
Dr Sergei Anisimov
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Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Career Development (AKKORK)
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115054 Moscow
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Dublin, 18 March 2015

Subject: External review of AKKORK and decision on membership

Dear Dr Anisimov,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting of 6 March 2015, the Board of ENQA agreed to grant AKKORK Full membership of ENQA for five years from that date.

On the basis of the evidence provided in the review report, as well as the further clarifications received from the Chair of the panel, the Board agreed that AKKORK met the necessary requirements for being granted ENQA Membership.

The Board noted the progress made since the last external review in 2011. Notwithstanding Full membership being granted, the Board would like to highlight that AKKORK passed the review with a number of significant issues and recommendations to be addressed, as shown in the annex to this letter.

Your Agency is therefore urged to make the necessary arrangements and report to the Board on the progress made in a follow-up report within one year of the decision, i.e. by March 2016. The report should be based on the recommendations in the review report (as outlined in the attached annex).

The Board wishes to remind you about the need to publish in the web site of AKKORK this letter with the annexes along with the review report as part of the final decision of the external review.

Please accept my congratulations to AKKORK for the positive review outcome and I look forward to a fruitful future cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Padraig Walsh
President of ENQA

Annex: Areas for development

ANNEX: AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Board concluded that the review has been conducted in accordance with the Guidelines for external reviews. However, the Board would like to point out that the lack of appropriate soundproof premises for interviews and panel meetings is not a good practice.

In addition to the panel's recommendations listed in the review report, the Board would like to draw the Agency's attention to the following areas for development:

ENQA Criterion 1– Activities (ESG 3.1, 3.3)

Regarding the following standards, the Board noted discrepancies between the conclusion of the review panel and the evidence brought forward in the report. Substantial compliance was reported whereas some elements are obviously missing. Therefore, the Board of ENQA regards these standards as partially met.

ESG 2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures

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

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

ESG 2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes

The panel report reads on pages 17-18 that: *"public information about the aims and objectives are not available for each of the different individual assessment processes. This information can only be found for some of the types of services that AKKORK provides"*.

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

ESG 2.3 Criteria for decisions

This is one of the key standards to be met. Indeed, as pointed out by the panel, *"the easy availability of criteria is not just an important feature for interested HEIs, but also for other actors and stakeholders in the Russian Federation and internationally in order to determine the value of the work of AKKORK"*. However, according to the report, page 19: *"The precise criteria are not easily locatable. [...] AKKORK added criteria during the review, but not for all of its external quality assurance activities. For the ones that are published, finding them is slightly complicated, as they are not clearly marked as criteria."*

For some procedures, criteria are lacking completely (page 19): *"international accreditation of programmes, international accreditation of e-learning, and the audit and certification of quality management system, criteria cannot be found"*.

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

ESG 2.5 Reporting

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

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

ESG 2.7 Periodic reviews

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

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

ESG 3.3 Activities

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

ENQA Criterion 4 – Mission statement (ESG 3.5)

The panel believes (pages 33-34) that "AKKORK uses its mission in order to determine its activities. However, there was no documentation that would prove that this is done in a systematic manner".

The mission statement "is not publicly available. Instead, the various elements contained therein are placed in different parts of the website".

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

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

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

→ This leads to a finding of partial compliance.

ENQA Criterion 7 – Accountability procedures (ESG 3.8)

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

There is no provision for regular external review of the Agency.

→ This leads to a finding of partial compliance.

The Board of ENQA reiterates the necessary, careful attention to the issues highlighted above and wishes AKKORK to conclude a necessary plan of actions to be taken urgently and before the follow-up report is submitted to ENQA.