образования и/или образовательных программ критериям оценки и выявить возможности по улучшению качества.

The Agency has developed and uses threshold requirements for accreditation applicable to educational organizations and/or educational programs.

The application of educational organizations for accreditation may be rejected in the following cases:

- lack of a valid state license;
- provision by an institution of educational services on the market for less than 5 years;
- lack of students and graduates;
- an undeveloped internal quality management system;
- existence of valid acts of violation.

1.4 Methods of educational organizations assessment

The main assessment methods of the IAAR used in accreditation of educational organizations and/or educational programs and the EEP work are as follows:

1. Study and examination of the self-assessment report of educational organizations and/or educational programs;
2. Assessment of the educational organizations' operations and/or educational programs by the EEP (with onsite-visits to educational institutions) based on certain, developed, implemented criteria for institutional and specialized accreditation and development of recommendations for accreditation making decisions;
3. Feedback from educational organizations with the IAAR;
4. Post-accreditation monitoring.

The implementation of the indicated above assessment methods is based on the information reflected in:

- self-assessment report of educational organizations and/or educational programs;
- interviews with representative groups;
- visual inspection of educational organizations;
- survey of teaching staff and students;
- documents, including those published on the official website of educational institutions;
- supporting documents of educational organizations and/or educational programs;
- monitoring results of educational organizations and/or educational programs;

- expert reviews and reports.

1.5 Self-assessment of educational organizations and educational programs.

The IAAR provides educational organizations and/or management of educational programs with the methodological documentation necessary for self-assessment and preparation of a self-assessment report.

For the standards requirements and self-assessment reports content clarification purposes, the Agency conducts seminars in educational organizations.

In preparation of a self-assessment report of educational organizations and/or management of educational programs, an analysis of the development dynamics is implemented to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and the work of structural divisions (office, faculty, center, Institute) that ensure program running. The analysis results allow to determine whether educational organizations and/or educational programs meet the assessment criteria and identify quality improvement opportunities.

1.6 Arrangement of EEP activities in educational institutions.

The on-site visit procedure to educational institutions is performed by the EEP formed by the IAAR.

The core tasks of the EEP are:

- 1) evaluation of the completeness and reliability of the self-assessment results submitted by educational organizations and/or under educational programs;
- 2) evaluation in accordance with the IAAR standards;
- 3) preparation of the evaluation report on educational organizations and/or educational programs for compliance with the IAAR standards.
- 4) development of recommendations for improving the activities of educational organizations and/or educational programs;
- 5) development of recommendations for the accreditation Council.

EEP activities are implemented under the developed Guidelines for the organization and conduct of external review in the process of accreditation of educational organizations.

The IAAR pays special attention to the selection and appointment of external experts to assess the quality of educational organizations and/or educational programs. Experts are certified representatives of the academic community, professional and student associations. The following criteria are taken into account in the process of selecting experts for the EEP: experience in higher education, academic achievements (degree, title, etc.), specialization profile in areas of expertise.

For each accredited educational organization and/or educational program, taking into account the areas of activity and educational services provided, the EEP is formed from a database of certified experts, including competent teachers, representatives of employers or professional associations, students, external/international experts, and an observer from the IAAR.

The IAAR appoints the Chair of the EEP, who is a specialist with the greatest experience and knowledge of the accreditation process, as well as having experience in a managerial position of a structural division at a HEI. The Chair organizes the work of the EEP following the on-site program to the education organization, and is leading and coordinating the work of the Panel, he prepares the final EEP report as well as compiles recommendations for quality improvement of educational organizations and/or educational programs. The Chair also presents the EEP on-site visit results to the Accreditation Council.

To enhance the effectiveness of external experts, the IAAR has developed the Regulations governing the expert activity of an external expert and the Code of expert ethics, which establish mandatory ethical rules of conduct for experts. After signing the Code, the expert undertakes not to disclose confidential information received during the work of the EEP. Prior to the evaluation procedure, members of the EEP sign the expert's statement of no conflict of interest.

All information and documentation received by the IAAR is confidential and is used for analysis, evaluation and accreditation of educational organizations and/or educational programs.

Organizational and technical support for the EEP activities is provided by the Agency, whose observer coordinates the work of EEP.

The IAAR together with the expert Council provides training and professional development training of experts compliant with the qualification requirements.

The Agency provides its members with standards, regulatory documents, and self-assessment reports of educational organizations and/or educational programs with appendices in advance. All this contributes to the quality of the assessment procedure.

Each member of the EEP carefully studies the received materials prior to the on-site visit to the educational institution and submits to the IAAR a review of the self-assessment report.

During the preliminary meeting, members of the EEP identify problem areas and discuss the on-site visit program.

In their correspondent work members of the EEP are guided by the standards. The EEP report evaluates educational organizations and/or educational programs for compliance with all standards criteria. In this respect, Parameters of the institutional profile and/or profile of educational programs, notebooks for entries filled by members of the EEP during the visit serve as supporting material.

Evaluation of the quality of educational institutions and/or educational programs and the EEP report preparation includes the following stages:

1. Individual expert assessment.
2. Executive summary of the data received on the final day of the EEP visit using the parameters of the institutional profile and/or the profile of educational programs.
3. Development of recommendations for improving educational organizations activities and/ or educational programs.
4. EEP assessment and submission of recommendations to the Accreditation Council.

5. Preparation of an oral feedback about accredited educational organizations and/or educational programs.

After completion of the stages, the EEP members make a final decision on the compliance of an educational organization and/or educational programs with the accreditation standards. The Panel shall not bear the right to evaluate this educational organization and/or educational program based on its comparison with educational organizations and/or educational programs.

Recommendations to the Accreditation Council are an important part of the evaluation process and must be facts-based. The recommendations of the EEP are adopted collectively, by open voting, by a majority vote.

The EEP provides the IAAR with an on-site visit report with reasonable conclusions and recommendations to the AC.

The Agency has defined and clear follow-up procedures such as post-accreditation monitoring and has developed a Regulation on the post-accreditation monitoring procedure.

Should the AC make a positive accreditation decision related to the HEI and/or the management of educational programs, a Plan is compiled to implement the recommendations of the EEP, serving as the basis for post-accreditation monitoring and is implemented in compliance with the terms of accreditation (table 2).

Table 2. Post-accreditation monitoring of educational organizations

Accreditation Period	3 years	5 years	7 years
Frequency of an interim report submission	Once every 1.5 years	Twice every two years	Three times every two years
Visit	once	twice	3 times

In the case of accreditation of educational organizations and/or educational programs for a period of 1 year, the management of the educational institution and/or educational program during this period decides to undergo re-accreditation procedure.

The Accreditation Council is entitled to suspend or revoke the accreditation certificate if the EEP recommendations have not been implemented by a higher educational institution and/or the management of educational programs.

1.7 Internal Quality Assurance System of the IAAR

For the better work efficiency, the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating has developed a Guidelines to the internal quality assurance system.

The Guideline defines the IAAR Quality Policy and describes the internal quality assurance system developed to implement this Policy.

While supporting the strategic objectives of the state, the Agency's Quality Policy is focused on the continuous development and provision of quality services to consumers at all levels: the state, society, the education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan, educational organizations, students.

Work with consumer services is aimed at meeting customer requirements and is based on the principles of feedback and mutually beneficial partnership, based on maximum responsibility for the obligations assumed.

The Agency gives priority to:

- formation of a quality culture;
- continuous improvement of the internal quality assurance system that meets the requirements of international and Kazakh recognition bodies;
- ensuring the unity of the development Policy and Strategy.

The Guidelines of the IAAR on the Internal Quality Assurance System is used by the management and its divisions. The overall management of the internal quality assurance system is implemented by the IAAR Director, who coordinates the content component of the IQAS. The legal Consultant is responsible for the Agency's organizational and legal operations and resource provision processes within the IQAS.

The IQAS serves as a tool for implementing the quality Policy by achieving the set of quality goals.

The IAAR defines the following processes of the internal quality assurance system:

- document management;
- management responsibility;
- provision of resources;
- on life cycle.

The purpose of the developed documentation of the internal quality assurance system is to ensure a common understanding of the IAAR development Policy and Strategy.

Documented, implemented and maintained documentation of the Agency's internal quality assurance system includes the following documents:

- Guidelines on the internal quality assurance system (IQAS);
- IAAR's strategic development plan for 2016-2020;
- Standards and guidelines for evaluation of compliance with accreditation standards;
- external documents of the recognition bodies: including ESG, WFME standards, etc.;
- laws and regulations governing accreditation and rating research related activities;
- corporate documents of the Agency governing activities in the field of accreditation and rating research of the Agency;
- results of the Agency surveys;
- work instructions, regulations, job descriptions, etc., which are developed to maintain documents;
- reporting documentation;
- records and their forms/templates.

The IAAR management is committed to ensure that the internal quality assurance system is duly developed, adopted, implemented and continuously

improved for its better efficiency.

For the purposes of staff engagement in the process of continuous enhancement of the internal quality assurance system, the IAAR leadership supports working groups of initiative employees and experts.

The IAAR management views the processes of determining and meeting customer requirements as a priority activity of the Agency. The Agency's management informs the staff on the consumer (stakeholder) requirements and the importance of their satisfaction.

The most important resource for quality assurance of the IAAR services is the personnel who complies with the required qualification requirements. The management continuously creates an internal environment, involving Agency employees to achieve the identified strategic goals, and provides assistance in ensuring the competence, awareness and staff training.

The Agency employees constantly enhance their competencies via participation in professional development seminars, conferences, etc. During the year, it conducts a survey of experts from the IAAR and accredited educational organizations, which indicates a high level of trust by consumers of services to employees and their level of professionalism.

The Agency attracts competent national and international experts for accreditation. Special attention is given to the training of national experts to continuously improve the quality of accreditation procedures. The Agency defines qualification and ethical requirements for experts. All experts are trained in special professional development courses conducted by the Agency.

Under the developed Regulations on expert councils, the Agency forms Expert Councils in the specific areas from the database of certified experts. The Agency delegates individual experts to participate in Kazakhstan and international events related to quality assessment.

To conduct accreditation and rating research, the Agency applies a systematic and process-based approach to managing activities and resources.

When planning the accreditation process, the following are identified: goals, activities, deadlines, resource requirements, workload distribution among the IAAR employees, quality control measures for the accreditation process, conformity assessment processes and post-accreditation monitoring of educational organizations and/or educational programs.

The accreditation process is implemented in compliance with the IAAR standards and regulations. The standards are developed in collaboration with all stakeholders (expert reviews, recommendations of government agencies, non-governmental organizations) under the Instructions for development and enhancement of standards. To ensure quality and disseminate the best European practices, the IAAR standards are harmonized with the ESG and WFME standards.

For the purpose of making objective and independent decisions on accreditation of educational organizations and/or educational programs, under the Agency operates an Accreditation Council, which makes decisions based on the self-assessment of educational organizations and/or educational programs and the EEP report. The Accreditation Council is formed based on recommendations of public or professional

associations and state bodies. To ensure objective decision-making, each member of the Accreditation Council signs the AC member Code, developed by the IAAR.

To ensure that the activities of educational organizations and/or educational programs comply with the standards and for continuous improvement purposes, post-accreditation monitoring is performed, the regulations of which are developed by the IAAR in the Post-Accreditation Monitoring Regulation.

The IAAR strives to continuously improve its performance via: annual development Strategy implementation plans, staff and experts engagement in working groups for continuous IQAS enhancement, internal IQAS review procedures, management analysis of the IQAS, corrective and preventive actions.

To further improve the system of independent accreditation, its transparency and effectiveness of results, as well as the implementation of the Strategic development plan for 2016-2020, the Agency initiated the creation of a Supervisory Board.

The competence of the Supervisory Board is based on monitoring and developing recommendations to the IAAR management related to strategic management and assistance in the development of the Agency, as well performing public control functions.

According to the recommendations of professional associations and public associations of Kazakhstan and foreign partners, the Council includes government officials, representatives of employers and a foreign expert.

The first meeting of the Supervisory Board was held on June 6, 2017 in Almaty.

2. IAAR activities on quality assurance in education

2.1 Institutional accreditation

Under the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On education”, institutional accreditation is the process of evaluation of the quality of educational organizations by the accreditation authority for compliance with its declared stated status and established standards of the accreditation authority.

Independent institutional accreditation of educational organizations facilitates the following:

- funding procedures via the state study grants and state order of the Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- authorized issuance of degree certificates of the state sample;
- implementation of country-specific agreements on mutual recognition of academic degrees and education documents;
- expansion of interaction with leading foreign educational institutions;
- training of future specialists in collaboration with foreign educational organizations;
- graduates employment and their further international training.

Quality assessment of educational organizations is based on standards and guidelines for institutional accreditation of higher, vocational, higher and postgraduate medical education, medical colleges, organizations of additional education for adults, schools that implement international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education.

Accreditation procedure helps to assess the trajectory of an educational institution and determine its development prospects.

The accreditation procedure consists of 5 stages.

The first stage includes submission of an application to the IAAR, review of an application and, if it meets the threshold requirements of the IAAR, conclusion of a contract.

The second stage is a training seminar for the staff of an educational institution to clarify the criteria for standards of institutional and specialized accreditation. The seminar is held for the purpose of consulting the working group of the educational organization, which consists from the management of an educational organization, teachers, representatives of students and employees in preparation of a self-assessment of an educational institution.

The third stage involves submission of a self-assessment report by an educational organization for further review. At this stage, the Agency together with the Expert Council forms the EEP, which includes national experts, foreign experts, representatives of employers, students, as well as an observer from the IAAR. The EEP on-site visit lasts for 2-3 days. The independence of experts, their objectivity and the absence of conflicts of interest with educational organizations are priorities in accreditation process. The purpose of the on-site visit is to assess the quality of the educational organization’s activities based on criteria of the IAAR’s institutional accreditation and develop recommendations for review at the Accreditation Council.

During the on-site visit, the Panel develops final recommendations for the Accreditation Council and an educational institution.

The fourth stage is a meeting of the Accreditation Council to make a final decision, informing the authorized body and the public about the accreditation results.

The fifth stage is post-monitoring, which is conducted every 1.5-2 years. The main goal of this stage is to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the External Expert Panel.

2.2 Specialized accreditation

Under the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On education”, specialized accreditation is an assessment of the quality of individual educational programs implemented by an educational organization.

Independent specialized accreditation facilitates the following:

- funding received by an educational organization via the state study grants and state orders for accredited specialties.
- permission of an educational organization to issue state-standard degree certificates in accredited study 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 academic mobility of students and teaching staff within the framework of accredited educational programs;
- implementation of international agreements on mutual recognition of academic degrees and educational documents;
- further international education and employment of graduates.

Quality assessment of educational programs is based on standards and guidelines for specialized accreditation of higher, vocational, basic medical and postgraduate medical education, medical colleges, programs of additional education for adults, schools that implement international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education.

During the 2017 reporting period, **28** educational organizations, including **25** TVE organizations and **3** higher education institutions, were accredited by the IAAR under the **institutional accreditation procedure** (table 3).

Table3. Quantitative indicators of accredited educational organizations in 2017 (institutional accreditation)

Type of EO	7 years (with repeated accreditation)	5 years	3 years	1 year	Denied in accreditation
HEI	1		2		
TVE		20	1		
TVE		4			

(medical profile)					
TOTAL					

Under the specialized (program) accreditation procedure, **353** HEIs' educational programs of different levels and course areas were accredited (table 4).

Table 4. Quantitative indicators of accredited educational programs for 2017 (specialized accreditation)

Program title	7 years (with repeated accreditation)	5 years	3 years	1 year	Denied in accreditation
HEIs					
• BA	13	75	60	4	
• MA	12	26	16		
• PhD	5	8			
TOTAL	30	109	76	4	
MEDICAL HEIS					
• BA		2			
• MA		1			
• Residency		3			
TOTAL		6			
TVE		106	5		
TVE (medical profile)		14	1	2	
TOTAL		120	6	2	
GRAND TOTAL		353			

Thus, based on the analysis of indicators presented in table 3 and table 4, it is evident that the largest percentage of educational organizations have been accredited under the institutional and specialized accreditation procedures for a period of 5 years.

3. Rating research

3.1 National ranking of HEIs in demand

In order to support the objectivity of assessment and monitoring of the quality of education, the IAAR conducts rating research in higher education in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The main purpose of such research is to evaluate the study process in educational organizations, identify benchmarks and guide population in selection of an educational institution.

In the rating research of HEIs the Agency uses publicly available sources of the Ministry of Education and Science and international electronic resources: information about institutional and specialized accreditation of higher education institutions, study grants, owners of the sign “Altyn belgi”, state grant “The Best HEI teacher”, state prizes and scholarships for the development of science, scientific grants, patents and inventions, as well as publications rate based on the Hirsch index (ISI Web of Knowledge, Thomson Reuters and Scopus). The main competitive advantage of the IAAR rating is the maximum objectivity and transparency. The purposes of the rating procedure are indicated below:

- ✓ creation of a mechanism to encourage HEIs in rating research at the national and international scopes
- ✓ ranking of higher education institutions under the framework of the quality assurance system of education based on international experience
- ✓ increasing graduates’ competitiveness and raising the export potential of the education sector
- ✓ increasing the percentage of international students and teaching staff in the learning process
- ✓ public awareness about scientists’ recognition (of a particular HEI), HEIs’ and teaching staff research results at the international scope
- ✓ identification of key indicators for improvement of the quality assurance system.

3.2 Rating research methodology

The IAAR rating of educational organizations in Kazakhstan is based on a unique technology and methodology - a **digital ranking program** characterized by objectivity and transparency of assessment by automated verification of data entered by educational institutions, analysis of the Thomson Reuters database and the Scopus bibliometric database, an e-database of intellectual property.

The principles of the methodology are: transparency, objectivity, verifiability and availability of data sources.

The methodology of the IAAR rating research is of national nature and may be used by HEIs:

- for a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of HEIs, taking into account the diversity of national higher education system, with a view to comparisons,

benchmarking, competitiveness, planning and strategic development of Kazakhstan's system of higher education;

- as a tool for promotion of Kazakhstan HEIs in the world educational space and global academic rankings;
- to solve the tasks of designing “road maps” for the development of leading HEIs and monitoring their implementation.

The results of the IAAR rating studies are compiled every 3 years and presented in the published references “Independent ranking – 2014”, “Competition – 2015”, “Independent rating – 2016” and on the IAAR's website (www.iaar.kz).

Rating research is conducted in the following areas:

- Rating of Kazakhstan HEIs on educational programs by levels and course areas;
- Rating of Kazakhstan HEIs by course areas at the levels: BA-MA-PhD;
- General rating of Kazakhstan HEIs by course areas;
- General rating of the Republic of Kazakhstan faculty (TOP-50).

Based on the IAAR's Charter, rating research is conducted independently of the accreditation process and does not affect its results. The rating is based only on the measured data. Educational institutions are evaluated based on the following criteria:

- high concentration of talented students, teachers and researchers (25%);
- academic mobility (25%);
- graduates competitiveness (25%);
- competitiveness of scientific publications of teachers, master and doctoral students (25%).

The object of evaluation is statistics that reflect the degree of attractiveness of the educational institution and the quality of the teaching staff.

The main indicators for rating research are as follows:

- efficiency indicators of educational services, research results, success in fulfilling learning obligations, accounting for the internationalization (determining the degree of attractiveness of an institution internationally);
- recognition indicators of an institution by employers, compliance of the quality of educational services with the market requirements;
- indicators of research output, quality of educational services, recognition of teachers and students.

In 2017, the IAAR conducted rating research of HEIs in Kazakhstan based on 2016 results, which was attended by **59** educational organizations. The rating of HEIs educational programs in Kazakhstan by levels (bachelor's, master's, doctoral) and course areas included **2045** educational programs in **436** specialties.

4. International cooperation, recognition and partnership

4.1 Development of international cooperation with global agencies

Ministry of education and science of the Kyrgyz Republic

On April 6, 2017, the IAAR was recognized as an accreditation body and included in the national register of the Kyrgyz Republic under the “Procedure for recognition of *accreditation agencies in the field of education*”, approved by the Government resolution No. 670 as of September 29, 2015 and order of the Ministry of education and science No. 395/1 as of April 06, 2017. The inclusion of the 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 significant regulatory and methodological base, professional composition of the expert community, and focus on promotion of a quality culture in Central Asian countries.

This recognition opens for the Agency new horizons for cooperation in accreditation procedures of higher education institutions and educational programs in Kyrgyzstan as an international cross-border accreditation body.

Thus, during 2017, the IAAR held negotiations with Kyrgyz educational institutions on accreditation procedure in the Kyrgyz Republic. Apart from that, the IAAR actively interacted with the Ministry of education and science of the Kyrgyz Republic, organized events on international accreditation and ranking of HEIs. On October 21-22, 2017, the IAAR organized a seminar for representatives of higher education institutions on the basis of the I. Razzakov Polytechnic University “International accreditation and rating research of the IAAR in the Kyrgyz Republic”. The seminar was organized to present systematic material on international accreditation and familiarize higher education institutions of Kyrgyzstan with the principles and methodology of the IAAR ranking. The seminar was attended by the Deputy Minister of education and science of the Kyrgyz Republic Mr. K.G. Kozhobekov the seminar Program covered issues of ensuring the quality culture of higher and postgraduate education. The IAAR presented the criteria for ranking HEIs in the Kyrgyz Republic for discussion.

European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)

By the decision of the Registration Committee as of 20 June 2017, the IAAR was included in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). The inclusion of the IAAR in the European register is one of the strategic goals of our Agency and to obtain this status, the IAAR has undergone a multi-stage assessment of its activities, which is carried out by leading foreign experts. The status of a recognized Agency confirms the IAAR operations compliance with high international standards and signifies trust in such a reputable organization.

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education includes 44 agencies from 22 countries. Kazakhstan became the 23rd country out of 48 countries participants to the Bologna process.

Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network (APQN)

On October 19, 2017, the IAAR received full membership in the Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network (APQN). The mission of the latter is to improve the quality of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region by developing operations of quality assurance agencies and their mutual cooperation.

World Federation of Medical Education (WFME)

The IAAR is the first organization from the CIS countries that received recognition from the World Federation of Medical Education on December 14, 2017, which gives the right to conduct international accreditation of medical organizations and programs. IAAR's accreditation of medical education organizations following international standards facilitates achievement of the national goal – to enhance graduates' competitiveness and increase the export potential of the educational sector.

International partnership

The Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating is proactively working to develop mutually beneficial cooperation with recognized foreign quality assurance agencies in higher education. **In 2017**, the Agency signed agreements on bilateral cooperation on quality assurance in education with 6 foreign organizations (table 5).

Table 5. International organizations of quality assurance in education.

	Title	Country
1	Andalusian Agency of knowledge, Department of evaluation and accreditation (AAC-DEVA)	Spain
2	Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (HEA)	Bosnia and Herzegovina
3	Certification Association “Russian Register”	Russia
4	Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES)	Portugal
5	National Agency for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education (ANACIP)	Moldova
6	GDSI Limited	Ireland

The above-mentioned agencies, as official partners, assist in the external quality assessment procedures: joint events, nomination of foreign experts to the IAAR External Expert Panel.

On November 13-15, 2017, the IAAR in collaboration with the German “Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute” (ACQUIN) conducted an international specialized reaccreditation procedure of the L. Gumilyov Eurasian National University.

National partnership

In addition, the Agency cooperates with various public associations and state authorities.

In 2017, 6 memoranda of cooperation were signed with the following organizations of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- 1) JSC National center for professional development “Orleu”;
- 2) Consulting Educational Center “Bilim Central Asia”;

- 3) Association of colleges in Almaty;
- 4) Republican Non-Governmental Organization “Physical and Technical society” of Kazakhstan;
- 5) CJSC “Kasipkor” Holding;
- 6) Association of Legal Entities “Kazakhstan Association for the development of technologies in education”.

Within the framework of signed memoranda, the Agency is working hard to attract these associations to expert evaluation and improve accreditation standards.

4.2 Participation in international projects

The Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating in 2017 participated in the international project funded by the World Bank: “The review of best practices to develop a systematic approach to align the National qualifications frameworks with professional and higher education programs” (KZSJ – 1.2/CQS), implemented since August 18, 2017. The IAAR has developed mechanisms for accreditation systems and agencies operating on the Republic of Kazakhstan to ensure sustainability in implementation of the competence approach in the TVE and higher education system. The project is purported to advance the development methodology for study programs in the context of labor market requirements, as well as to elaborate a strategy for advancement of existing quality assurance system to align the National Qualifications Framework with professional and higher education programs. The project also includes developing a strategy for agencies’ transition to promotion of improvement rather than pure oversight functions as well as adapting the tools of accreditation agencies for program evaluation of the competence-based learning, improving expert skills, and ensuring the continuity of the process of working with HEIs on the internal quality assurance system.

5. Formation and development of expert potential

5.1. The qualitative composition of experts

The Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating maintains a database of more than 1,500 experts, including international experts.

The IAAR regularly conducts training seminars for employers in collaboration with the regional chambers of entrepreneurs “Atameken”.

On January 19, 2017, in Almaty, the IAAR jointly with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) hosted an international workshop on professional development of the IAAR experts, the latter received certificates upon the workshop completion.

On February 25, 2017, in Almaty, to extend the database of experts, the IAAR hosted a training seminar titled as “Training of experts for institutional and specialized accreditation of medical educational organizations” in the premises of the Kazakh-Russian Medical University. The training workshop was attended by 45 employees from the management and teaching staff of various colleges based in Almaty and Almaty region.

In order to train experts on evaluation of the quality of higher education institutions and educational programs in Kyrgyzstan, the IAAR held training seminars in the cities of Bishkek (may 22-23, 2017) and Osh (may 24-25, 2017) for the faculty and administrative staff of the educational organization. Experts under the IAAR’s leadership discussed the following urgent issues: Independent assessment of the quality of education: the IAAR experience, IAAR’s Development Strategy: values and priorities, Methodology for rating research of HEIs by levels and course areas, Trends in quality assurance: from Europe to Central Asia. Relationship between ESG and IAAR standards, Qualification requirements for the IAAR experts.

Also, on October 21-22, 2017 in Bishkek, the IAAR held a seminar for HEIs representatives on the topic “International accreditation and rating research of the IAAR in the Kyrgyz Republic”.

The seminar was consummated by the award of participation certificates and creation of a Database of the Kyrgyz Republic National Experts.

On November 10, 2017, an international training workshop titled “Accreditation of technical and vocational education organizations as a factor for quality assurance in education of qualified personnel: international experience” was hosted by the Agency in Astana. The workshop was attended by more than 150 participants from different regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Among them are representatives of the German society for international cooperation (GIZ), Non-profit Institution “National Agency for quality assurance in professional education” (ANACIP, Moldova), Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, National Chamber of Entrepreneurs “Atameken”, LLP “Valknut Certification Center”, CJSC “Kasipkor” Holding, Astana Department of education,

Association of colleges in Almaty and many colleges in Kazakhstan. During the panel and section discussions, participants stated the importance and prospects of accreditation in TVE organizations. At the end of the event, participants were awarded participation certificates.

On December 8, 2017, in Almaty, the IAAR in cooperation with the Narkhoz University held the Central Asian Forum on Quality Assurance, dedicated to urgent issues of the quality and competitiveness enhancement in higher education of Kazakhstan, taking into account world standards. The forum was attended by deputies of the Senate and Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan and subordinate organizations, National Chamber of Entrepreneurs “Atameken”, Kazakhstan and foreign HEIs, international experts in higher education and science, employers and students. The forum was attended by more than 400 people, including foreign guests from 11 countries (Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Greece, Poland, Russia, Latvia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and representatives of the European Union).

The main purpose of the forum is to create an international dialogue platform on issues of quality assurance, contributing to the dissemination of best practices in strategic planning, designing and monitoring of educational programs, academic mobility, cooperation between institutions, formation of professional community for external evaluation.

5.2 Improving the effectiveness of external experts.

To ensure the quality and professional conduct of external experts, the IAAR conducts training seminars. Training and certification of experts is performed in compliance with the Regulations on training, retraining and professional development of the IAAR external experts. Trained external experts are entered into the Agency’s database, which is used when forming the EEP. The professional conduct of external IAAR experts is regulated by a set of normative documents that define the ethical behavior of the expert and his/her competence in external quality assessment procedures. The statement of the IAAR expert on the absence of a conflict of interest and the “Code of expert ethics” are published on the IAAR website in the section of “Experts”. Important tools for internal quality assurance are annual surveys of educational organizations that have been accredited by an Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating and certified external experts, which contribute to the continuous improvement of the international accreditation procedures conducted by the Agency (IAAR).

6. SWOT Analysis

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

Table 6. SWOT analysis

S (Strengths)	W (Weaknesses)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognition of the IAAR in Kazakhstan and internationally; - cooperation with international partner agencies for mutual exchange of experts; - IAAR membership in international quality assurance networks; - harmonization of the IAAR standards with the revised ESG 2015 and WFME 2012 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 within the framework of the Bologna and Turin processes; - monitoring the implementation of the EEP recommendations to accredited educational organizations and/or accredited educational programs; - availability of mechanisms for institutional and specialized quality assessment: HEIs; organizations of technical and vocational education; schools implementing international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education; organizations of additional education for adults; educational programs of business education MBA, DBA; medical education; - support of the WFME in the development of the national accreditation system for medical and pharmaceutical education; - the Agency developed and tested the technology of national ranking of educational programs of the Republic of Kazakhstan HEIs by levels of specialists training (bachelor's, master's, doctoral (PhD)); - timely public awareness (website, media, publications). - issuance of the Agency's own Journal "EDUCATION" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of joint projects with international agencies; - insufficient experience in accreditation of schools that implement international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education; - insufficient experience in accreditation of research institutes and organizations of additional education for adults and MBA, DBA programs; - insufficient cooperation with the professional community, associations of educational organizations and student associations; - insufficient level of professional development of Agency employees; - absence of foreign experts in the Accreditation Council; - insufficient experience in projects for the development of education and quality assurance systems; - not efficient enough experts' feedback.
O (Opportunities)	T (Threats)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - amendments and additions to the legislation in education that open up new opportunities in the education quality assessment; - support of national agencies by international quality assurance networks (ENQA, INQAAHE, IREG, APQN, WFME); - support of the system of independent education quality assessment at the state level and by the education authority; - implementation of the principles of the Bologna and Turin processes at the national scope; - awareness by education stakeholders of the importance of an independent quality assurance system; - access to national, European and international educational and research resources; - improvement of the national education system; - competition in the field of accreditation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unsustainable policy of the authorized body in the field of education on the recognition of national and international quality assurance agencies; - untimely public awareness about accredited educational organizations and educational programs under the procedure for forming National registers 1, 2 and 3; - local economic situation; - lack of professional standards for economic sectors; - weak involvement of employers in the educational process of educational organizations, as well as in the quality assessment procedure.

The SWOT analysis fostered reflection of the interaction of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats in 2017 in the form of a logically consistent scheme. The IAAR seeks to overcome the weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis and neutralize possible threats with the help of strengths, to determine the development directions that will strengthen the Agency’s market position.



7. Implementation of the IAAR Action Plan

<i>Event Date</i>	<i>Summary</i>
<i>January 19, 2017</i>	The IAAR jointly with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher education - ENQA held an international workshop on professional development of the IAAR experts at the Narkhoz University premises in Almaty.
<i>January 27, 2017</i>	The IAAR held a seminar for vice-rectors, heads of structural divisions responsible for the rating at the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University premises.
<i>February 25, 2017</i>	In order to expand the database of experts, the IAAR held a training seminar titled “Training of experts for institutional and specialized accreditation of medical education organizations” based on the Kazakhstan-Russian Medical University.
<i>February 24, 2017</i>	The IAAR took part in an expanded meeting of the Board of the Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the participation of members of Parliament, representatives of Central Executive bodies and subordinate organizations, scientific organizations, HEIs, schools and colleges.
<i>February 28 to March 2, 2017</i>	The IAAR participated in the annual international conference of INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) titled Cooperation and Competition: prospects and challenges of the quality assurance system of higher education (in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain).
<i>March 15, 2017</i>	The IAAR took part in the event held by the Information and analytical center of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan “Presentation of the review of higher education in the framework of the Country program of cooperation” at the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University premises.
<i>March 5, 2017</i>	The IAAR signed a Memorandum of cooperation

with the Certification Association “Russian Register” (RR), Astana.

March 14, 2017

According to the Republican Accreditation Council decision, the IAAR was repeatedly recognized as an authorized agency and included in the Register 1 of recognized accreditation bodies.

April 5-6, 2017

The IAAR participated in the international workshop “Students as partners in HEI management and quality assurance of higher education” at the Narkhoz University premises.

April 6, 2017

The IAAR in compliance with the “Procedure for recognition of accreditation agencies in education”, approved by the Government resolution of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 29/09/2015 No. 670 and the order of the Ministry of education and science No. 395/1 dated 06/04/2017 was recognized as an accreditation agency and included in the national register of the Kyrgyz Republic.

April 13, 2017

The IAAR signed a Memorandum of cooperation with the Republican Public Association “Physical and Technical society of Kazakhstan” (FTS), Astana.

April 28-29, 2017

The IAAR participated in the annual seminar and General Assembly of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) at the University of Zagreb (Croatia)

May 4-5, 2017

The IAAR participated in the VII Forum of members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) at the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) in Oslo, Norway.

May 18-19, 2017

The IAAR took part in the international forum “Entrepreneurial education in rapidly developing societies” at the Almaty Management University.

May 18-19, 2017

Under the second stage of the Central Asian Education Platform (CAEP), the IAAR participated at the regional conference “Quality Assurance and

Accreditation in higher and vocational education and training” in Dushanbe (Tajikistan).

May 22-23, 2017

For experts training purposes on evaluation of the quality of higher education institutions and educational programs in Kyrgyzstan, the IAAR held a training workshop in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan).

May 24-25, 2017

For experts training purposes on evaluation of the quality of higher education institutions and educational programs in Kyrgyzstan, the IAAR conducted a training workshop in Osh (Kyrgyzstan).

May 25, 2017

The IAAR participated in the national workshop on quality assurance and accreditation in higher and technical professional education within the framework of the Central Asian Education Platform (CAEP) project in Astana.

June 6, 2017

The IAAR participated in a Symposium dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Charter at the L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University.

June 6, 2017

The first meeting of the IAAR Supervisory Board, whereby members of the Board were represented (Almaty).

June 15, 2017

The IAAR participated at the international UI GreenMetric workshop at the Kazakh National Agrarian University premises.

June 19-20, 2017

Within the framework of EXPO-2017, the IAAR acted as a co-organizer of the World Congress of engineers and scientists WSEC-2017 “Future Energy: innovative scenarios and methods of their implementation” (Astana).

June 21, 2017

The IAAR participated in the round table organized by the Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Latvia at the international specialized exhibition “Astana EXPO-2017” (Astana).

June 24, 2017

The IAAR took part at the Forum of rectors of the European Union and Central Asia universities at the

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University premises.

June 29, 2017

The IAAR participated at the international conference “Bologna principles and quality assurance in higher education institutions of the European Union and Central Asia in the framework of the EU ERASMUS+ project “Capacity Building for the implementation of institutional systems and typology of quality assurance using the principles of the Bologna process/IQAT” at the Kazakh Agrotechnical University named after S. Seifullin.

July 18, 2017

The IAAR paid a working visit to the Andalusian Knowledge Agency, Department of assessment and accreditation (AAC-DEVA) in Cordoba city (Spain)

July 18, 2017

The IAAR paid a working visit To the Agency for higher education assessment and accreditation (A3ES) in Lisbon (Portugal).

August 22, 2017

The IAAR took part in the Plenary session of the annual Republican August conference of teachers “Modernization of Kazakhstan – the contribution of education” (Astana).

August 26-30, 2017

The IAAR participated in the annual international conference AMEE city of Helsinki (Finland).

September 28-29, 2017

The IAAR took part at the Round table “Strategic management of the University in the conditions of expanding academic freedom” at the Narkhoz University premises.

September 29, 2017

The IAAR signed a Memorandum of cooperation with the Association of colleges in Almaty.

October 2, 2017

The IAAR participated at the International Congress of the Mathematical society of the Turkic world (TWMS 2017) at the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University.

October 4, 2017

The IAAR signed a Memorandum of mutual cooperation with the branch of JSC “National center for professional development Orleu: - Institute for

professional development of teachers of the Karaganda region (Astana).

October 6, 2017

The IAAR signed a Memorandum of cooperation with one of the largest consulting centers - the Educational Center “Bilim — Central Asia” (Almaty).

October 11, 2017

The IAAR participated in a webinar on internal quality assurance of higher education at the Kazakh Agrotechnical University named after S. Seifullin.

October 12-13, 2017

The IAAR participated at the ENQA workshop organized by the Netherlands-Flemish accreditation organization (NVAO) in the Hague (Netherlands).

October 20-22, 2017

The IAAR participated in the International Economic Forum of the Turkic World at the Mugla Sytky Kochman University in Mugla (Turkey).

October 21-22, 2017

The IAAR held a seminar for representatives of higher education institutions “International accreditation and rating research of the IAAR in the Kyrgyz Republic” at The I. Razzakov Polytechnic University in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan).

October 26-27, 2017

The IAAR participated in the VIII General Assembly of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in Sevres (France).

October 27, 2017

The IAAR took part in the international workshop “Improving the rating system of higher education institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan taking into account the world experience” (Astana).

October 30, 2017

The IAAR has signed a Memorandum of cooperation with Kasipkor Holding.

November 30, 2017

The IAAR held an international training workshop “Accreditation of technical and vocational education organizations as a factor in quality assurance in education of qualified personnel: international experience” (Astana).

November 14, 2017

The IAAR participated in the Round table “Quality

assurance in education and modernization of educational programs in the context of the National qualifications framework” (Astana).

November 13-15, 2017

The IAAR in collaboration with the German Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute” (ACQUIN) conducted an international specialized reaccreditation of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University.

November 17, 2017

The IAAR took an active part in discussion of the draft Law “On amendments and additions to some legislative acts of Kazakhstan on expansion of academic and managerial autonomy of higher education institutions” (Almaty).

November 23-25, 2017

ИААР приняло участие в 12-ом Европейском Форуме по обеспечению качества на базе Латвийского Университета (г. Рига, Латвия). The IAAR participated in the 12th European forum on quality assurance at the University of Latvia (Riga, Latvia).

December 17, 2017

As part of the 80th anniversary of the Republican Higher Medical College, the IAAR took part in the Republican scientific and practical conference “Modernization of technical and professional education in the health care system” (Almaty).

December 8, 2017

The IAAR in collaboration with the Narkhoz University held the “Central Asian Forum on Quality Assurance” (Almaty).

December 22, 2017

The IAAR participated in the events held by the educational center “Bilim – Central Asia”: presentation of the project “Future is My Choice” (Almaty).

Conclusion

The Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating as a recognized national and international agency in 2017 intensively and continuously maintained sustained efforts on external quality assurance of higher and postgraduate, professional and technical, secondary education (international schools). As part of its activities, the IAAR pursues proactive policy of continuously improving the quality of education via identification and dissemination of best practices and a quality culture at the national scope.

The IAAR plans to further expand its expert database, and continuously diversify its collaboration processes with educational organizations under the regulatory and legislative requirements of the Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the IAAR threshold requirements.

The Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating distributes good practices at the institutional and specialized (program) levels for the development of the national system for quality assurance in education in Kazakhstan using international experience based on enhanced mechanisms for institutional and specialized assessment of the quality of education and annual professional development of employees in cooperation with the Agency's partners.

The Agency is accountable to the stakeholders of education, provides accountability through various mechanisms of internal quality assurance.

The Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating reports annually on the results of post-accreditation monitoring of accredited educational organizations and/or educational programs. Members of the Accreditation Councils regularly participate in the discussion of important IAAR's regulatory documents, including the Development Strategy, the implementation Plan for the IAAR Development Strategy, the annual IAAR Activity Plan, appeal procedures, accreditation standards and criteria, offer recommendations and suggestions for improving the IAAR's activities.

The IAAR annually submits to the Ministry of Education and Science analytical report with recommendations for improving the national quality assurance system, also regularly informs the Ministry about the accredited educational institutions and/or educational programs. The Agency is a member of the correspondent working group and takes an active part in the discussion of the Law of RK "On education" and offers recommendations for its improvement.

List of abbreviations

- ABET** - Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
ACBSP - Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs
ACQUIN - Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute
APQN - Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network
AQAIIW - **Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World**
ASIIN - Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Engineering, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics
CEENQA - Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
CIQG - United States Council for Higher Education Accreditation International Quality Group
ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR - European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
ESG - Standards and Recommendations for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
FIBAA - Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation
IMarEST - Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology
INQAAHE - International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IREG - International Observatory for Academic Ranking and Excellence
DBA - Doctor of Business Administration
MBA - Master of Business Administration
PhD - Doctor of philosophy
MA – Master of Arts program
QA - Quality Assurance
SAR - Self-Assessment Report
AC - Accreditation Council of the IAAR
BA – Bachelor of Arts program
GDP - gross domestic product
EAAP - external assessment of academic performance
IQAS - Internal Quality Assurance System
HEI - higher education institution
WFME - World Federation of Medical Education
EPP - External Expert Panel
SPIID - State Program for Industrial and Innovative Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019
SPED - State Program of Education Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020
EMBA – Executive MBA Program
EHEA - European Higher Education Area
KR -Kyrgyz Republic
IA - Institutional Accreditation

SC MNE RK - Statistics Committee, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan

MES - Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Kazakhstan

IAAR - Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating

NAC - National Accreditation Center, Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Kazakhstan

National accreditation center - National Center for Public and Professional Accreditation

RI - Research Institutes

IQAA - Independent Kazakhstan Agency for Quality Assurance in Education

NCE - National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan “Atameken”

NSQAE - National System for quality assessment in education

EO - Educational Organization

EP - Educational Program

TS - Teaching staff of higher education institutions

WG - Working Group

Register - National Register

RK - Republic of Kazakhstan

RSMC - JSC “Republican Scientific and Methodological Center for the Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Qualification”

IQAS Guidelines - Internal Quality Assurance System Guideline

RF – Russian Federation

SA - Specialized Accreditation

MM - Mass Media

TVE - Technical and Vocational Education

EC - Expert Council of the IAAR

AC - Accreditation Council