

Joint Final Report

External Evaluation of the Russian National Accreditation Agency (NAA)

Visit Dates

November 4 - 8, 2008

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1. Executive summary

The external evaluation of the Russian National Accreditation Agency (NAA) took place during the period June 2007 to December 2008, involving a self-evaluation exercise and report, a site visit by an external review panel, and this report. The main purpose of this process was to analyze whether NAA meets the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and whether NAA should be granted full membership of European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

In addition, the NAA wished to learn how experts judge its activities in the Russian context, and to obtain expert feedback and comments on its implementation of the recommendations given by ENQA Board in 2006.

Having examined the evidence carefully in conjunction with each of the ESG standards, it is the external panel's considered opinion that the NAA is **substantially** compliant with the ENQA membership criteria and the ESG. Furthermore, the panel considers that the NAA has contributed substantially to improving the overall quality of higher education in Russia over the last ten years, and can continue to do so for the foreseeable future. In this perspective, the external panel has presented a number of outline recommendations which it considers will assist the NAA in achieving this objective.

2. Composition of panel

The Russian Association of Nongovernmental HEIs (ANVUZ) who commissioned the review was responsible for selecting and appointing the members of the external review panel. Members of the review panel were not current members of the NAA or any of its expert committees, or representatives of a higher education institution or study program under evaluation by NAA in 2007- 2008.

The review panel consisted of five foreign and Russian members and a technical assistant, and included:

- three experts with international experience in quality assurance of HE, one of whom acted as Chair, one as expert and one as Secretary for the review;
- one student (Russian);
- one representative of private higher education institution (Russian)

The external panel members were:

- **Riitta Pyykkö**, panel chair, professor, University of Turku, Finland, the chair of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council, e-mail: rpyykko@utu.fi;

- **Vladimir A. Zernov**, panel member, professor, chairman of the Board of the Association of Nongovernmental Education Institutions of Russia, e-mail: rector@rosnou.ru;
- **Evgeny V. Kondratjev**, panel member, fifth-year student of Russian Legal Academy of the Ministry of Justice of Russian Federation, chairman of Student Council, e-mail: kev87@yandex.ru;
- **Ivan Panayotov**, panel member, professor, chairman of the Bulgarian National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency; e-mail: astoyanova@neaa.government.bg;
- **Tiit Laasberg**, panel secretary, Estonian Higher Education Accreditation Centre, Foundation Archimedes, e-mail: laasberg@archimedes.ee.

The panel is very thankful to Mrs Zhanna Kuzminykh who acted as an independent local technical assistant, e-mail: zkuzminykh@yandex.ru

3. Main stages of review

3.1 Goals and objectives of review

The review of NAA has three distinct, but related *purposes*.

First, the review was aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of NAA's performance of its statutory functions since its establishment in 1995, with a particular regard to the policies and procedures used by the Agency in its work.

Second, the review's objective was to assist the staff of NAA in further developing its own internal quality culture. With this aim in view, it will consider the organizational structures and processes of NAA as they currently operate, and evaluate their suitability in the context of continuing educational reforms in Russia.

Third, the review had a particular focus on NAA's role in the international developments against the background of the Bologna process, and in particular, the extent to which NAA in the performance of its mission and statutory functions complies with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

3.2 Stages of review

The review took place over 3 main stages. These were:

3.2.1 Self-evaluation

The NAA was responsible for writing a self-evaluation report. Based on the ENQA *Guidelines for National Reviews*, the self-evaluation report included the context and aims of the evaluation, an outline of the Russian higher education system, a detailed description and analysis of the external quality assurance activities undertaken by the NAA, including issues linked to financing and international activities, and a step-by-step analysis of NAA compliance with ESG Parts 2 and 3.

The self-evaluation report also covered actions taken on recommendations of ENQA Board (2006) in order to fulfill the criteria for full membership. The self-evaluation phase took place between September 2007, when the NAA self-evaluation team was appointed, and June 2008. In October 2008 the self-evaluation report and all annexes were sent to the external panel.

The external review panel would like to record its positive appreciation of the self evaluation report, which was written in a very open and useful way, allowing for a good initial understanding of the issues, and high quality interaction with all those met during the site visit.

3.2.2 Site visit

The review panel made a site visit to Russia from 4 – 8 November 2008, in order to verify the validity of information contained in the self-evaluation report, and to gather additional evidence as to the NAA's operations and its compliance with the ESG. The review panel was responsible for determining the duration of the evaluation visit, and drew up an outline list of organizations, institutions and persons which it wished to meet during the visit. The review chair and secretary were responsible for approving the finalized timetable of the site visit and of all interviews. The panel would like to record its appreciation of the helpful and efficient interaction with the NAA staff during this process. The complete visit schedule can be found in Annex 2.

The NAA provided the local administrative support for the site visit, including the organization of interviews, meeting rooms for the panel and interviews, as well as computers with internet access. At the end of the site visit, the review panel delivered a brief oral report of its major findings to the NAA coworkers.

3.2.3 Evaluation report

The review panel was responsible for delivering this evaluation report within six weeks following the end of the site visit, according to the timeframe set out in the terms of reference. The draft evaluation report, which the terms of reference stipulated should not exceed thirty pages, excluding annexes, was drawn up by the panel secretary based on the findings of the panel. Panel members then commented on the draft and the finalized draft was sent to the NAA to check for factual errors. The panel finalized the report after making the necessary factual

corrections, and sent it to the Ministry, to the Rectors' Conference and to the NAA by the end of December 2008.

According to the terms of reference, the NAA will then formulate its comments to the report, including its planned follow-up measures on the report's recommendations, which will constitute part of the final publication of the report. The NAA shall make the evaluation report public on its website and in print, together with the evaluation decision, its own comments and follow-up measures, by the end of February 2009.

4. Contextual information

4.1 Russian quality assurance structures

Before to start the analysis, it would be useful to emphasize the most important characteristics of the Russian system of higher education determining its specificity. The main features are the good educational traditions and scientific potential of the country but also the scope of the HE system, the vast geographical territory, the heritage of the centralized state system and, on the other hand, the turbulent years of change in 1990s. All these factors determine the complexity of the existing system of QA in HE including a large number of different institutions.

The quality assurance system for higher education in Russia was defined by the Law of the Russian Federation "On Education" in 1992. The law defined the procedures of licensing, attestation and accreditation, which replaced the previous methods of education quality management based on centralized government control and inspection. In April 2007 new changes were introduced into the legislation, which put the Russian system of quality assurance in line with the European model: the previously existing procedure of attestation was united with accreditation.

Accreditation is voluntary and conducted once in every five years after an application from an HEI. The accreditation is a formal recognition of the status of an HEI by the state on the basis of solid evidence that its activities conform to nationally established norms. It comprises an external assessment of the content and quality of education and training and their compliance with the state educational standards; and the correspondence of an HEI to the required status criteria. In case of a positive decision about the state accreditation the HEI is granted the Certificate of State Accreditation with a supplement which lists the accredited educational programs the HEI has the right to offer. The certificate is granted for the period of five years.

According to the Russian legislation licensing and state accreditation are conducted by the federal executive body - the **Federal Service of Supervision**

in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor). Rosobrnadzor carries out the function of strategic monitoring of the system of education quality assurance in the Russian Federation; *the Authority for Licensing, Accreditation and Supervision at Rosobrnadzor* exercises managing functions, and ensures the work of the Accreditation Board and expert panels. Certain responsibilities are delegated to the specially established bodies.

The Accreditation Board (AB) is an elected public and state body that reviews final reports made by NAA and makes an accreditation decision. The AB is a deliberative body attached to the Rosobrnadzor. The AB is composed of representatives of HEIs, public organizations and Rosobrnadzor. The members are nominated at different levels: by the regional rectors' councils, federal ministries of other fields, regional authorities, the National Student Union and the government. The final composition of the AB is approved by Rosobrnadzor.

The Main State Expert Center on Evaluation of Education is responsible for financial support of expert panels.

Informational and Methodological Center of the Ministry of Education and Science on Evaluation of Educational Institutions evaluates the compliance of curricular and educational programs to the requirements of the State Educational Standards

National Accreditation Agency (NAA) is a federal state institution. It is important to note that the division of labor between NAA and the other bodies namely Accreditation Board, the Federal Service and the Ministry of Education is clearly defined. The NAA carries out informational and methodological support of the state accreditation procedure; prepares final reports on the quality of the institutions to be accredited for the members of the Accreditation Board; carries out research in the field of quality assurance; participates in the work of international quality assurance networks; conducts workshops and conferences on QA in education; evaluates the quality of graduates' training. All bodies have a legally established basis and this balance corresponds to the real situation in the Russian HE area. The specific features of the Russian system of HE, in particular its scope and vast geographical territory, determine the choice of the accreditation model and the wide application of information technologies.

4.2 NAA mission and activities

NAA's mission in the Russian system of quality assurance is to promote the quality culture in education and quality assurance in HE through technical, methodological, information and research support of all evaluation procedures and accreditation decision making.

NAA is a nonprofit organization which doesn't have making profit as the main goal of its activity. The Agency has the right to carry out profit-bearing activity only to the extent that complies with the purpose of its establishing.

In accordance with its Statutes NAA fulfils specific functions in the procedure of state accreditation of educational institutions, and in the quality assurance of their education process; it contributes to achieving social goals and public good for the benefit of people, society and the state in the quality enhancement of education, academic, professional and social mobility of citizens, and competitiveness of Russian citizens in the international labor market.

The principal statutory function of NAA is **information, methodological, technological, analytical and organizational support of the procedure of the state accreditation** conducted by the Federal Service of Supervision, and the state monitoring of the quality of education in educational institutions. Another important function is promoting the system of quality control and quality assurance in the Russian Federation.

In alignment with its key function the Agency undertakes the following activities:

- forming and maintaining information resources on national accreditation issues and academic quality assessment in education institutions as well as the development of the information data base containing the performance indicators of activities in education institutions and organizations;
- information and methodological support of the accreditation procedure of educational institutions
- preparation of an annual report showing the outcomes of information and methodological support to accreditation of institutions of higher, secondary and further professional education in Russia;
- participation in activities aimed at implementation of issues set out in the Bologna Process in the area of academic quality assurance;
- advisory services on issues of state and public academic accreditation of education institutions;
- development of a software, reference and methodological base for the purpose of academic quality assurance and evaluation;
- monitoring the academic quality assessment process including testing technologies and surveys;
- carrying out research work for academic quality provision;

- organizing and conducting meetings, workshops and conferences to discuss ways of ensuring the development of state and public accreditation procedures, provision of quality management and academic quality assurance procedures in education institutions and organization;
- publishing activity in the sphere of state and public accreditation, provision of quality management and academic quality assurance in education institutions and organizations.

4.3 Engagement with the ESG

NAA is formally recognized as an organization with responsibilities for external quality assurance by several international quality assurance networks:

- the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education – INQAHE (full membership since 2001);
- the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education – the CEE Network (full membership since 2002);
- the Asia-Pacific Quality Network – APQN (full membership since 2006);
- the Eurasian Quality Assurance Network – EAQAN (full membership since 2004);
- the International Association for Educational Assessment – IAEA (full membership since 2007);
- since 2006 NAA has been a candidate member of ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).

As such, the NAA has been involved with the development of the ESG since their inception, and has incorporated elements of the ESG into its work, in so far as this is possible given that many elements of the NAA's operations are written into legislation. It has also restructured its own approach by separating institutional and program accreditation. These elements are part of the ongoing embedding of Russian higher education in the European Higher Education Area, and the NAA has accompanied and supported, through the accreditation process, the introduction of the Bachelor (4 years) and Master (2 years) degree cycles in Russian higher education institutions.

4.4 Reasons for commissioning the evaluation

NAA has been a candidate member of ENQA since May 2006. ENQA candidate membership is granted for a maximum of two years. In order to be granted a Full Member status NAA will need to submit itself, under ENQA regulations, to an external review. In addition, the NAA wished to learn how experts judge its activities in the Russian context. This involves the legal environment in which

NAA works and the degree to which it is able to comply with the legislation as well as with the NAA's internal regulations, standards and procedures.

In order to fulfill the criteria for Full Membership, NAA should take into account the recommendations made by the ENQA Board in 2006. Therefore in the course of the evaluation process special attention was paid to the implementation of these recommendations.

The framework for external evaluation of the NAA was accepted by the NAA's staff general meeting on 5 June 2007, and subsequently agreed with the Russian Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science. The review was coordinated by the Association of Nongovernmental HEIs (ANVUZ).

4.5 Purpose and scope of evaluation

It was planned initially to conduct an A type external review coordinated by ENQA but owing to certain legal problems with organizing an international evaluation it was changed into a B type review organized on the national level. Nevertheless the focus of the review remained largely unchanged. This means that the purpose of the review is twofold (*the ENQA Guidelines for national reviews of ENQA member agencies* p. 7.):

- to check compliance with the ESG and thereby the ENQA membership criteria, and
- a wider purpose, namely to determine the effectiveness of the NAA's activities within the context of Russian higher education quality.

4.6 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria against which the review panel assessed the NAA were:

- the ESG Part 3, European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies, as well as ESG Part 2, European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education;
- legislation governing the NAA and the NAA's internal regulations and criteria;
- the ENQA Board recommendations given in 2006.

The full terms of reference for the external evaluation can be found in Annex 1.

5. Summary of evidence gathered

The review panel collected information by:

- studying the self-evaluation report and other documents relevant to the operation of the NAA;

- a site visit to the NAA offices in Moscow and Yoshkar-Ola;
- interviews with heads of the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation;
- interviews with representatives of the Department of Licensing, Attestation, and Accreditation;
- interviews with representatives of the Accreditation Board;
- interviews with representatives of the National Guild of Independent Experts and representatives of students’ organizations;
- interviews with representatives of state and non-state HEIs;
- interviews with the NAA leadership, including its Director and Deputy Directors, Heads of the Departments;
- interviews with NAA staff members.

Based on these meetings and interviews, and on the basis of the evidence available, the external panel examined whether NAA meets each criterion in the ESG Section 3 (and 2), as follows.

5.1 Compliance with ESG Part 3: European standards for external quality assurance agencies

ESG 3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education:
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.

The specific inclusion in this external evaluation of an examination of the NAA’s compliance with the ESG Part 2 was noted favorably by the external panel.

<i>European Standard</i>	<i>NAA’s practice</i>
<p>2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures: External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines</p>	<p>The external panel found ample evidence to show that the NAA takes into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes in institutions. It should be noted that these institutional processes are heavily influenced by the work of the NAA itself, through its information, methodological and technological work to prepare institutional and program accreditations carried out by Rosobrnadzor.</p> <p>Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Russian HEIs should take a more proactive approach to their own internal quality assurance procedures. The NAA should assist them by paying more attention to institutional QA during the accreditations.</i>

<p>2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes: The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.</p>	<p>As already outlined, the NAA must meet a number of different aims and objectives through its activities. The external panel found that these aims and objectives are well known within Russian higher education and published and available on NAA website. The relevant attendant processes are likewise known and published. Stakeholders are involved in these processes, including in assessment of the impact of the NAA's activities through various channels, including the current external evaluation.</p> <p>Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.</p>
<p>2.3 Criteria for decisions: Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently</p>	<p>NAA prepares Analytical Materials (final reports) for accreditation and the accreditation decision made by the Accreditation Board. These materials are based on the criteria approved by the Federal Service of Supervision and published in the Internet (www.nica.ru). The criteria are applied consistently and they allow making an objective decision about accreditation of a HEI. As NAA is not a decision making QA body then the panel is giving its opinion only with reservation added. The external panel found that accreditation decisions are based on explicit and published criteria. These criteria were mainly worked out by NAA.</p> <p>Opinion of the panel: Partly compliant.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The clear legal link between AB and NAA should be established. NAA should be the servicing body (bureau) to the AB and AB should be the supervising and decision making body to NAA.</i>
<p>2.4 Processes fit for purpose: All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them</p>	<p>The basic aims and objectives of NAA's various activities are published or available on its website and well known to public. The panel was impressed about the enormous methodological and info-technological work made by NAA - the collection of data from HEIs from all over country, the automatic generation of the first draft of the self-evaluation report for the institutional evaluation (based on collected HEI's performance indicators), recently started internet based state exams in different subject areas are really very well and professionally developed activities by NAA. The NAA is also administrating the database of experts involved in the evaluations in Russia and organising the training courses for them. The stages comprising the procedure of institutional accreditation (self-evaluation, site visit, writing a report, publishing the report, follow-up procedures) are aimed at the objective evaluation and making a decision about the compliance of a HEI with the determined standards.</p> <p>There is no doubt that automatically generated institutional self-evaluation reports are extremely useful tools for confirmation of the status of Russian HEI-s (on January 1, 2008 1423 HEI-s). But in this methodological approach there are also some risks. As the self-evaluation process is the cornerstone of QA then the minimal role of an HEI in this process could affect the effective functioning of QA cycle.</p> <p>Opinion of the panel: Partly compliant.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The completion of accreditation expert teams should be the full responsibility of NAA and it should be fixed in the Statute of NAA;</i> • <i>There is need to increase the role of an HEI in the self-evaluation process, particularly in the study program accreditation. There</i>

	<p><i>should be obligatory SWOT analysis with added development plans in a different part of the self-analysis report;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Include a greater focus on improvement in the external evaluation processes;</i> • <i>Include greater international participation in all NAA processes to enhance general fitness for purpose;</i> • <i>there should be greater participation of students in the QA processes, particularly in the self-evaluation</i>
<p>2.5 Reporting: Reports should be published and should be written in a style, which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.</p>	<p>The external panel saw evidence that NAA reports are published and accessible on the NAA website. Registers and reference books with the outcomes of accreditation are published on NAA's web-site www.nica.ru, and in special editions. The expert panels' reports are not publicly available. At present the structure of the expert panel report is being reviewed and ways of making them public are being discussed. It has been also recommended to translate parts of the report into English for informing the international community. On its web-site NAA publishes general information (address, telephone numbers) on HEIs undergoing accreditation, and names of expert panel members. Orders and instructions issued by the Federal Service of Supervision on the results of the Accreditation Board meetings are also published there. Negative accreditation decisions are analyzed in the annual Analytical report</p> <p>Opinion of the panel: Partly compliant.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The expert panels' reports should be publicly available.</i>
<p>2.6 Follow-up procedures: Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.</p>	<p>When during accreditation some inconsistency is found between the content and quality of education and the federal state educational standards for higher education or between the HEI's performance indicators and the predetermined criteria, the HEI is accredited with recommendations. These recommendations are fixed in the final document as prescriptions. One to three years are allowed to implement the recommendations. The recommendations are entered into a special data base for monitoring dead lines by which the HEI is supposed to produce the evidence of improvement. In case such evidence is not presented the HEI's accreditation is forfeited by the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science.</p> <p>Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant</p>
<p>2.7 Periodic reviews: External quality assurance of institutions and/or programs should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.</p>	<p>The state accreditation of HEIs in Russia is conducted every five years. This requirement is stipulated by the law of the Russian Federation "On Education". Besides all HEIs annually submit information about their activity to the CDBSA, which allows regular monitoring of the system of education in Russia.</p> <p>Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant</p>
<p>2.8 System-wide analyses: Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analyzing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.</p>	<p>Currently, the NAA publishes comprehensive yearly reports and summary tables of activity. There is also a well structured presentation of its work, with documentation, on the NAA website. The panel was also impressed about the journal "Akkreditatsiya v obrazovanii" regularly published by NAA. NAA carries out a lot of research into quality assurance of education. The results are published in articles and monographs. Research facilitates the enhancement of our procedures and processes. The leading specialists of NAA supervise post graduate</p>

	<p>students who are conducting research into procedures of quality assurance used by the agency</p> <p>Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant</p>
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As noted in 5.1 above, the external panel found that the NAA has well functioning external quality assurance processes as described in the ESG Part 2.

Opinion of the panel: **Substantially compliant.**

ESG 3.2 Official status: *Agencies should be formally recognized by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.*

The NAA and its functions with regard to external quality assurance are written into Russian primary and secondary legislation. The Agency is a legal entity and has an independent balance sheet. Order №1462 of 31.12.1999 of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation assigned NAA as the organization responsible for information and methodological support of the procedure of state accreditation. In the opinion of the panel, the NAA also complies with the requirements of this legislation.

Opinion of the panel: **Fully compliant.**

ESG 3.3 Activities: *Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institution or program level) on a regular basis.*

Annually NAA collects information on the state accreditation indicators from 1427 higher education institutions, 2953 secondary vocational institutions and 355 institutions of further professional education (data of 2008).

On the basis of collected data an annual analysis of the criteria values of accreditation is made, and if necessary they are corrected and updated (normally, once in five years), which helps to improve the effectiveness of the quality assurance system.

Every year for 8 Accreditation Board sessions NAA prepares analytical materials (final reports) for over 200 HEIs, which contain data from self-evaluation reports, reports of external expert panels and accreditation indicators. Similar work is conducted for the accreditation of secondary vocational educational institutions

(sVET-institutions) in 22 regions in Russia whose accreditation commissions cooperate with NAA.

Twice a year Internet testing of students and graduates is held by NAA. The outcomes of this testing are used by HEIs in their self-evaluation procedures. The Internet testing technology provides external evaluation of the quality of taught educational programs in a HEI.

NAA's activities contribute to the information transparency of the system of state accreditation of HEIs in Russia by publishing orders on accreditation, and data on accredited HEIs on its web-site.

Opinion of the panel: **Fully compliant.**

Recommendation: To ensure the quality of teaching the NAA should encourage the HEI-s to participate more in the internet based state exams.

ESG 3.4 Resources: *Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organize and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.*

NAA has adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial to efficiently and effectively carry out the Agency's activities. NAA has 97 ft personnel, and the number of employees is growing proportionally to the growth of the scope and amount of work fulfilled by NAA. The management of NAA pays much attention to human resource development. The Agency views its staff as the most important factor in the Agency's success. At present 6 members of the staff hold candidates of science degree and 3 members hold doctor of science degrees. NAA provides equipment that is sufficient and appropriate for the organization's working requirements. There is a balance between needs and the technical specifications of the computer equipment. NAA is financed through different sources. The major source is accreditation fees paid by HEIs undergoing accreditation and funding of research activities. In 2007 NAA's budget came up to 88 million rubbles.

Opinion of the panel: **Fully compliant.**

ESG 3.5 Mission statement: *Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.*

The external panel found that the NAA has a mission statement with a clear and explicit set of goals and objectives for its work. This has been used to develop a NAA quality policy and a strategy document. These are all publicly available on the NAA website. The goals and objectives of the procedure of state

accreditation are stipulated by the Law of the Russian Federation “On Education” and the Regulations “On the state accreditation of a higher education institution”. These documents are published and are readily accessible in the Internet. NAA’s mission is to promote the quality culture in education and quality assurance in HE through technical, methodological, information and research support of all evaluation procedures and accreditation decision making.

Opinion of the panel: **Fully compliant.**

ESG 3.6 Independence: *Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.*

NAA is operating independently and bears autonomous responsibility for its actions. First of all it means that the values of accreditation indicators, chosen as criteria, are calculated independently from the government, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence: they are determined by NAA on the basis of CDBSA (Central Database of State Accreditation) using mathematical methods, approved by the order of the Rosobrnadzor and applied to all HEIs regardless of their organizational and legal form (state or private).

When nominating experts for expert panels the information from the data base of certified experts is used. The composition of an expert panel is coordinated with the HEI and is approved by the Rosobrnadzor.

The outcomes of the quality evaluation processes, presented in the form of Analytical Materials for State Accreditation, are prepared by NAA independently without any outside influence and are considered by the Accreditation Board, which comprises representatives of all stakeholders (educational institutions, employers, students). An accreditation decision on a HEI is made at the Accreditation Board meeting. The Accreditation Board is a deliberative body attached to the Rosobrnadzor.

NAA is responsible for information support of the Accreditation Board: it publishes the agenda of the Accreditation Board meeting on its web site, prepares final reports for all HEIs undergoing accreditation, and prepares a draft decision on compliance or non-compliance of the HEI to the accreditation criteria.

Opinion of the panel: **Substantially compliant** – in terms of NAA’s operations.
Partly compliant – in terms of decision making.

The panel would like to repeat the recommendations given in the ESG sections 2.3 and 2.4:

- The clear legal link between AB and NAA should be established. NAA should be the servicing body (bureau) to the AB and AB the supervising and decision making body to NAA
- The completion of accreditation expert teams should be the full responsibility of NAA and it should be fixed in the statute of NAA

The panel hopes that the Ministry of Education and Science and Rosobrnadzor will support these legal amendments as these are crucial for NAA to fulfil the requirements of ESG. Furthermore, NAA is practically already fulfilling these tasks supervising expert's database, generating list of experts for the evaluation visits, preparing AB meetings.

ESG 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies: *The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:*

- *a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;*
- *an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the NAA;*
- *publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;*
- *a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.*

Russian external QA system still reflects the Soviet HE system where HE were strictly controlled by the state. There are unified study programs in each field of study across the whole country based on the state approved standards. The discussions are going at the moment to give more freedom to HEI-s to design their curricula. The main key player in external QA is Rosobrnadzor.

The main aim of institutional accreditation in Russia is to confirm the status of a HEI (university, academy or institute). Program accreditation is a new and positive development in the QA of Russian HE.

As stated already in this report, the external panel found that the external quality assurance criteria and processes used by the NAA are pre-defined and well known. These include self-evaluation, external evaluation and a site visit, publishing the final report (a short run), accreditation decision (published in the Internet) and follow-up procedures. Final reports for the state accreditation of a HEI, which are prepared by NAA for accreditation decision making, include information about a HEI's self-evaluation, and data from the expert panel report. The main distinguishing feature of the applied procedures is the usage of information technologies during accreditation of HEIs in Russia: creating CDBSA on the basis of HEIs' indicators, applying mathematical methods for the analysis

of HEIs' performance. The technology used for the preparation of final reports submitted to the Accreditation Board for making an accreditation decision, ensure the conformity of conclusions on the information collected from different sources. NAA developed and is currently using the technology of Internet assessment of students and graduates which helps HEIs to objectively evaluate the results of their activities during self-evaluation.

At present final reports on accreditation of HEIs are not published in full, and only official outcomes of the procedure are made public.

Opinion of the panel: **Substantially compliant**

Recommendation: Final reports on HEIs' evaluation should be published in full.

ESG 3.8 Accountability procedures: *Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.*

At present there is no formally described and published document on NAA's internal quality assurance, but as to the panel has been said the steps are being made towards its development. At the same time some inner quality assurance procedures in the agency's work are used.

The Agency has a clearly defined structure of its departments and management, which meets NAA's goals and objectives. The responsibilities of each department are defined by the Regulations on the Department structure, and the functions of the employees of each department are described in the job description. For getting feedback on the Agency's work the employees and representatives of HEIs are circulated with questionnaires.

The following mechanisms of internal reflection are also used:

- regular staff meetings;
- briefings of the management and administration;
- workshops organized by NAA, where the issues of enhancing the procedures of quality assurance are discussed;
- annual conferences of experts for sharing experience and good practice and discussing relevant issues concerning the work of expert panels.

In accordance with the law NAA prepares an annual report on the results of its performance for the state fiscal organs. Annually NAA submits a report about its activities to the Rosobrnadzor, and publishes an Analytical Report about the system of accreditation in Russia.

In February 2004 the Agency underwent an external expert evaluation of its activity by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation. In the expert panel there were also representatives of HEIs of Russia. The expert panel decision approved the work of the NAA.

Opinion of the panel: **Fully compliant**

Recommendation:

- The panel encourage the NAA to work out as soon as possible the NAA's internal quality assurance document.

SUMMARY OPINION

Based on the evidence above, in the opinion of the evaluation panel, the NAA is **substantially compliant** with the European Standards and Guidelines.

5.2 NAA effectiveness in the context of Russian higher education quality

The NAA has played and is playing a crucial role in the QA of the Russian HE. Taking into account the total number of HEIs in the Russian Federation then the work made by NAA is enormous. When the amount of program accreditations will rapidly increase then the NAA could face difficulties to manage all evaluations across the country. The Panel recommends to study the USA model of external QA. There are six main regional accrediting organizations for the *institutional accreditation* of universities in the USA. Additionally there are organizations that accredit *study programmes* in certain areas of knowledge such as medicine, law, teaching, engineering, business. Professional accreditation bodies, however, do not exist for all types of HE programmes, only for those with organised professional communities.

In the self-evaluation report NAA nicely identified its Strengths and Weaknesses (NAA self-evaluation report, paragraph 4). The Panel fully agrees with them. Some of the strengths and weaknesses are pointed by Panel in the different part of this evaluation report.

General comments on Russian HE. Russian HE has long and proud traditions. There are many very good universities well-known around the world. The panel believes the new 4 plus 2 Bologna system will keep the traditions of Russian HE. But there are also some concerns. As in many East and Central European countries the HE system in Russia is overheated. For short period of time many new private HEI-s were established. On January 1, 2008 there were 671 private HEI-s in Russia. Due to the bad demographic situation the number of possible student candidates (secondary school graduates) will in close future remarkably drop down. In fact it means that there will be a strong pressure on the quality of HE. The panel is afraid that to have the students the HEI-s will lower the entrance requirements. This is not bad in itself – every youth will have a possibility to enter

a HE. The real threat is that the HEI-s, to keep students, will lower requirements to pass the exams.

Recommendations:

Rosobrnadzor should seriously rethink licensing rules of new HEI-s.

More attention should be paid to the program accreditation.

5.3 Progress on the recommendations made in the 2006 by the ENQA Board

The ENQA Board recommendations to NAA, in order to fulfill the criteria for Full Membership of ENQA, are given in Annex 1, paragraph 2.

The panel considers that most of the ENQA Board recommendations have been taken into account.

The mission, goals and objectives are formulated and published on NAA's website. The division of labour between NAA, the Accreditation Board, the Federal Service and the Ministry of Education is stated in the law. The solutions in the division of labour are based on the historical and cultural context. Existing QA system in terms of operational independence, NAA has been strengthened.

However, the panel fully agree with the ENQA Board recommendation that much more division of labour is needed between NAA, the AB and the Rosobrnadzor, particularly when NAA wants to be full member of ENQA and Register. The main problem is that different responsibilities and decisions making rights, which according to the ESG should belong mainly to the QA Agency, are dispersed between different institutions.

Nevertheless, there are some items in the operational independence that should be changed, especially the expert teams should be selected and appointed independently by NAA (NAA selects and trains the experts, it also licenses them and maintains the Expert Database, but according to the Russian legislation, the expert teams are appointed by Rosobrnadzor) and secondly, the legal link between NAA and AB should be established.

The panel supports NAA in further development of the technology of automated team selection and in active participation in the development of legislative and regulatory acts towards more clearly expressed independence of the agency.

The NAA's final evaluation reports are supposed soon to be published in full on the NAA's website. The appeals' procedure has been determined, as was mentioned above in ESG 3.7. NAA has done much in developing the internal quality assurance: the collective agreements have been approved, the departments' regulations reconsidered, staff general meetings and meetings with

NAA's stakeholders are held on a regular basis. Regular feedback on NAA's work has been organized and NAA uses questionnaires for the staff, HEIs and experts.

6. Recommendations for improvement

Based on the examination of the documents provided, and on the high quality discussions which took place during the site visit, the external panel has outlined a number of recommendations which it considers would be useful for NAA in its ongoing quality improvement. Some of these are clearly linked to the ongoing use of the European Standards and Guidelines, and have already been mentioned at the relevant place in this report. Others are linked to broader issues of quality and quality improvement. It should be noted that some of these recommendations may need changes in primary and / or secondary legislation, in order for them to be feasible.

- 1) Russian HEIs should take a more proactive approach to their own internal quality assurance procedures. The NAA should assist them by paying more attention to institutional QA during the accreditations.
- 2) The clear legal link between AB and NAA should be established. NAA should be the servicing body (bureau) to the AB and AB the supervising and decision making body to NAA.
- 3) The completion of accreditation expert teams should be the full responsibility of NAA and it should be fixed in the statute of NAA.
- 4) There is need to increase the role of an HEI in the self-evaluation process, particularly in the study program accreditation. There should be obligatory SWOT analysis with added development plans in different part of the self-analysis report.
- 5) Include a greater focus on improvement in the external evaluation processes.
- 6) Include greater international participation in all NAA processes to enhance general fitness for purpose.
- 7) The expert panels' reports should be publicly available.
- 8) The panel encourages NAA to work out as soon as possible the NAA's internal quality assurance document on the basis of the already developed elements.
- 9) Final reports on HEIs' evaluation should be published in full.

- 10) There should be greater participation of students in the QA processes, particularly in the self-evaluation.
- 11) To ensure the quality of teaching the NAA should encourage the HEI-s to participate more in the internet based state exams.
- 12) Rosobrnadzor should seriously rethink licensing rules of new HEI-s.
- 13) More attention should be given to the program accreditation.

7. Conclusions

The external panel concludes that NAA substantially complies with ESG and ENQA's membership requirements. In addition, the external panel has examined the implementation of the recommendations of the ENQA Board from 2006 and considers that considerable progress has been achieved and most of them have been taken into account. Nevertheless, there are areas for improvement, which have been described in form of recommendations in Chapter 6 of this report. The two main preconditions for the full membership of ENQA and the EQAR are, that the legal link between Accreditation Board and NAA should be more clearly established, and that the nomination of accreditation expert panels should be the full responsibility of NAA. As main strengths of NAA the panel would like to define the high level professionalism and the enormous methodological and technical work fulfilled by the agency in the challenging context of a big country with very diverse higher education sector.

On the behalf of the Panel:

Prof. Riitta Pyykko
Chair of the Panel

ANNEX 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

ANNEX 2: TIME-TABLE OF THE SITE VISIT**External Review of the National Accreditation Agency****November, 4-8, 2008****Moscow-Yoshkar-Ola****Schedule and timetable of the site-visit****November 4, 2008**

	Time	Venue	Event (Activity)/ Participants
1.1.	<i>International panel members' arrival at Hotel Warsaw, Moscow</i>		
	<i>19:00</i>	Restaurant at Hotel Warsaw, Leninsky prospect 2 Moscow <i>Meet at 18:30 at the hotel reception</i>	Working dinner at the restaurant: review panel orientation meeting

November 5, 2008

	Time	Venue	Event (Activity)/ Participants
2.1.	10.00.	NAA Moscow Representation Office, Shabolovka 33	Meeting with heads of the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science; representatives of Department of Licensing, Attestation, and Accreditation; of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation
2.2.	10.40.	<i>Coffee break</i>	
2.3.	11.00.	NAA Moscow Representation Office, Shabolovka 33	Meeting with representatives of the Accreditation Board

2.4.	11.40.	Coffee break	
2.5.	12.00.	NAA Moscow Representation Office, Shabolovka 33	Meeting with representatives of the National Guild of Independent Experts, representatives of students' organizations
2.6.	12.40.	<i>Coffee break</i>	
2.7.	13.00.	NAA Moscow Representation Office, Shabolovka 33	Meeting with representatives of state and non-state HEIs
2.8.	13.40.	<i>Lunch catering</i>	
2.9	16.38.	<i>Departure for Yoshkar-Ola</i>	

November 6, 2008

	Time	Venue	Event (Activity)/ Participants
3.1.	7.10.	<i>Arrival in Yoshkar-Ola Review panel working breakfast at restaurant of Hotel Loudoviko Moro, Uspenskaya, 15, Yoshkar-Ola</i>	
3.2.	10.00.	NAA (Leninsky prosp.2, Yoshkar-Ola)	Tour getting acquainted with NAA staff
3.3.	12.30.	NAA (Leninsky prosp.2, Yoshkar-Ola)	Meeting with NAA Board of directors
3.5.	13.30.	NAA (Leninsky prosp.2, Yoshkar-Ola)	Meeting with Heads of NAA Departments
3.6.	13.30.	<i>Lunch catering</i>	
3.7.	15.00.	NAA (Leninsky prosp.,2,Yoshkar-Ola)	Meeting with NAA staff
3.8.	15.40.	<i>Coffee break</i>	
3.9.	16.00.	NAA (Leninsky prosp.,2, Yoshkar-Ola)	Work with documents
	19.00.	<i>Dinner at restaurant</i>	

November 7, 2008

	Time	Venue	Event (Activity)/ Participants
4.1.	9.00.	NAA	Work with documents
4.2.	11.30.	<i>Coffee break</i>	
4.3.	12.00.	NAA	Work with documents
4.4.	13.00.	<i>Lunch catering</i>	
4.5.	14.30.	NAA	Feedback session for representatives of NAA Board of Directors and NAA staff
4.6.	15.30.	NAA	Work with documents
4.7.	16.30.	<i>End of site- visit</i> Departure for Cheboksary (and from there for Moscow by the 18:00 train <i>Cheboksary-Moscow</i>)	

November 8, 2008

	Time	Venue	Event (Activity)/ Participants
5.1.	7.10.	<i>Arrival in Moscow</i>	
5.2.	7.20.	<i>Departure for Airport Sheremetyevo</i>	

ANNEX 3: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES USED BY NAA

Description of the external quality assurance procedures used by the Agency.

The main external quality assurance procedure used for evaluation of higher education institutions in the Russian Federation is state accreditation.

The major function of the state accreditation of a HEI is to establish if

- the content and quality of education in the HEI complies with the federal State Educational Standards for higher education (these are the obligatory requirements set out for the structure, provision and outcomes of the taught programs);
- the performance indicators of the HEI comply with the established criteria.

The state accreditation indicators and their criteria are contained in Annex 2.

The National Accreditation Agency (NAA) is one of the primary organizations participating in the procedure of the state accreditation of HEIs in Russia.

Under the Russian legislation (*The Law On Education, the Law On Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education*) the state accreditation of HEIs is conducted by the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor) – the federal executive power body. The principal statutory function of NAA is information, methodological, technological, analytical and organizational support of the procedure of state accreditation conducted by the Federal Service of Supervision, and the state monitoring of the quality of education in educational institutions. Another important function is promoting the system quality assurance in the Russian Federation.

The state accreditation of HEIs in Russia comprises:

- Self-evaluation by a HEI;
- External evaluation by a panel of experts;
- Assessment of the compliance of an HEI's performance indicators with the established criteria.

At each stage of the state accreditation procedure NAA is responsible for carrying out predefined functions:

Name of stage	Periodicity	Executive	NAA's function
Gathering data about the performance of all higher education institutions in Russia	Annually	NAA	1. Developing software 2. Integrating the obtained data into the Central Database of the state accreditation (CDBSA)
Developing criteria for state accreditation	Once in 5 years	NAA	1. Computation of the state accreditation criteria using mathematical methods

Name of stage	Periodicity	Executive	NAA's function
Endorsement of the state accreditation criteria	Once in 5 years	Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science	1. Preparation of the draft order
Self-evaluation by the HEI	Once in 5 years	HEI	1. Provision of the software for the preparation of the self-evaluation report 2. Consulting 3. Conducting the Internet-exam for student assessment 4. Provision of the software for getting feedback from students, employers, and graduates about the quality performance of a HEI
Application for state accreditation and submitting the required documentation to the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science	Once in 5 years ¹	HEI	1. Publishing the schedule of quality reviews on the web site.
External evaluation (a site visit by an expert panel)	Once in 5 years	An expert panel approved by the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science	1. Training of experts. 2. Conducting the Internet-exam for student assessment. 3. Maintenance of the expert database. 4. Provision of the software for the preparation of the Report by the expert panel
Preparation of the HEI's documentation for the Accreditation Board meeting	Once in 5 years	NAA	1. Processing the data submitted by the HEI and the expert panel and entering the data into the CDBSA. 2. Preparation of Final reports for the state accreditation of the HEI.
Accreditation decision making	Once in 5 years	The Accreditation board	1. Information support of the work of the Accreditation board. 2. Publishing the list of institutions whose applications are being considered at the nearest session of the Accreditation Board
Approval of the Accreditation board decision and issuing the Certificate of State Accreditation	Once in 5 years	the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science	1. The publication of the order on state accreditation 2. The preparation of the layout sheet of the certificate of state accreditation 3. Keeping and publishing the Register of the accredited educational institutions 4. Publication of the information on the accredited higher education institutions in the journal <i>Accreditation in Education</i> .

¹ In case the subject is to determine the status without changing the kind a HEI has the right to apply for another status at any time.

Name of stage	Periodicity	Executive	NAA's function
Follow up on the recommendations of the state accreditation procedure	Once a year in the event such recommendations are given	The Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science	1. Development and maintenance of the software for monitoring the follow up procedures on the outcomes of accreditation
Preparation and publication of an annual report on the state accreditation of HEIs in the Russian Federation	Annually	NAA	<p>1. The Report is prepared on the basis of the orders on state accreditation, and the information from CDBSA, the outcomes of research into quality assurance in Russia conducted by NAA. The circulation of the Report is 500 copies.</p> <p>2. The publication of the annual Register "The accredited HEIs of Russia". The number of printed copies is 20000. The Register is circulated among secondary schools in Russia.</p>

Collecting information about the activities of all HEIs in Russia

All higher education institutions using specially developed software submit information about their activities to the Central Database of State Accreditation. This software system is called "The Data Collecting Module for HEIs". (It is published on NAA's web site www.nica.ru). The Module is described in Annex 3. An educational institution submits separately the information about its activity in general and about each licensed structural unit (branch), in particular. At present the Central Database contains information about the activities of 1427 HEIs and 2155 branches; 2953 sVET institutions and 780 branches, 355 institutions of further professional education and 74 branches.

Calculation of state accreditation criteria

The annual data collection makes it possible to conduct a statistical analysis for determining criteria for state accreditation. The criteria for state accreditation are used when evaluating performance indicators of HEIs in order to determine their type (university, academy, and institute).

Criteria values of indicators are determined taking into consideration specific features of a HEI of each type. The values of the lower quartile of the range of quantity indicators for institutions of each type are taken as criteria values. When indicator values fitting the corresponding lower quartile change the criteria values change accordingly. State accreditation criteria for HEIs were adjusted in 2005 (see Annex 2).

Approval of state accreditation criteria

According to the Russian legislation the state accreditation criteria are approved by the executive power federal body – the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science. The draft of the Order approving the state accreditation criteria is prepared by NAA.

Accreditation criteria (and indicators) are the same for all HEIs in Russia regardless of their location, founder and legal status.

Self- evaluation of an educational institution

Self-evaluation of a higher education institution is conducted in preparation for state accreditation.

The self-evaluation report is one of the documents which a HEI submits for accreditation. The structure of the self-evaluation report is approved by the Federal Service of Supervision.

NAA developed special software for the purpose of facilitating the preparation of a self-evaluation report. The software is being appraised at the moment, and starting January 2009 it will be used in all HEIs in Russia.

During the self-evaluation procedure a HEI may ask for an audit by NAA: on the request of a HEI the formal indicators of the HEI are evaluated with the view of determining whether the HEI meets (doesn't meet) the accreditation criteria (without a site visit). The evaluation is conducted against the information on all HEIs in Russia, which gives an opportunity to take an outsider's view at the HEI's performance, determine its strengths and weaknesses from the point of view of compliance with the accreditation criteria, and also to determine if the HEI corresponds to the claimed accreditation status (type and kind) of an educational institution.

The results of the Internet exam are also used by HEIs during self –evaluation. The Internet exam is conducted by NAA in the disciplines which are taught at a HEI in different educational programs. The Internet exam is held twice a year all over the country (as a rule, before or during winter and summer examination sessions) for students who have completed or are completing a particular course of study. The testing results can be taken into account (at the institution's option) during the accreditation procedure. The internet exam provides independent external evaluation of students' outcomes.

During self-evaluation a HEI conducts students', employers' and graduates' surveys with the help of special software developed by NAA: the student questionnaire program and the Internet resource program. The processed results of the surveys are made available to the expert panel members during the site visit; they are also described in final reports.

Submission of an application for state accreditation to the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science

A HEI files the documents for state accreditation at the federal body – the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science, where the time schedule for external evaluation is compiled. NAA publishes this schedule, and changes and amendments to it on the web site www.nica.ru

External evaluation of a HEI (a site visit)

External evaluation of a HEI is conducted by an expert panel which is approved by the Order of Rosobrnadzor. The panel includes no more than ten members. The Chairperson of the panel is a representative of Rosobrnadzor. The duration of a site visit is 5 days.

In accordance with the amendments to the Law *On Education* introduced in 2007 members of expert panels should be trained. In order to meet this requirement

NAA has been conducting a training and certification program for experts. The information on certified experts is included in the data bank of experts, which is used when nominating expert panel members.

The purpose of external evaluation is to assess the education process in a HEI, and to make sure that the content and quality of training meet the requirements of the federal State Educational Standards.

As a rule an expert panel comprises specialists in each educational program undergoing evaluation, or in a group of related programs; it also includes vice rectors of similar institutions for evaluation of research and methodological work. Alongside representatives of the academic community from other HEIs local authorities and representatives of local rectors' councils may be invited to participate in the work of expert panels. These experts are nominated on the basis of recommendation letters sent to the Department of Licensing, Accreditation and Supervision at Rosobrnadzor.

The evaluation of correspondence of the content of graduates' education and training to the State Educational Standards is conducted by way of comparing working curricular of educational programs with the federal State Educational Standards with the help of special software (it is conducted by the Information and Methodology Centre for the Attestation of HEIs) and expert evaluation.

The analysis of the correspondence of graduates' training to the federal State Educational Standards is performed through Internet testing of students' outcomes, which is conducted by NAA.

The Evaluation of a HEI is conducted in the following areas:

- 1) legal and organizational provision of the education process and the system of management;
- 2) structure of education and training;
- 3) content of education and training (structure and content of educational programs, information and methodological support of the education process, the organization of the education process);
- 4) quality of graduates' training (admission requirements, the level of training, final assessment of graduates, the HEI's internal quality assurance system and its effectiveness);
- 5) student support;
- 6) conditions of the delivery of educational programs (teaching staff, facilities and equipment (including class rooms and equipment), international activity).

A HEI together with the expert panel prepare a report for NAA with the help of special software – the Complex Evaluation Module, which accumulates and processes all the information necessary for state accreditation (Annex 4). The expert panel prepares an external evaluation report. The HEI can peruse the document but cannot make any changes.

Preparation of HEI's documentation for the Accreditation Board

After the analysis of all information submitted by a HEI (The Data Collecting Module, the Complex Evaluation Module, the expert panel report, Internet testing results, students' surveys) NAA prepares the final report *Analytical Materials for the State Accreditation of the HEI*. The report in the concise and visual form presents the results of a HEI's activity and allows the Board to make an informed and well-founded accreditation decision (see Annex 5).

Accreditation decision making

An accreditation decision on a HEI is made at the Accreditation Board meeting. The Accreditation Board is a deliberative body attached to the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science. Members of the Board are representatives of education authorities, of HEIs, and employers. In line with international practice the President of the Russian Union of Students is a member of the Accreditation board. The board meets 8 times a year.

NAA is responsible for information support of the Accreditation Board: it publishes the agenda of the Accreditation Board meeting on its web site, prepares final reports for all HEIs undergoing accreditation, and prepares a draft decision on compliance or non-compliance of the HEI to the accreditation criteria.

Endorsement of the accreditation decision and awarding the State Accreditation Certificate

The Decision on accreditation of a HEI is endorsed by the Order of Rosobrnadzor, which is published on the web site of NAA. The Annex to the Order contains a list of accredited HEIs with the enumeration of their accredited educational programs.

After the Order is issued NAA prepares layout sheets of Accreditation Certificates awarded to the HEIs. The information about the certificates is entered in the Register. NAA is responsible for the keeping and publication of the Register. NAA publishes materials about accredited HEIs in the journal *Accreditation in Education*.

Follow up on the results of the State Accreditation procedure

If in the process of a HEI's accreditation some shortcomings have been revealed instructions are issued with the deadline for their implementation. These instructions are entered into the appendix to the Minutes of the Accreditation Board Meeting. NAA developed special software to follow up recommendations made during the accreditation process.

Preparation and publication of an annual report on the state accreditation of HEIs in the Russian Federation

Annually on the basis of state accreditation orders, information from the Central Database of State Accreditation and the results of research work conducted by NAA, the Agency prepares an Analytical Report covering all areas of the quality assurance system in Russia. The circulation of the Report is over 500 copies.

NAA also publishes an annual edition of the Register “Accredited HEIs of Russia”, which is circulated free of charge in the schools of Russia. Its electronic copy is accessible on NAA’s site.

Appeal system

A HEI can peruse the final report for state accreditation 10 days before the Accreditation Board meeting and make comments on its contents. A HEI has a right to withdraw its application for state accreditation at any stage of the procedure up to the accreditation decision making.

Denial of state accreditation or its annulment can be appealed in court.

Program accreditation

In accordance with the Russian legislation, during the accreditation procedure only those programs can be accredited which at the moment of state accreditation have been completed by at least one class of graduates. New education programs are accredited separately, and this process is called «accreditation of separate educational programs».

Accreditation of sVET-institutions and further professional education institutions

An analogous procedure is used by NAA when accrediting institutions of secondary vocational education and training (sVET-institutions) and further education institutions. A technology of the information support of the state accreditation of institutions of general education (e.g. secondary schools) and VET-institutions (e.g. vocational schools) has been developed and introduced specifically for these types of institutions.

Besides the state accreditation, conducted by the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science, NAA also takes part in the state accreditation of educational institutions conducted by the local authorities of the legal entities of the Russian Federation (accreditation bodies). At present NAA cooperates with 21 regional accreditation bodies (there are 84 entities in the Russian Federation). Until 2006 NAA supported the work of accreditation committees of different departments conducting the accreditation of the HEIs within their jurisdiction, such as Department of Transport of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Department of Energy, etc. Since 2006 educational institutions in Russia have been accredited only by education authorities.

ANNEX 4. TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Accreditation Board
CDBSA	Central Data Bank of State Accreditation
CEE Network	the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies
EAEC	Euro-Asian Economic Community
EAQAN	the Eurasian Quality Assurance Network
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Education
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
HE	Higher education
HEI	Educational Institution of Higher Education
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
NAA	National Accreditation Agency
Rosobrnadzor	Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science
QA	Quality Assurance
sVET-institutions	Secondary vocational educational institutions