

External Review of the National Accreditation Agency of the Russian Federation
(NAA) by
The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

Annex 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

11 March 2008

1. Background and Context

The National Accreditation Agency of the Russian Federation (NAA) was established by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation in 1995. The overall aim of the Agency is to support the higher education institutions, the educational establishments of vocational training, and the educational authorities of the Russian Federation in carrying out their state accreditation procedures.

NAA is involved in European and international cooperation through ENQA, the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), the Eurasian Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN), the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEE Network).

2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

This is a type A review, as defined in the *Guidelines for national reviews of ENQA member agencies*. It will evaluate the way in which and to what extent NAA fulfils the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. Consequently, the review will also provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether NAA should be granted Full Membership of ENQA. The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards granting to NAA Full Membership in ENQA.

The ENQA Board decided on 23 May 2006 to grant NAA Candidate Membership of ENQA. On that occasion the Board recommended that, in order to fulfil the criteria for Full Membership, NAA should take into account the following



recommendations (the numbered sections refer to the paragraphs of the regulations of ENQA):

- **3.10. Mission Statement:** The ENQA Board encourages NAA to consider compiling and publishing a document (also in English) on its website, which summarises
 - the mission, goals and objectives of the agency;
 - the division of labour between NAA, the Accreditation Board¹, the Federal Service and the Ministry of Education;
 - the cultural and historical context which explains and justifies the foundation of the agency.

Excerpts of the relevant legislation could also be included in the document.

- **3.12. Independence:** The operational independence of NAA could be strengthened. For instance, the ENQA Board suggests that
 - the director of the agency should be selected and appointed by an open competition;
 - the expert teams should be selected and appointed independently by the agency;
 - NAA should have greater autonomy in the definition of its procedures and methods;
 - the Accreditation Board should be able to refer back NAA final evaluation reports only on the grounds of factual errors, incompleteness or insufficient evidence;
 - NAA should bear final responsibility for the reports and the judgements made in them;
 - NAA should request relevant amendments to the legislation, if these are needed.
- **3.14. External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies:** The ENQA Board would wish to see the final evaluation reports published in full on the NAA's website.
- **3.15. External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies:** The ENQA Board was unable to find a description of the NAA's appeals procedure. According to the Regulations of ENQA, the nature and

¹ The Accreditation Board is a public body that reviews the final reports presented by the NAA and passes a decision on state accreditation; the Accreditation Board consists of the heads of the educational institutions, public organizations, and the representatives from the government.



the form of the appeals' procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

- **3.16. Accountability procedures:** ENQA Board encourages NAA to strengthen its internal quality assurance by
 - compiling a quality policy document concerning NAA's internal quality assurance mechanisms. The document should be published on the website (preferably also in English);
 - acquiring regular and organised feedback on its work. In addition to the publication of "Accreditation in Education" journal, NAA could use questionnaires for staff, HEIs and experts;
 - being externally reviewed at least once every five years.

In the course of the review, therefore, the team members will pay special attention to the way in which these recommendations have been addressed.

In addition to analysing NAA's compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines, the review aims to give background information on NAA's role and tasks in the context of the HE system in Russia.

3. The Review Process

The process will be designed in the light of ENQA's policy on "ENQA-organised external reviews of member agencies".

The evaluation procedure will consist of the following steps:

- Nomination and appointment of the review team members;
- Self-evaluation by a NAA including the preparation of a self-evaluation report;
- A site visit by the panel of reviewers to NAA;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report.

3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review team members

The review panel will consist of six members: four external reviewers (two quality assurance experts, a representative of higher education institutions and a student member), a review secretary and a local technical advisor. Two of the reviewers will be nominated by the ENQA Board on the basis of proposals submitted to ENQA by the national agencies, and will normally be drawn from



senior serving members of staff of ENQA member agencies. The review secretary will be nominated by the ENQA Board. The fourth external reviewer will be drawn from nominations provided by the European University Association. The nomination of the student member will be requested from the European Students' Union (ESU). The sixth member will be a technical advisor, familiar with the Russian higher education system. The technical advisor will be nominated by NAA, but has to be independent from it. The team members will have a knowledge of Russian and of the Russian higher education system. Current members of the ENQA Board will not be eligible to serve as reviewers.

ENQA will provide to NAA the list of suggested experts with their respective curricula vitae to establish that there are no known conflicts of interest. The experts will have to sign a non-conflict of interest statement as regards the NAA review.

The review team will be assisted by NAA in arriving to Yoshkar-Ola.

3.2 Self-evaluation by NAA, including the preparation of a self-evaluation report

NAA is responsible for the organisation of the self-evaluation process of the agency and shall take into account the following guidance:

- Self-evaluation is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- The self-evaluation report is broken down by the topics of the evaluation: background description of the current situation of the agency; analysis and appraisal of the current situation; proposals for improvement and measures already planned; a summary of perceived strengths and weaknesses;
- The report is also well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which NAA fulfils its mission and objectives and tasks of external quality assurance. The report will also demonstrate to what extent NAA meets the criteria for ENQA membership and thus the *European Standards and Guidelines*. The report will be submitted to the review panel a minimum of four weeks prior to the site visit.

3.3 A Site Visit by the Review Panel

The review panel will draw up and publish a schedule of the site visit. The schedule will include an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises



to be undertaken by the review team during the site visit, the duration of which will be 2 days.

3.4 Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report

On the basis of the review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report in consultation with the expert panel. The report will take into account the purpose and scope of the evaluation as defined under article 2. It will also provide a clear rationale for its findings. A draft will be submitted for comment to NAA within four weeks of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If NAA chooses to provide a statement in reference to the draft report it will be submitted to the chairperson of the review panel within two weeks after the receipt of the draft report. Thereafter the expert panel will take into account the statement by NAA, finalise the document and submit it to NAA and ENQA.

The final report will be completed within two months of the site visit.

4. Follow-up Process and Publication of the Report

NAA will consider the expert panel's report and inform ENQA of its plans to implement any recommendations contained in the report. Subsequent to the discussion of the evaluation results and any planned implementation measures with ENQA, the review report and the follow-up plans agreed upon will be published on NAA's website.

5. Budget

5.1 NAA shall pay the following review-related fees to ENQA directly:

- Chair 5.000 EUR
- Review secretary 5.000 EUR
- Other panel members 3.000 EUR
- Administrative overhead for ENQA Secretariat 5.000 EUR
- Travel and subsistence expenses (approximate) 6.000 EUR

This gives a total indicative cost of 30.000 EUR for the review. If the allowance for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, NAA will cover any additional costs after the completion of the review. However, the ENQA Secretariat will endeavour to keep the travel and subsistence expenses within the limits of the planned budget, and will refund to NAA any underspend if the travel and



subsistence costs are less than the agreed allowance. NAA will pay the fee of the technical advisor to him/her directly.

6. Indicative Schedule of the Review

The duration of the evaluation is scheduled to take 12 months, from March 2008 to March 2009:

Agreement on terms of reference and protocol for review	March 2008
Appointment of review team members by ENQA	March 2008
NAA starts self-evaluation	March 2008
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	May 2008
NAA self-evaluation completed	June 2008
Briefing of review team members	August 2008
Expert panel site visit	September 2008
Draft of evaluation report to NAA	October 2008
Statement of NAA to review team if necessary	November 2008
Submission of final report to NAA and ENQA	December 2008
Consideration of report by NAA	January 2009
Consideration of the report and response of NAA by ENQA	February 2009
Publication of report and implementation plan	March 2009

