

ENQA EVALUATION FOLLOW-UP

Dear ENQA Board members,

AKKORK is grateful to you for the recommendations you gave. Please find here attached the follow up report on your recommendations and recommendations of the reviewers. In green in Criterion 6 in some parts of the report is highlighted the part of the recommendation which is addressed in AKKORK follow-up section.

ENQA Board recommendation 1

ESG 2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures The report reads on page 16: “The review panel could, however, not find evidence that a systematic assessment is undertaken for programme reviews to what extent all programme features are linked to the institutional quality assurance system. Therefore, it could not be concluded that all aspects that form part of the ESG 1 are consistently applied in AKKORK’s procedures”.

→ As not all processes described in Part 1 of the ESG are consistently applied in AKKORK’s procedure, this leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA reviewers recommendation 1

AKKORK should further elaborate its criteria in order to ensure that systematic assessments of study programmes are embedded in the review process and that all aspects of the ESG Part 1 are assessed.

AKKORK follow-up

AKKORK starting from the beginning of its activities in 2005 was the follower of the ESG ENQA criteria. AKKORK is conducting the systematic assessment of the study programmes, evaluating also how different programme features are linked to the institutional quality assurance system. From the comparative table enclosed you can find out how ESG Part 1 is presented in AKKORK criteria.

ENQA Board recommendation 2

ESG 2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes The panel report reads on pages 17-18 that: “public information about the aims and objectives are not available for each of the different individual assessment processes. This information can only be found for some of the types of services that AKKORK provides”.

→ As the aims and objectives are not publicly available for all QA processes, this leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA reviewers recommendation 2

AKKORK should systematically provide information about the aims and objectives for each of its activities. This information could also be offered in a comparative manner in order to better outline the differences between the assessment activities.

AKKORK follow-up

Now aims and objectives for every service AKKORK offer is available in respective section

- Service: Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/>

- Service: Participation in professional - public education programme accreditation: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ppepa/>

- Service: Independent education programme accreditation: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iepa/>

- Service: International accreditation of education programmes: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/>

- Service: International e-learning accreditation:
<http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iela/>

- Service: Internal quality assurance system audit and certification (IQAS):
<http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iqasdac/>

- Service: Assessment of administrative and teaching staff:
<http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/aoaats/>

The comparative table of aims of AKKORK services is enclosed to this letter.

ENQA Board recommendation 3

ESG 2.3 Criteria for decisions This is one of the key standards to be met. Indeed, as pointed out by the panel, “the easy availability of criteria is not just an important feature for interested HEIs, but also for other actors and stakeholders in the Russian Federation and internationally in order to determine the value of the work of AKKORK”. However, according to the report, page 19: “The precise criteria are not easily locatable. [...] AKKORK added criteria during the review, but not for all of its external quality assurance activities. For the ones that are published, finding them is slightly complicated, as they are not clearly marked as criteria.” For some procedures, criteria are lacking completely (page 19): “international accreditation of programmes, international accreditation of e-learning, and the audit and certification of quality management system, criteria cannot be found”.

→ As criteria are mostly not published and if they are, they are not explicitly marked as criteria, this leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA Criterion 6 – External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)

- The appeals procedure is missing as the Agency does not have appeals regulations in place. The appeals procedure should be made available on its website.

- The criteria that AKKORK uses are not accessible for all external quality assurance activities and are not fully published.

- There is no structure follow-up mechanism for every review.
 - Not all review reports are published.
 - Students are not systematically involved in review teams.
- This leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA reviewers recommendation 3

AKKORK should fully publish its criteria on its website in a more easily accessible and clear manner.

AKKORK follow-up

Now criteria for every service AKKORK offer is available in respective section

- Service: Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/>
- Service: Participation in professional - public education programme accreditation: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/pppepa/>
- Service: Independent education programme accreditation: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iepa/>
- Service: International accreditation of education programmes: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/>
- Service: International e-learning accreditation: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iela/>
- Service: Internal quality assurance system audit and certification (IQAS): <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iqasdac/>

- Service: Assessment of administrative and teaching staff:

<http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/aoaats/>

ENQA Board recommendation 4

ESG 2.5 Reporting Not all reports are published. The panel notes that “reports from institutional reviews are not published, but are only available on request”; “Negative reports are neither published, nor is there any indication that a review at all took place”.

→ As only reports of successful study programmes accreditation are published, this leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA Criterion 6 – External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)

- The appeals procedure is missing as the Agency does not have appeals regulations in place. The appeals procedure should be made available on its website.

- The criteria that AKKORK uses are not accessible for all external quality assurance activities and are not fully published.

- There is no structure follow-up mechanism for every review.

- **Not all review reports are published.**

- Students are not systematically involved in review teams.

→ This leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA reviewers recommendation 4

AKKORK should publish all of its review reports on its website, including those at institutional level and negative ones.

AKKORK follow-up

AKKORK publishes all the reports on the website. If you go to section Projects on the website <http://www.akkork.ru/e/projects/> you will see six groups of projects

that AKKORK has done including Register of non-accredited programmes (negative reports) and Registry of programmes that passed institutional assessment and/or accreditation.

ENQA Board recommendation 5

ESG 2.7 Periodic reviews The report lacks evidence to support the substantial compliance of this standard. The panel recognises the lack of a clear cycle of reviews which is due to the possibility that subsequent rounds of accreditation may be performed by another agency. Furthermore, the 3-year validity of accreditations is highlighted by the panel as being a short period to observe progression and improvement.

→ The lack of a clear periodicity of reviews leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA reviewers recommendation 5

AKKORK should consider extending the validity for all its accreditations to avoid accreditation fatigue in universities.

AKKORK follow-up

As you can see from the reports posted in the section Registry of accredited programmes, AKKORK periodically carries out its activities. Mainly as you can see from that list the names of the universities each year are the same. For instance, Tyumen State Oil and Gas University underwent review in AKKORK in 2013 and 2014, National Research Tomsk State University underwent review in 2014, in 2015, and we are starting now a new project there. Higher School of Economics (National Research University) underwent the review in 2015 and we have review there which is going on now and will finish in May 2016. Those are really big universities which have a lot of programmes and for each year plan some amount of programmes for the review in AKKORK.

AKKORK urges the universities that if they undergo each time the review in AKKORK it will help them to constantly and consistently monitor the strategy, success and problems of the education programmes, which is an important part of the review activity.

After considering the recommendations AKKORK started to grant accreditation for 4 years period for which received positive feedback from the universities, stating that it is very convenient for them, because either covers full bachelor cycle or two full masters cycles.

ENQA Board recommendation 6

ESG 3.3 Activities The Board concurs with the panel's recommendation that "AKKORK should continue to ensure that consultancy services and external quality assurance are not offered at the same HEI within a reasonable timeframe" (page 29).

ENQA reviewers recommendation 6

AKKORK should continue to ensure that consultancy services and external quality assurance are not offered at the same HEI within a reasonable timeframe.

AKKORK follow-up

Having received such recommendation AKKORK decided to withdraw consulting from the list of services it offers.

ENQA Board recommendation 7

ENQA Criterion 4 – Mission statement (ESG 3.5) The panel believes (pages 33-34) that "AKKORK uses its mission in order to determine its activities. However, there was no documentation that would prove that this is done in a systematic manner". The mission statement "is not publicly available. Instead, the various elements contained therein are placed in different parts of the website".

→ Documentation does not prove that AKKORK's activities are undertaken systematically. The mission statement is not published, but its content is. This leads to a finding of substantial compliance.

AKKORK follow-up

The mission was always seen on AKKORK front page. Also it was present in the hard copy in the office of the agency. We decided to publish in in the section About/Documents. It can be found following the link: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/about/documents/>

Documentation concerning all the review activities contains references to the mission.

ENQA Board recommendation 8

ENQA Criterion 6 – External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)

- The appeals procedure is missing as the Agency does not have appeals regulations in place. The appeals procedure should be made available on its website.

- The criteria that AKKORK uses are not accessible for all external quality assurance activities and are not fully published.

- There is no structure follow-up mechanism for every review.

- Not all review reports are published.

- Students are not systematically involved in review teams.

→ This leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA reviewers recommendation 8

AKKORK should clearly determine its appeals procedure and make it available on its website.

AKKORK follow-up

Now appeals procedure for every service AKKORK offer is available in respective section

- Service: Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/>

- Service: Participation in professional - public education programme accreditation: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ppepa/>

- Service: Independent education programme accreditation: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iepa/>

- Service: International accreditation of education programmes: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/>

- Service: International e-learning accreditation: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iela/>

- Service: Internal quality assurance system audit and certification (IQAS): <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iqasdac/>

- Service: Assessment of administrative and teaching staff: <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/aoaats/>

ENQA Board recommendation 9

ENQA Criterion 6 – External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)

- The appeals procedure is missing as the Agency does not have appeals regulations in place. The appeals procedure should be made available on its website.

- The criteria that AKKORK uses are not accessible for all external quality assurance activities and are not fully published.

- **There is no structure follow-up mechanism for every review.**

- Not all review reports are published.

- Students are not systematically involved in review teams.
- This leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA reviewers recommendation 9

AKKORK should ensure that there is a structured follow-up mechanism for each of its reviews. This should be made part of the contract signed with the HEI.

AKKORK follow-up

Part of each contract which the university signed with AKKORK is the schedule of the procedure. In the procedure is always foreseen the time for follow up.

ENQA Board recommendation 10

ENQA Criterion 6 – External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)

- The appeals procedure is missing as the Agency does not have appeals regulations in place. The appeals procedure should be made available on its website.
- The criteria that AKKORK uses are not accessible for all external quality assurance activities and are not fully published.
- There is no structure follow-up mechanism for every review.
- Not all review reports are published.
- **Students are not systematically involved in review teams.**
- This leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA reviewers recommendation 10

AKKORK should ensure that students are part of the review team for each assessment.

AKKORK follow-up

After the recommendation was expressed by the panel on the last day of visit, AKKORK carefully planned the integration of students in each of the reviews. AKKORK conducted the training for a certain amount of students reviewers and

started to involve students in all its reviews starting from October 2015. This can be seen in the sections Register of accredited programmes <http://www.akkork.ru/e/projects/>.

ENQA Board recommendation 11

ENQA Criterion 7 – Accountability procedures (ESG 3.8) The panel recommends AKKORK to “develop a mechanism to ensure that staff and members of AKKORK’s bodies do not have any conflict of interest with regard to reviews they are involved in / decide about”. There is no provision for regular external review of the Agency.

→ This leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA reviewer recommendation 11

AKKORK should develop a mechanism to ensure that staff and members of AKKORK’s bodies do not have any conflict of interest with regard to reviews they are involved in / decide about.

AKKORK follow-up

Members of AKKORK Advisory and Accreditation Councils are approved by the Supervisory Board of AKKORK. Advisory and Accreditation councils are completely independent in their decision making from each other, the Director of AKKORK, reviewers. Each of them has regulations where is stated that their members can’t coincide. This is made in order for members not to be connected by mutual interests.

With regard to the staff: it is part of their labour contracts that they sign an impartiality declaration, stating that if there is any conflict of interest with the HEI, they should inform the director about that cases. Then the director addresses this case or brings it to the appeals commission. One of the employees was fired from AKKORK due to misconduct during the review and conflict of interest with the HEI.

For reviewers AKKORK has an impartiality declaration, first of all and also the work of AKKORK is organized in the way, that reviewers do not have direct contacts with the HEI its all done through the manager of AKKORK. Thus they are protected from the pressure that the HEI can put on them. In their contract it is prescribed that they should inform the management of AKKORK if they were approached by the HEI with some pressure or inquiries on how to influence the results of reviews. If the reviewer is detected to be affiliated with the reviewed HEI, he is fired and put in the List of dishonest reviewers.

ENQA reviewer recommendation 12

AKKORK should officially adopt that it will undergo an external review at least every five years.

AKKORK follow-up

According to the internal standards AKKORK agency passes the external review every 5 years subject to ENQA recommendations. This is stated in the AKKORK Internal Rules. See the section ABOUT on the web site.

ENQA reviewers recommendation 13

AKKORK should disseminate its analytical reports to HEIs and among stakeholders in a more efficient and consistent way.

AKKORK follow-up

AKKORK disseminates its analytical reports and news to the HEIs and among stakeholders, moreover the AKKORK also publishes news and achievements in the field of QA in the «Quality of Education» Magazine (<http://www.edu-quality.ru/>), rectors, vice-rectors and HEIs, partner organizations are subscribed to it.

Articles published in 2015 in Quality of Education:

1. AKKORK as a member of international integration process// Quality of Education, №1-2
2. INQAAHE 2015-2016: new aspirations and prospects // Quality of Education, №1-2
3. Global experience in university branding initiatives // Quality of Education, №1-2
4. ESG: universal approach to e-learning and traditional education // Quality of Education, №3
5. The April ENQA forum: key issues // Quality of Education, №4
6. INQAAHE: search for answers to global challenges // Quality of Education, №4
7. Higher education as a tool for promotion of Russia's image in the international arena // Quality of Education, №4
8. Globalization and diversification of higher education quality assessment: APQN Conference // Quality of Education, №6
9. Interview with Erika Soboleva: open borders and increasing the mobility of students are the future of Russian education // Quality of Education, №7-8
10. The accreditation of experts and expert organizations // Quality of Education, №7-8
11. ESG: transition to the new version // Quality of Education, №9

Also based on AKKORK analytical reports and work there were published several books: System of Education Quality Assessment: International Practice and Russian Experience; Education Quality Assessment in the Framework of Russian Education Environment Development.

Sincerely yours,

Director of AKKORK



Erika Soboleva