

**Analysis of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating
of the Republic of Kazakhstan against the ENQA membership
criteria, and thereby the European Standards and guidelines for
quality assurance in Higher Education**

Josep Grifoll

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1

Independent agency for
accreditation rating

Report identification:

Title: Analysis of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating of the Republic of Kazakhstan (IAAR) against the ENQA membership criteria, and thereby the European Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in Higher Education

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Purpose : The main objective of the present report is to provide information to the management team of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating of the Republic of Kazakhstan (IAAR) about the position of this organisation for a possible international review against the ENQA membership criteria and thereby the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The analysis has been conducted using the draft revised ESG endorsed by the Bologna Follow-Up Group on 19 September 2014, subject to approval by the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan, on 14-15 May 2015.

Inputs of the report:

The report is prepared after holding meetings with the IAAR direction and the IAAR scientific advisor, the representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, the IAAR personnel and representatives from the stakeholders (institutions and students). The agenda with all the meetings and interviews is presented in the annex of this report.

The task to compose this report includes analysis of the regulatory framework for the IAAR and the public information available in the institutional website.

Content of the report:

1. Introduction
2. IAAR and its context
3. Situation of the IAAR regarding the Part II of ESG
4. Situation of the IAAR regarding the Part III of ESG
5. Other requirements of ENQA for full membership position
6. Final recommendations
7. Annex

References:

- Draft revised ESG endorsed by the Bologna Follow-Up Group on 19 September 2014. Subject to approval by the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan, on 14-15 May 2015
- Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the EHEA. Occasional Papers. ENQA. 2011
- Rules and Requirements for National Registers of Accreditation Institutions, Accredited Education Institutions and Education Programs. Approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan December 30, 2011 No. 556
- State Program of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011–2020; Approved by the decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated December 7, 2010 No 1118
- Regulations on the Accreditation Council of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Ratings. Approved by the Director of IAAR on 27th April 2012.
- Charter of the Non-Profit establishment “Independent Agency for Accreditation and Ratings”. Approved by the founder of IAAR on 18th November 2011.
- Example of a review report: Report on external expert commission performance for evaluation of the East Kazakhstan State Technical University named after D. Serikbayev Republican State Enterprise on the basis of economic control rights in conformity with institutional accreditation standards from April 07 till April 09, 2014. (as example of external quality assurance report).
- Higher Education in Kazakhstan. Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and National Tempus Office Kazakhstan. July 2012
- www.iaar.kz website of the Independent Agency for accreditation and rating
- IAAR Strategic plan for 2012-2015. In brief

3

Independent agency for accreditation rating

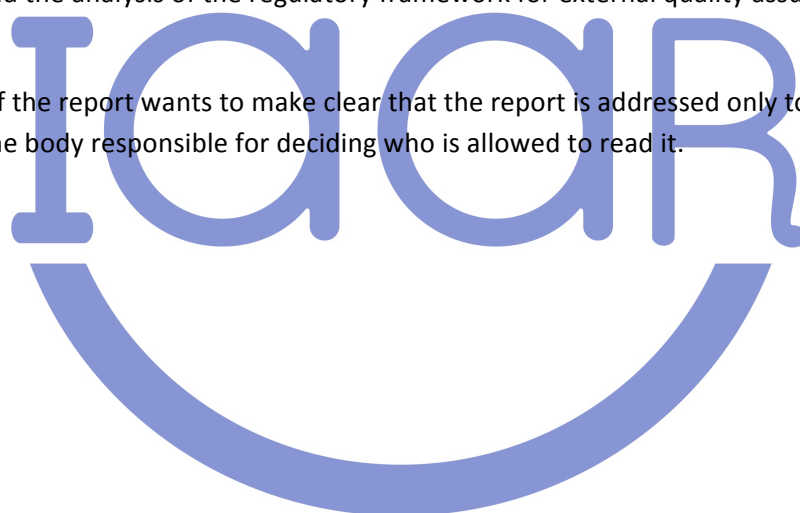
1.- Introduction

This report is the result of very useful and interesting interaction with the management team of IAAR, a notable representation of the staff working in IAAR, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and some of the stakeholders of the Kazakhstani Higher Education System. I wish to thank them for their availability and willingness to facilitate my analysis of IAAR.

The report should not be used as evidence to support the fulfilment of ESG, but as a tool for the director and the management team at IAAR in the preparation of a self-assessment document for an international review of IAAR. In this regard, the report contains recommendations and suggestions to better fulfil the ENQA membership requirements.

Any external reader of this report should take into account that this report was prepared without a previous self-assessment document issued by IAAR. The report is a consequence of different interviews and the analysis of the regulatory framework for external quality assurance in Kazakhstan.

The author of the report wants to make clear that the report is addressed only to the IAAR and the IAAR is the body responsible for deciding who is allowed to read it.



Independent agency for
accreditation rating

2.- IAAR and its context

The Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating of the Republic of Kazakhstan is a young organisation; being established in 2011, in a short period of time it has been able to consolidate a consistent system of external Quality Assurance for programmes and institutions.

The agency is also developing a service of ranking higher education, which is a product that could contribute to its sustainability of the agency in the future.

IAAR is indeed active in the task of consultancy for higher education institutions. This is basically made to prepare higher education institutions to be ready for external quality assurance.

The implemented follow-up system by IAAR is working regularly and seems appreciated in this initial stage of the agency.

Taking into account this configuration it is important to mention that IAAR is working in a system in constant evolution, in which institutions and policymakers are focused in adapting their post-soviet structures and regulations to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). A clear example of this can be seen in the level of autonomy of higher education institutions; in that respect a significant percentage of the content for higher education courses and programmes is fixed by the government.

This process of adaptation to the EHEA also takes into account a liberalised market for external quality assurance services and therefore IAAR having competition from other providers. At the moment, IAAR is competing with another national quality assurance agency and several international organisations delivering external quality assurance services.

This complex landscape has an additional challenge that should be considered, this is the geographical area in which IAAR is operating. Kazakhstan is the eighth biggest country in the world by area; its territory is about 62% of the current area of the European Union, and it counts with a rather complex system of higher education, in terms of diversity and quantity of institutions. Currently, there are 148 universities (9 national, 2 international, 32 state, 12 non-civilian, 93 private, including 16 corporatized ones), which educate more than 595 thousand people.

Moreover, Kazakhstan has only one neighbouring country (The Russian Federation) included in the list of signatory countries of the European Higher Education Area. This makes also complicated the task of internationalising quality assurance activities.

In any case, the most important issue about IAAR, as quality assurance agency, can be seen in the fact that is following a rather unique model in the European Higher Education Area. IAAR should be considered like a non-profit organisation but operating as a sort of private company in a competitive market. IAAR has not been established by the national government or founded by an association of institutions. IAAR has an individual founder that saw the opportunity to establish the company and be a provider of external quality assurance services in a liberalised market. In that respect, IAAR is full independent, but it has to be very careful in justifying that its business model is adapted to the ESG and avoids potential conflict of interests.

Any competitive market for quality assurance needs to have consistent transparency tools. This is a task that IAAR can undertake itself but it can be much more effective if national decision-makers promote mechanisms for transparency for all the operators at national level. The legal framework of Kazakhstan already includes transparency tools for a liberalised market on external quality assurance, however it seems not easy for the general public to get access to the registers of accredited institutions and accredited programmes.

The market for external quality assurance (accreditations) has a clear regulation; however it is not evident what happens beyond the market operations. How developmental functions, not directly connected with the market of accreditations but normally conducted by quality assurance agencies, can be supported? For instance: training stakeholders as a group, promoting debates and dialogues on the concept of quality or undertaken field research. These activities produce some positive externalities that perhaps are not sufficiently considered in the promotion of the market in external quality assurance, so there is a risk of missing those activities in the market.

Is the market and competition in external quality assurance compatible with the opportunities to development of economies of scale and cooperation?

Finally, IAAR methodology and its institutional reports might consider more the document State Program of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011–2020 and the new ESG in which the responsibilities of higher education institutions grow. This task is not easy to be implemented but it seems strategic for IAAR.

6

3.- Situation of the centre regarding Part II of ESG. European Standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education

2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures

STANDARD:

External quality assurance procedures should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES:

Quality assurance in higher education is based on the institutions' responsibility for the quality of their programmes and other provision; therefore it is important that external quality assurance recognises and supports institutional responsibility for quality assurance. To ensure the link between internal and external quality assurance, external quality assurance includes consideration of the standards of Part 1. These may be addressed differently, depending on the type of external quality assurance.

Comment

Kazakhstani National regulations are in a process to increase the autonomy of Higher Education institutions. This can be seen in areas such as programme content and quality assurance procedures. In addition, State plans for a wider participation of the stakeholders in institutional

governance exist and they should be taking into consideration in the IAAR guidelines for institutional accreditations.

This is important also because national QA agencies have exclusivity in nationally recognised accreditation on Kazakhstani Higher Education institutions. Moreover, this is crucial according to the ESG in which higher education institutions should have a policy on QA.

Programme accreditation is conducted by national and foreign QA agencies. In this respect, there is a competition among QA agencies. It is however appreciated the work of IAAR in providing seminars, training activities and consultation services to higher education institutions. In any case, it seems recommended to put more attention in IAAR methodology to the national targets for higher education and to the ESG, in which institutions take more responsibilities on quality assurance.

2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

STANDARD:

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

GUIDELINES:

In order to ensure effectiveness and objectivity it is vital for external quality assurance to have clear aims agreed by stakeholders.

The aims, objectives and implementation of the processes will

- bear in mind the level of workload and cost that they will place on institutions;
- take into account the need to support institutions to improve quality;
- allow institutions to demonstrate this improvement;
- result in clear information on the outcomes and the follow-up.

The system for external quality assurance might operate in a more flexible way if institutions are able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance.

Comment

Independent agency for accreditation rating

The QA methodology is designed by experts and seems to be compatible with the expectations of higher education institutions. There is a pretty well developed process of consultation that is appreciated by universities and it helps staff of the institutions to be prepared for external QA; nevertheless IAAR should consider if the current aims and goals of its methodology in responding to the challenges of the Kazakhstani universities.

The position of IAAR as a private organisation; national authorities should take into account that uncertainties in the progress of the national regulatory framework might reduce incentives to invest in developmental strategies like upgrading guidelines or facilitating the participation of universities and stakeholders in the generation of new schemes for external quality assurance.

Although quality assurance guidelines seem well accepted by actors, it would be recommended to formalise the implication of different relevant actors in methodological developments through

the accreditation council or through other alternative paths. In other words: how can institutions and stakeholders be active in the formulation of comments, suggestions and even to look for a consensus about the procedures for the IAAR methodology?

2.3 Implementing processes

STANDARD:

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent;
- an external assessment normally including a site visit;
- a report resulting from the external assessment;
- a consistent follow-up.

GUIDELINES:

External quality assurance carried out professionally, consistently and transparently ensures its acceptance and impact. Depending on the design of the external quality assurance system, the institution provides the basis for the external quality assurance through a self-assessment or by collecting other material including supporting evidence. The written documentation is normally complemented by interviews with stakeholders during a site visit. The findings of the assessment are summarised in a report (cf. Standard 2.5) written by a group of external experts (cf. Standard 2.4). External quality assurance does not end with the report by the experts. The report provides clear guidance for institutional action. Agencies have a consistent follow-up process for considering the action taken by the institution. The nature of the follow-up will depend on the design of the external quality assurance

8

Comment:

The IAAR seems very well situated in this standard. Some remarks can be formulated:

- a) The consultation process before the site visit should be performed adequately in order to avoid possible conflict of interest of those who train and support the institutions in preparing the self-evaluation and those who perform accreditation site-visits;
- b) The work on the rankings performed by IAAR should not interfere, negatively, in accreditation procedures. In that respect, IAAR should consider the possibility to separate clearly what is covered in the rankings and what in accreditation;
- c) Having short abstracts in English of the accreditation reports;
- d) And to consider public information about the follow up systems in place.

2.4 Peer-review experts

STANDARD:

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

GUIDELINES:

At the core of external quality assurance is the wide range of expertise provided by peer experts, who contribute to the work of the agency through input from various perspectives, including those of institutions, academics, students and employers/professional practitioners.

In order to ensure the value and consistency of the work of the experts, they

- are carefully selected;
- have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task;
- are supported by appropriate training and/or briefing.

The agency ensures the independence of the experts by implementing a mechanism of no-conflict-of-interest. The involvement of international experts in external quality assurance, for example as members of peer panels, is desirable as it adds a further dimension to the development and implementation of processes

Comment

IAAR seems doing a good job in this area. It is however recommended to formalise all the processes related to the work with reviewers. The agency is appointing international experts in their processes, in this respect it is important to explain how they are selected and in how many evaluation processes they are involved.

IAAR is also working with students as member of the accreditation committees. The agency should also explain how they are selected and trained.

International experts and also students help the IAAR review panel with expertise and balance. Particularly interesting is the appointment of chairpersons for review panels. The majority of them are high representatives from universities. They are seen as respected experts by the universities; in any case, IAAR should establish documented systems for a possible conflict of interest of those chairpersons if they are in relevant positions in the Kazakhstani higher education system.

Independent agency for accreditation rating

2.5 Criteria for outcomes

STANDARD:

Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

GUIDELINES:

External quality assurance and in particular its outcomes have a significant impact on institutions and programmes that are evaluated and judged. In the interests of equity and reliability, outcomes of external quality assurance are based on predefined and published criteria, which are interpreted consistently and are evidence-based. Depending on the external quality assurance system, outcomes may take different forms, for example, recommendations, judgements or formal decisions.

Comment

IAAR is in line with this standard; however it is important to make explicit how the methodology is updated regarding the current and future needs of higher education universities in Kazakhstan. If this is well organised the outcomes of the quality assurance procedures should provide systemic recommendations for the Kazakhstani higher education system.

Moreover it seems relevant to reflect on how the work of IAAR represents and added value in terms of external QA. What is the expected impact of the task performed by IAAR?

2.6 Reporting

STANDARD:

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

GUIDELINES:

The report by the experts is the basis for the institution's follow-up action of the external evaluation and it provides information to society regarding the activities of an institution. In order for the report to be used as the basis for action to be taken, it needs to be clear and concise in its structure and language and to cover

- context description (to help locate the higher education institution in its specific context);
- description of the individual procedure, including experts involved;
- evidence, analysis and findings;
- conclusions;
- features of good practice, demonstrated by the institution;
- recommendations for follow-up action.

The preparation of a summary report may be useful. The factual accuracy of a report is improved if the institution is given the opportunity to point out errors of fact before the report is finalised.

Comment:

At the moment, reports are not published in IAAR website but the agency new homepage seems prepared to do it. The analysis of an example of a review report for a case of an institutional accreditation shows that:

- a) Applicable standards are not stated in the report. The explanation of IAAR for this is that they are too long to be published together with the observations and recommendations of the review panel. If this is the case, I suggest creating synthetic standards for one of each section of the report. This will facilitate the task of the reader and ensure the quality of the reports by having the chance to compare the appreciations of the review panel with certain standards or rubrics.
- b) The reports should make a difference between description and assessment.
- c) There should be a concordance between the recommendations and what was observed in the assessment process (stated in the report as assessment).
- d) Probably it should be positive to have a better identification of the key performance indicators of the assessed units (using tables and charts).

A final reflection on the content of the reports can be made. Some of the standards for internal quality assurance are not sufficiently visible; e.g. policy for QA or public information about the Higher Education programmes. On the other hand, the fact that universities are not completely

autonomous in establishing the content of their programmes is not well aligned with the ESG that looks for the mechanisms on how universities design and approve programmes.

2.7 Complaints and appeals

STANDARD:

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

GUIDELINES:

In order to safeguard the rights of the institutions and ensure fair decision-making, external quality assurance is operated in an open and accountable way. Nevertheless, there may be misapprehensions or instances of dissatisfaction about the process or formal outcomes.

Institutions need to have access to processes that allow them to raise issues of concern with the agency; the agencies, need to handle such issues in a professional way by means of a clearly defined process that is consistently applied.

A complaints procedure allows an institution to state its dissatisfaction about the conduct of the process or those carrying it out.

In an appeals procedure, the institution questions the formal outcomes of the process, where it can demonstrate that the outcome is not based on sound evidence, that criteria have not been correctly applied or that the processes have not been consistently implemented.

Comment:

IAAR needs to formalise a mechanisms to fulfill this standard. It is important to make clear to the institutions that IAAR has a procedure to handle possible complains or appeals from universities concerning the service provided by IAAR and the outcomes generated by this service. Certainly it seems clear that IAAR only takes those programmes that can be positively accredited, but having the mechanism for complaints and appeals creates the chance to express dissatisfaction with the quality of the work conducted by IAAR and this contributes to the development of IAAR as a reliable organisation.

11

Independent agency for
accreditation rating

3.- Situation of the centre regarding the Part III of ESG. European Standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education

3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education

STANDARD:

The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES:

The standards for external quality assurance contained in Part 2 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experiences gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education institutions.

The standards for external quality assurance should together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies constitute the basis for professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

Comment

Taking into account the concept of effectiveness of the external quality assurance, which is included in the standard, I suggest starting a reflection on how IAAR can take into consideration the National targets for Higher Education and to contribute by doing this to enhance the position and recognition of the Kazakhstani higher education institutions worldwide.

12

Articulate statistics about the quality of the provided services (quality of information, fulfillment of calendars, relevance of experts) is a good option for IAAR to provide better services; but the inclusion of some items in the IAAR methodology, as strategic tools, seems very recommended. This second task is not easy and perhaps it requires a great consensus among the stakeholders, because it is related with concepts, for example, like governance in Kazakhstani universities

3.2 Official status

STANDARD:

Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

GUIDELINES:

In particular when external quality assurance is carried out for regulatory purposes, institutions need to have the security that the outcomes of this process are accepted within their higher education system, by the state, the stakeholders and the public

Comment:

The IAAR is however listed in the governmental register of QA agencies that can undertake recognised QA services in higher education, including accreditation

IAAR operations are therefore recognised by the Government because the accredited programmes and institutions seem to get some rights and resources (for instance grants for students). In order to improve the position of IAAR in this standard it can be proposed a better identification of the IAAR accreditation council (legitimacy). The configuration of the IAAR accreditation council is important at this stage for a good reputation of the agency. Better formalisation of the Council (i.e. how to select and appoint its members?), jointly with the participation of different and recognised stakeholders and the inclusion of this accreditation council in the IAAR charter.

3.3 Independence

STANDARD:

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for Their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

GUIDELINES:

Autonomous institutions need independent agencies as counterpart.

In considering the independence of an agency the following are important:

- Organisational independence, demonstrated by official documentation (e.g. instruments of government, legislative acts or statutes of the organisation) that stipulates the independence of the agency's work from third parties, such as higher education institutions, governments and other stakeholder organisations;
- Operational independence: the definition and operation of the agency's procedures and methods as well as the nomination and appointment of external experts are undertaken independently from third parties such as higher education institutions, governments and other stakeholders;
- Independence of formal outcomes: while experts from relevant stakeholder backgrounds, particularly students, take part in quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

Anyone contributing to external quality assurance activities of an agency (e.g. as expert) is informed that while they may be nominated by a third party, they are acting in a personal capacity and not representing their constituent organisations when working for the agency.

Independence is important to ensure that any procedures and decisions are solely based on expertise

Independent agency for
accreditation rating

Comment:

The fact that IAAR is a private organisation and the automatic interpretation of its natural independence makes necessary to consider the following suggestions:

- a) A better formalisation of its accreditation council (how its members are selected? Or how is the renovation of the Council members done?).
- b) The fact that IAAR is a private organisation and the need to fund its daily functioning through fees paid by assessed units requires a detailed explanation on how IAAR selects the units subject to accreditation and the process of issuing accreditations to them.
- c) An inclusion of the concept of independence in the IAAR charter.

3.4 Thematic analysis

STANDARD:

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

GUIDELINES:

In the course of their work, agencies gain information on programmes and institutions that can be useful beyond the scope of a single process, providing material for structured analyses across the higher education system. These findings can contribute to the reflection on and the improvement of quality assurance policies and processes in institutional, national and international contexts.

A thorough and careful analysis of this information will show developments, trends and areas of good practice or persistent difficulty.

Comment:

IAAR is conducting rankings of higher education institutions and faculty; in that sense this can be considered a thematic analysis; however IAAR should elaborate a process of generating findings from their external quality assurance processes. Opportunities for that exist. At short term IAAR could work with its follow up procedure for the implementation of reviews' recommendations formulated by the review panels. The observation on how those recommendations are formulated and are implemented seems to be done and to be used in order to prepare reports to the Ministry of Education and Science.

3.4 Resources

STANDARD:

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

GUIDELINES:

It is in the public interest that agencies are adequately and appropriately funded, given higher education's important impact on the development of societies and individuals. The resources of the agencies enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance activities in an effective and efficient manner. Furthermore, the resources enable the agencies to improve, to reflect on their practice and to inform the public about their activities.

Comment:

IAAR should make more explicit the composition of the Accreditation Council, the expertise of the panel members and of course the experience of its staff. More transparency in this respect can be positive.

Although IAAR is fulfilling the national requirements to be included in the Kazakhstani register or QA agencies, the IAAR resources seem a bit limited to achieve all the services provided.

- a) First of all, the activity of the Accreditation Council to work on additional added value services is limited by the fact that they cannot receive honorariums.

- b) In addition, the managers working in the agency seem well prepared but they conform a small team to undertake a strategic plan that is ambitious.
- c) The available premises are really limited. The meeting room is not adequate for deliberations and the resources for videoconferences seem insufficient.

IAAR should prove its financial sustainability in the middle term and articulate procedures to integrate the accreditation council in the development of new procedures and strategies for QA in higher education.

3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

STANDARD:

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

GUIDELINES:

Agencies need to be accountable to their stakeholders. Therefore, high professional standards and integrity in the agency's work are indispensable. The review and improvement of their activities are ongoing so as to ensure that their services to institutions and society are optimal. Agencies apply an internal quality assurance policy which is available on its website. This policy

- ensures that all persons involved in its activities are competent and act professionally and ethically;
- includes internal and external feedback mechanisms that lead to a continuous improvement within the agency;
- guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination;
- outlines the appropriate communication with the relevant authorities of those jurisdictions where they operate;
- ensures that any activities carried out and material produced by subcontractors are in line with the ESG, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance activities are subcontracted to other parties;
- allows the agency to establish the status and recognition of the institutions with which it conducts external quality assurance.

15

Comment:

The current internal quality system at IAAR is not sufficient. It requires better formalisation in terms of procedures, collection of data, use of statistics, improvement of transparency. Certainly the agency collects the satisfaction of the Higher Education institution about the service provided, but this seems very limited. There is a need to collect the view of the review panel members that act on behalf of the agency and other possible stakeholders.

Additionally, it should be published the code of conduct of the review panel members and the policy to avoid conflict of interest. Statistics about the implementation of the IAAR internal QA system should be also prepared.

3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies

STANDARD:

Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

Guidelines:

A periodic external review will help the agency to reflect on its policies and activities. It provides a means for assuring the agency and its stakeholders that it continues to adhere to the principles enshrined in the ESG.

Comment:

Currently IAAR is fulfilling the national regulations as accreditation body. It is recommended to include this point in the Charter of IAAR as an internal measure of quality.

4- Other requirements of ENQA for full membership position

“The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgements and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups.”

IAAR is well aligned with this standard but it is recommended to work more with statistics about its services and analytical reports on the performed works.

“If the Agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of the agency.”

The IAAR needs to have an appeals committee and its procedure in place.

“The Agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.”

The IAAR is doing significant efforts in working internationally and it takes part in ENQA meetings and events.

Independent agency for
accreditation rating

5- Final recommendations

According to the observations and evidence collected by the author of this report, the IAAR is well-positioned to undertake an international review in order to demonstrate its alignment with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Before starting the process, it would be wise to consider the content of this report and its suggestions.



Independent agency for
accreditation rating

6- Annex

Visit of Mr. Josep Grifoll Saurí 30 – 31 March and 1 April 2015

Venue: Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating
Address: Kabanbay batyr avenue 42 – VP -17
Astana city
Agenda

Day 1

Time	Activity
10:00 – 11:00	Meeting with IAAR Director (Eleonora Khankeshiyeva) and Scientific Advisor (Rimma Seidakhmetova)
11:00 – 11:30	Time for Analysis & Preparation
11:30 – 12:00	Meeting with the QA agency Staff (Support: Administration, Legal Aid Department) Lawyer Zhanzira Shalabayeva)
12:00 – 12:30	Time for Analysis & Preparation
12:30 – 13:00	Meeting with QA agency Staff (QA service: institutional accreditation of higher education institutions – Manager of International Projects Timur Kanapyanov)
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 15:00	Time for Analysis & Preparation
15:30 – 16:00	Meeting with the QA agency Staff (QA service: specialised accreditation of education programmes – Managers of Medical Programmes, Aigerim Aimurziyeva)
16:00 – 16:30	Time for Analysis & Preparation
16:30 – 17:00	Meeting with the QA agency Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Manager for ranking and methodological support of education, Baizhan Ualkhanov - Office manager, Zarina Auezbayeva - Chief accountant, Shinar Smagulova
17:00 – 17:30	Time for Analysis

18

Independent agency for accreditation rating

Day 2

Time	Activity
10:00 – 10:30	Meeting with the Representatives of the Ministry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Miras Shalabayev, Deputy Director of Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science of the RK; - Zarina Chikibayeva, Head of the Methodological Support Department of Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science of the RK.
10:30 – 11:00	Meeting with Public Higher Education Institution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - L. Gumilyov Eurasian National University (University representatives, students, head of accreditation department and programme coordinators).
11:30- 12.30	Time for Analysis & Preparation

12:30 – 13:00	Meeting with Private Higher Education Institution - Kazakh University of Economics, Finance and International Trade. (University representatives, students, head of accreditation department and programme coordinators)
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 17:00	Time for Analysis & Preparation
17:00 – 18:00	Meeting with NCEQE Director and Deputy Director

Day 3 (Almaty)

Time	Activity
10:30 – 11:30	Meeting with Public Higher Education Institution - Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abai (University representatives, students, head of accreditation department and programme coordinators).
11:30- 12:00	Time for Analysis & Preparation
12:00 – 13:00	Meeting with Private Higher Education Institution - Turar Ryskulov New Economic University (University representatives, students, head of accreditation department and programme coordinators).
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch



Independent agency for
accreditation rating