Standards and Guidelines for International Accreditation of Educational Organisations and Educational Programmes Implemented Using Digital Technologies (based on ESG)

«АККРЕДИТТЕУ ЖӘНЕ РЕЙТИНГТІҢ ТӘУЕЛСІЗ АГЕНТТІГІ» КЕМ

НУ «НЕЗАВИСИМОЕ АГЕНТСТВО АККРЕДИТАЦИИ И РЕЙТИНГА»

INDEPENDENT AGENCY FOR ACCREDITATION AND RATING

Standards and Guidelines for International Accreditation of Educational Organisations and Educational Programmes Implemented Using Digital Technologies (based on ESG)

2022

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TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Distance Education Courses: distance education courses are those where no classes are held on campus – all instruction is conducted at a distance. Distance education courses may use a variety of delivery methods, such as video/audio conferencing and those which are internet- or print-based.

Online Courses: a form of distance education where the primary delivery mechanism is the internet. These could be delivered synchronously or asynchronously. All instruction is conducted at a distance.

Synchronous Online Courses: courses where students and an instructor participate at the same time, but at separate locations other than an institutional campus. These courses may be delivered by video conferencing, web conferencing, audio conferencing, etc.

Asynchronous Courses: courses where students are not required to participate in sessions at the same time as the instructor. These may be print-based courses or online courses using a learning management system, for instance.

Online Programmes: a fully creditable programme that can be completed entirely by taking online courses, without the need for any on-campus classes. These could be delivered synchronously or asynchronously.

Blended/Hybrid Courses: these are courses designed to combine both online and face-to-face teaching in any combination.

OER (Open Educational Resources): materials that are offered freely for use by teachers and learners, i.e. without charge and with few or no restrictions on the way in which the material may be adapted and reused.

MOOCS (Massive Open Online Courses): online courses that are designed for large numbers of participants, often offered for free and without any entry qualifications. They are distinguished from OERs in that they offer a full course experience and content that is not usually free to reuse.

Academic Mobility: transfer of students or lecturers-researchers for training or research for a certain academic period (semester or academic year) to another organisation of higher education and (or) postgraduate education (domestically or abroad) with mandatory re-crediting of completed curricula, disciplines in the form of academic credits in their organisation of higher education and (or) postgraduate education or to continue studies in another organisation of higher and (or) postgraduate education.

Institutional Accreditation: the process of evaluation the quality of education by the accreditation body for compliance with the declared status and established standards of accreditation body.

Analysis: a research method characterised by the identification and/or study of individual parts of the object of accreditation, the process of determining, collecting data to assess the quality of educational services.

Site Visit of the External Expert Panel: a generally accepted component of the holistic accreditation process, which provides for verification of reality compliance with a previously submitted self-assessment report of the higher education institution, assessing the quality and effectiveness of educational services provided, interviewing and questioning stakeholders, as well as developing recommendations for improving the quality.

Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area: a structure of qualifications covering three levels of higher and postgraduate education: bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees, Dublin descriptors for each level based on

educational outcomes and competencies, and a range of credits for the first and second levels.

Distance Education Technologies: an education, carrying out with application of information and telecommunication means upon mediate (in the distance) or incompletely mediate interaction of student and teaching staff.

European Credit Transferand Accumulation System (ECTS): a student-centered method of planning, describing educational programmes, recording and recognising learning outcomes, as well as monitoring the dynamics of a student's progress along an individual educational trajectory, by determining the laboriousness (labor intensity) of disciplines for all its components.

Quality of Educational Programme: compliance of the level of competencies of students and graduates with the requirements of professional standards and additional requirements established by the organisation implementing educational programmes.

Credit Technology of Training: learning based on choice and selfplanning for the students of the sequence of studying disciplines with the accumulation of academic credits.

Educational Programme: the uniform complex of the main characteristics of education including the purposes, results and content of training, the organisation of educational process, ways and methods of their realisation, criteria for evaluation of results of training.

Educational Monitoring: systematic observation, analysis, assessment and prediction of the state and dynamics of changes of the results and conditions of implementation of educational processes, student body, network, as well as rating indicators of achievement of activity of organisations of education

Organisation of Higher and (or) Postgraduate Education: higher education institution implementing educational programmes of higher and (or) postgraduate education and carrying out research activities.

Assessment: a method for determining the degree of achievement of the planned results of educational services, educational goals of the programme for decision-making and determining further directions for improving quality. Interpretation of data and evidence collected during the analysis.

Self-Assessment Report: a document developed by the higher education institution based on the results of self-assessment and submitted for consideration and decision by the accrediting body.

Quality Assurance Policy: the main directions that characterise the key priorities and value orientations of quality assurance development, determined on the basis of collective discussion and approved by the leadership of the higher educational institution.

Diploma Supplement: a pan-European standardised document containing a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the training passed and successfully completed by the holder of an educational qualification, additionally attached to the official document of higher education.

Assignment of Qualifications: a procedure for confirming the totality of individual abilities, professional knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform work in the framework of the corresponding type of professional activity.

Training Profile: an essential characteristic of the educational programme, revealing the specifics of the direction of higher education.

Reaccreditation: accreditation of the organisation of higher and (or) postgraduate education by an accreditation body that previously issued a certificate of institutional accreditation upon the expiration of the accreditation status.

Learning Outcomes: the volume of knowledge, skills and abilities confirmed by the assessment, acquired and demonstrated by students on mastering the educational programme, and the formed values and attitudes.

Effectiveness: the degree of implementation of the planned activities and achievement of the planned learning outcomes.

Self-Assessment: a procedure for self-assessment of a higher educational institution based on standards and criteria for institutional and (or) specialised accreditation.

Quality System: a set of procedures, units and officials in an organisation that perform certain quality management functions in accordance with the established rules and accepted practices and ensure compliance of all graduates of the educational programme with the requirements established in accordance with professional standards.

Stakeholder: an individual, a group of people or an organisation interested in and / or involved in activities, decision-making in a certain area.

Higher Education Strategy: a long-term qualitatively defined direction of the development of higher education, concerning the structure, content, means and form of its activity, the system of internal and external interaction.

Student-Centered Learning: the fundamental principle of the Bologna reforms in higher education, implying a shift of the emphasis in the educational process from teaching (as the main role of the teaching staff in the "translation" of knowledge) to learning (as an active educational activity of the student).

Academic Programme: a programme that defines for each subject, each discipline and (or) module the content and scope of knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies to be mastered.

Curriculum: a document regulating the list, sequence, volume (labour intensity) of academic subjects, disciplines and/or modules, professional practice, other types of educational activities of students of an appropriate level of education and forms of control.

Expert Assessment: a procedure for obtaining an assessment based on the analysis of the problem under consideration, the opinions of specialists with the aim of subsequent decision-making.

Efficiency: the relationship between the result achieved and the resources used.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of digitalisation, the use of e-learning technologies is one of the key directions in the development of the educational sphere. Digital technologies in the modern world are the foundation of innovative development, improvement of education quality, and optimisation of university management. They have a positive impact on the development of academic mobility by attracting leading scientists and practitioners to enhance the quality of education. Furthermore, the digital environment contributes not only to the globalisation of science and education but also to the utilisation of the wide-ranging opportunities of this globalisation for the development of universities, faculty and students.

The predominance of new teaching methods, i.e., the so-called attempt to combine e-learning with traditional approaches, is relevant in higher education institutions. Modern approaches and teaching methods, especially digital technologies, are aimed at student-centered and practice-oriented learning, which primarily involves choosing an individual learning trajectory, individual and independent student work, as well as collaborative work with other students for extensive discussion of the correctness of the chosen solution and the adoption of further actions.

These *Standards and Guidelines for the International Accreditation of Educational Organisations and Educational Programmes Implemented Using Digital Technologies* have been developed by the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR) with the aim of assisting educational organisations in the external evaluation of the quality of e-learning, including online programmes, distance learning, blended courses, MOOCs, as well as courses using advanced technologies (TEL).

The development of these standards is based on the analysis of current practices and principles of quality assurance of e-learning programmes in international quality assurance networks such as ENQA, APQN, WFME, as well as on the conclusions of the *"Considerations for Quality Assurance of E-Learning Provision. ENQA Occasional Papers No. 26" (2018)* and the results of the Erasmus+ programme project *"Kazakhstan Universities for the Enhancement of Quality Assurance Processes in Education Using Advanced Technologies (KUTEL, 2018-2021)".*

I. INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

Goals and Objectives of International Accreditation

The goal of international accreditation (hereinafter - accreditation) is to assess and recognise the high quality of educational organisation activities and/or educational programmes implemented using digital technologies in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015), as well as the "Considerations for Quality Assurance of E-Learning Provision. ENQA Occasional Papers No. 26" (2018).

The procedure of international accreditation serves the common goal of assessing the quality of educational organisation activities and/or educational programmes implemented using digital technologies in higher education and adhering to European standards. When conducting international accreditation, the specific legislation of the respective countries is taken into account.

The standards and procedures of international accreditation comply with the main principles and documents of the Bologna process.

The main principles of international accreditation are: professional and public character of evaluation; voluntary basis; independence; objectiveness and professionalism; transparency, credibility and relevance of information about accreditation procedures; collective decision making, publicity of positive and negative outcomes.

Procedure for Carrying Out International Accreditation

The procedure includes the following stages:

1. Applying for accreditation.

Applying for an application by the educational organisation (hereinafter – EO) for institutional and (or) programme accreditation with copies of title and authorisation documents.

IAAR considers the application of the educational organisation.

2. Conclusion of a contract between the EO and IAAR.

The IAAR decision to start the procedure of institutional or programme accreditation of the educational organisation. The schedule of visits to the educational organisation, conditions and financial issues of accreditation are determined by the agreement between the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR) and the educational organisation.

At the request of the organisation of education, IAAR can organise training to clarify the standards and procedures of institutional and (or) programme accreditation to internal experts of the educational organisation at special seminars on the theory, methodology and technology of institutional and (or) programme accreditation. This seminar procedure is not a mandatory component of the accreditation process.

3. Preparation of a self-assessment report

The educational institution independently organises and carries out the self-assessment of the educational organisation and the study programme (cluster of programmes) in order to establish the compliance with the international accreditation standards and prepares a self-evaluation report according to the second section of the Guidelines.

In case of institutional or programme accreditation of medical educational organisations and / or educational programmes, a self-evaluation report is prepared on the basis of separate Standards and Guidelines developed on the basis of WFME standards.

The educational institution is provided with guidelines and methodological materials to facilitate the preparation of the self-assessment report.

EO sends a report on institutional or programme self-assessment and all necessary applications to IAAR at least 8 (eight) weeks before the visit of the EEP.

IAAR sends a self-assessment report to the experts for review at least 6 (six) weeks before the visit after the internal examination for compliance.

An expert reviews the self-assessment report for compliance with the International Standards of IAAR, prepares and sends the review to IAAR within 10 (ten) calendar days. In case of non-compliance with the requirements of IAAR, the review is sent to the expert for revision. In the case of repeated inconsistencies, IAAR is entitled to remove this expert from participation in the EEP.

Based on the analysis of the report on the self-assessment of the educational organisation, IAAR is entitled to make one of the following decisions:

• develop recommendations on the need to finalise the self-assessment report;

• carry out further accreditation procedures (the EEP site visit to EO);

• postpone dates of the further accreditation procedures due to inconsistency of the self-assessment report with International Standards of IAAR.

4. EEP site visit to an educational organisation

In case of continuation of further accreditation procedures, IAAR forms an External Expert Panel, which is approved by the IAAR General Director. The external evaluation of the quality of the educational organisation and the implementation of the educational programme (cluster of programmes) for compliance with International Standards of IAAR is carried out by the External Expert Panel during a visit to the educational organisation in an online, offline or hybrid format.

The composition of the EEP is determined depending on the workload of the external evaluation. The panel consists of independent experts including foreign experts experienced in teaching and quality assurance, a representative of an employer and a student community representative.

In case of continuation of accreditation, IAAR will coordinate with the educational organisation the dates for institutional and (or) programme accreditation and the Programme of EEP site visit.

The programme of the EEP site visit is developed by the Chairman of EEP and the IAAR Coordinator with the participation of an EO. The agreed programme of the visit of EEP is approved by the IAAR Director at least 2 (two) weeks before the visit to an EO. The structure and content of the programme is developed taking into account the specifics of the EO and (or) the EP in accordance with the recommended sample programme of the EEP visit programme (Annex 1).

The duration of the visit of the commission is 3-5 days. During the site visit, the educational organisation creates conditions for the work of EEP in accordance with the Service Contract:

- submits an electronic and (or) paper version of the self-assessment report for each member of the panel;

- provides the necessary office equipment in consultation with the representative of IAAR and according to the number of members of EEP;

- organises an inspection of infrastructure and resources, meetings, questionnaires, interviews and other types of EEP work in accordance with the Programme of EEP visit (depending on visit format);

- provides the requested information.

The results of the visit to the educational organisation are reflected in the review report on the results of the external evaluation.

The draft of EEP report is reviewed by the IAAR and sent to the educational organisation for approval. If the educational organisation reveals factual inaccuracies, the Chairman agrees with the EEP members and makes the necessary changes to the EEP report. In case of disagreement with the educational organisation's comments to the EEP report, the Chairman, together with the IAAR coordinators, prepares an official response with justification.

The report contains a description of EEP visit, a brief assessment of the compliance of the activities of the educational organisation in the context of the international standards of IAAR, recommendations of the educational organisation for improving activities and quality assurance, recommendations for the Accreditation Council

(hereinafter - AC). Proposals to the Accreditation Council contain a recommendation for accreditation (including recommended accreditation period) or non-accreditation.

The EEP report, including recommendations, is developed by the EEP members collectively.

5. Decision-making by IAAR

The basis for the decision making on institutional and (or) programme accreditation by the Accreditation Council is the review report of the educational organisation by the external expert panel and the self-assessment report of the educational organisation.

The Chairperson of the External Expert Panel presents to the Accreditation Council the outcomes of the External Expert Panel's visit.

The exclusive competence of the Accreditation Council of IAAR includes making decisions on accreditation or refusal to accredit the educational organisation. The composition of the Accreditation Council is determined in accordance with the Regulations on its activities. The meeting is held in the presence of a quorum. The Accreditation Council has the right to make an informed decision that does not comply with the recommendations of the external expert panel.

The Accreditation Council has the right to take following decisions:

• accreditation for a period of **1 (one) year** - in compliance with the criteria in general, but in the presence of some shortcomings and opportunities for improvement (when assessing criteria that require improvement from 40% to 60%, the absence of strong criteria);

• accreditation for a period of **3 (three) years** - in compliance with the criteria in general, but in the presence of certain minor shortcomings and opportunities for improvement (when assessing criteria that require improvement from 20 to 40%, in the presence of strong criteria);

• accreditation for a period of **5 (five) years** - if the criteria are observed in general and there are positive results (when assessing criteria that require improvement up to 20%, in the presence of strong criteria);

• accreditation for a period of **7 (seven) years** - in compliance with the criteria in general and the presence of examples of best practice translation (when assessing those requiring improvements up to 10%, and strong criteria at least 20%)

• **refusal of accreditation** - if there are significant shortcomings (when assessing at least one criterion as "unsatisfactory" or requiring an improvement of 60% or more).

If the Accreditation Council makes a positive decision, IAAR sends an official letter to the EO with the results of the decision and a certificate of institutional and / or programme accreditation of the educational organisation. Further, the decision on the accreditation of the educational organisation is sent to the authorised educational authority of the relevant country and is posted on the IAAR website. Also a report of the external expert panel is posted on the IAAR website.

After receiving the accreditation certificate, the educational organisation posts a self-assessment report on its website.

When the Accreditation Council makes a negative decision, IAAR sends an official letter to the educational organisation with the decision made.

The educational organisation in the prescribed manner in accordance with the Service Agreement and the Regulation on the Commission for the Review of Appeals and Complaints may appeal to IAAR on the decision of the Accreditation Council. In case of doubt about the competence of the external expert panel and representatives of the Agency, or a gross violation committed by members of the external expert panel, the

educational organisation may send a complaint to IAAR according to the Regulation on the Commission for the Review of Appeals and Complaints.

6. Follow-up procedures

In case of a positive decision by the Accreditation Council of IAAR, the educational organisation provides IAAR with a Plan of measures to improve and refine quality in the framework of recommendations of an external expert panel (hereinafter - Plan), which is signed by the head and sealed, and also concludes a Service Agreement with IAAR. The Agreement and Plan are the basis for post-accreditation monitoring.

In accordance with the Regulations on the procedure for post-accreditation monitoring of educational organisations and (or) educational programmes, accredited educational organisations must prepare interim reports in accordance with the Plan. Interim reports are sent to IAAR before the expected date of post-accreditation monitoring.

Post-accreditation monitoring of educational organisations and (or) educational programmes is carried out in accordance with the regulations on the procedure for post-accreditation monitoring of educational organisations and (or) educational programmes.

In the event of non-compliance with the Plan and the requirements put forward by IAAR in relation to the educational organisation, as well as the lack of information about changes made in the educational organisation, the Accreditation Council has the right to take one of the following decisions:

- temporarily suspend validity of the institutional and (or) programme accreditation of the educational organisation;
- withdraw the accreditation of the educational organisation, which may entail the cancellation of all previously achieved accreditation results.

In case of failure of the educational organisation to conduct post-accreditation monitoring, expressed in not signing the Service Agreement with IAAR, the Accreditation Council of IAAR has the right to decide on the termination and revocation of the accreditation status.

In case of early termination and revocation of accreditation status, the education organisation has the right to apply for accreditation to IAAR within one year from the date of the decision to revoke the accreditation of the educational organisation.

External Expert Panel (external evaluation expert group)

External review of an educational organisation and/or educational programme (cluster of programmes) is performed by an External evaluation panel (external evaluation expert group) which consists of independent experts including foreign experts experienced in teaching and quality assurance, a representative of an employer and a student community representative.

EEP is formed on the basis of the order of the Director of IAAR from among the certified representatives of the academic, professional and student community included in the database of experts of IAAR. Foreign experts may be recruited from partner accreditation agencies.

During the programme accreditation, the composition of EEP is formed depending on the number of EPs in the accredited EO.

In order to eliminate a conflict of interest, IAAR sends an official letter on the composition of EEP to EO 14 (fourteen) calendar days prior to the visit.

EO is entitled to notify IAAR in an official letter of a conflict of interest with a justification within 3 (three) working days. IAAR replaces the expert if necessary.

All members of EEP sign a Statement of Obligation on the absence of a conflict of interest and the Code of Ethics of the external expert of IAAR during each visit.

The expert is obliged to notify the coordinator of IAAR of any connection with EO or his own interest, which may lead to a potential conflict related to the external evaluation process.

Each member of EEP should perform his functions and duties with high quality. Failure to comply and refusal without a proper reason are considered as a violation of the Code of Ethics of an external expert of IAAR and may lead to exclusion from IAAR expert database.

Information about EO, obtained during the external evaluation, is presented as confidential and is not subject to disclosure.

EEP members should not disclose or comment on the recommended accreditation dates before the decision of the AC.

External Expert Panel includes:

- Chairman of EEP, responsible for coordination of experts work, preparation and oral presentation on preliminary conclusions, drawn up during the site visit of EO, also responsible for preparation of the final Report on the results of the external review of an educational programme (cluster of programmes).

- External experts – representatives of the academic community responsible for assessing the compliance of an accrediting educational organisation and / or educational programme(s) with the IAAR international accreditation standards.

- External expert – a representative of the professional community (an employer) who is to assess whether an accrediting educational programme and/or educational programme(s) (a cluster of programmes) and professional competencies of its graduates comply with the labour market requirements.

- External expert - a representative of a student community, who is responsible for assessing the compliance of an accrediting educational organisation and / or educational programmes with the needs and expectations of students (for each cluster, 1 representative of the student community).

IAAR appoints from among its staff a coordinator responsible for coordinating the work of the expert group. The educational organisation, for its part, appoints an authorised person responsible for the process of international accreditation of the educational organisation and / or educational programme (cluster of programmes).

II. SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

The self-assessment report (SAR) is one of the basic documents of international accreditation.

Key Principles of the Report Preparation

❖ Structuring: strict compliance of the presented information with the sections of the document.

❖ . Readability: the text of the document should be easy for apprehension from the point of view of printing, semantic and stylistic features of the text.

❖

❖ Analyticity: analysis of advantages and disadvantages, analysis of development dynamics of the EO or EP (cluster of programmes).

❖ Objectiveness of assessment.

❖ Conclusiveness: provision of facts, data, information as arguments for conclusions

Those features of the study programme which have not been described in the guidelines must be included in the documents of the corresponding part.

During the cluster accreditation the aspects common to all programmes are described once in the introductory section to avoid repetition.

The final document must be well-structured, the pages numbered (including annexes).

Report Format

The report should be drawn up in the form of a coherent and logical text with tables, graphs, figures, where appropriate and attachments, in which large tables (occupying more than half of a sheet in A4 format) and other large-scale sources of information are placed.

The self-assessment report shall include an introduction, main body, conclusion and annexes. All statements, judgments, assumptions of the report must be supported by necessary documents in the main body of the text and attachments (Annex 2. Recommended Structure of the Self-Assessment Report).

Report shall be drafted in the following format: font type - Times New Roman, font size - 12, space between lines - 1.5, paragraph spacing before and after titles - no more than 6 pt, at the beginning of report, there is automatically edited inline table of contents, page numbers. The report is printed in A4 format in portrait orientation, attachments may also use landscape orientation. The first annex to report contains text confirming the reliability, exhaustive nature and accuracy of all data provided, signed by the head of the institution and executors who prepared the report with the contact details of compilers of report for further consultations if necessary: “I, [name of head of organisation], confirm that in self-assessment report [institution name] containing [number of pages in the main body of report, i.e. without attachments] pages, provided absolutely reliable, accurate and comprehensive data, which adequately and fully characterise activities of the institution”.

Contents of the Self-Assessment Report

The SAR consists of introduction, main section, conclusion and annexes.

It is recommended that the introduction should include information on the conditions and organisation of self-evaluation, its goals and objectives.

The introduction presents general information about the educational organisation for institutional accreditation, the structural division of the educational institution, which implements the accrediting study programme (cluster of programmes) for programme accreditation:

- brief background;
- organisational and legal provision of activity;
- organisational structure and management system;
- interaction with educational, research, professional organisations on the local, regional and national levels;
- international activity;
- quantity of students (in each year);
- dynamics of the student population of different educational forms during the last 3-5 years.

The main section includes an analysis of the conformity of the activities of the educational organisation or the educational programme being accredited to the international accreditation standards.

The articles of the section are supposed to be arranged according to the order suggested in the guidelines. The SAR must provide answers to all the main questions and include all necessary documentary evidence in the annexes.

The educational organisation must provide information on the achievements of the organisation or the study programme for the last 3-5 years for each standard. It is also supposed to point out in the report problems and areas for improvement which were revealed with the help of the SWOT analysis.

The conclusion of the report is supposed to include general findings and the conclusion of the self-assessment process, giving grounds for applying an application for passing an external quality assessment procedure.

Annexes must include tables, general information about the educational institution, information about the accredited study programme (cluster of programmes), achievements of the study programmes (no less than 2 pages) (in case of programme accreditation), and the list of material and documentary evidence, which are presented for the consideration of the external expert panel during the visit to the educational organisation.

The SAR must be presented in English [1] - officially in electronic version if there were no other preliminary agreements. The report must not exceed 50-60 pages (without annexes).

The SAR should be presented from the name of the head of the educational institution and signed by the head of the educational institution.

The main provisions and conclusions of the report must be brought to notice of all participants of the self-assessment process; posted on the website of the educational institution. All persons responsible for self-assessment and accuracy of the material presented in the report must be involved in filling out the “Conclusion of the Self-Evaluation Committee” table (see Annex 2, section 3.2).

The evaluation table “Conclusion of the Self-Evaluation Committee” has following positions for assessment:

[1] Large documents can be submitted in the original language on condition that they are accompanied by a short summary in English

- "**Strong**" is characterised by a high level of indicators of one criterion of international accreditation. This position of this criterion makes it possible to serve as an example of good practice for dissemination among other EOs.
- "**Satisfactory**" is determined by the average level of indicators of one criterion of international accreditation and means compliance with the criteria.
- "**Suggests improvement**" is characterised by a low level of performance of one criterion of international accreditation.
- "**Unsatisfactory**" means that indicators of EO or EP does not meet the criteria of international accreditation.

III. INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The self-assessment procedure at the international level must contain the following parts: Standards 1-10 and relevant annexes.

These standards are applicable to institutional or programme accreditation of non-medical educational organisations or educational programmes in higher and postgraduate education implemented using digital technologies (including initial accreditation of educational organisations or educational programmes (ex-ante).

Standard 1. POLICY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Criteria:

• The educational organisation should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management.

• Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

• E-learning is part of the overall strategy for the institution's development as well as the policy for quality assurance.

• The educational organisation uses a clearly articulated policy framework and governance structure when deciding on the adoption of new technologies to ensure the expected quality of e-learning provision.

• Institutional policies, structures, processes, and resources are in place to guarantee the successful teaching and learning process of students, including those with special educational needs.

• The educational organisation has a policy and code of practice to ensure academic integrity and freedom and ethical behaviour.

• The quality assurance policy includes electronic security measures.

• If external services or expertise are utilised, written agreements/contracts that define the roles and responsibilities exist.

• Stakeholders (especially students) are involved in the internal quality assurance system, even if they are not on campus.

Guidelines:

The quality assurance policy and its implementation mechanisms form the basis of a logically structured and consistent quality assurance system for the educational organisation. This system represents a cycle of continuous improvement and contributes to the accountability of the educational organisation. It supports the development of quality culture in which all stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance at all levels of the educational organisation. In order to facilitate this, the quality assurance policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

The policy is implemented through activities involving various processes and procedures of internal quality assurance, which require the participation of all departments of the educational organisation. The degree of policy implementation is regulated, monitored, and reviewed at the level of the educational organisation itself.

Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach. Such a policy supports

• the organisation of the quality assurance system;
• departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units as well as those of institutional leadership, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;
• academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud;
• guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff;
• the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

With the institution's e-learning strategy embedded into the overall strategy of the institution, institutions' quality assurance strategies can also be more easily adapted to reflect educational objectives, rapid technological changes, and shifts in pedagogical models. Such quality assurance policies and strategies for e-learning, which may cover quality, pedagogical models, and innovation, can then be well defined, implemented, and communicated to the public.

The e-learning strategy includes an explanation as to why e-learning has been selected as an appropriate learning strategy for the students being served. Institutional policies for e-learning may further include the constituting elements of quality, which include:

• institutional support;
• course development;
• teaching and learning;
• course structure;
• student support;
• faculty support with compulsory e-learning training for new members of staff;
• technological infrastructures;
• student assessment (learner authentication, work authorship and examination security) and certification; and
• electronic security measures.

The institution may also define policies to grant proper access and ensure participation for those students affected by disability, illness, and other mitigating circumstances.

Part of the institution's cycle of continuous improvement includes ensuring a constant analysis and updating of the structure that provides service and support for e-learning activities, which typically includes subcontracting (or delegation) for network services or management of the institution's virtual learning environment (VLE). The term Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is used to describe the collection of software systems that provide materials and facilities for online learning. These systems allow for the management of all processes from course authoring, to delivery of the course materials to students, and recording their performance. The term Learning Management System (LMS) is often used synonymously with VLE, but indicates a greater focus on administration than on course authoring and production (EADTU, 2016).

Quality assurance processes embrace those activities.

Involving stakeholders (e.g. students, teaching staff, authors, technical staff, student support staff, administration, etc.) in the internal quality assurance of e-learning can be a challenge due to the lack of an on-campus presence, so institutions may need to take steps to actively engage all stakeholders in internal quality procedures.

Standard 2. DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES

Criteria:

• The educational organisation should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes.

• The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes.

• The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

• The educational organisation has a clear strategy for digital innovation, e-learning being a part of it. This strategy is known within the institution at all levels and is adopted by teachers in charge of designing the curriculum.

• E-learning programmes are aligned with the institutional mission.

• Curricula design reflects pedagogical practices and innovation, if applicable

• People involved in designing/developing/evaluating e-learning programmes have expertise in academic and technical aspects.

• Teaching staff involved in designing/developing/evaluating programmes are familiar with the advantages/disadvantages of using e-learning in particular course contexts.

• Student needs are considered when developing the learning model and the curricula design.

Guidelines:

Study programmes are at the core of the higher education institutions' teaching mission. They provide students with both academic knowledge and skills including those that are transferable, which may influence their personal development and may be applied in their future careers.

Programmes

• are designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes;

• are designed by involving students and other stakeholders in the work;

• benefit from external expertise and reference points;

• reflect the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (cf. Scope and Concepts);

• are designed so that they enable smooth student progression;

• define the expected student workload, e.g. in ECTS;

• include well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate;

• are subject to a formal institutional approval process.

It is important to pay attention to the process by which the teaching staff determine the best teaching methods for students in a specific context, taking into account pedagogical practice, innovation, and the specific goal of the programme.

Major challenges that institutions face are those of designing online programmes that guarantee skills development or the sense of academic community that has traditionally been associated with on-campus provision. Key challenges and opportunities include: programme modularity, online assessment methods, building online academic

communities, integrating knowledge and skills development, and offering personalised instruction to meet different learning needs and aspirations.

Institutions may also focus on demonstrating the need for e-learning provision in relation to the mission and goals of both the programme and the institution.

Standard 3. STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Criteria:

• The educational organisation should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

• Teaching methodologies and learning activities are chosen with the aim of achieving learning outcomes.

• Learning materials fit the pedagogical model and facilitate student learning.

• Authors of learning materials are relevant for the subject. Learning materials are reviewed and updated periodically

• The technical infrastructure is aligned with the teaching methodology, learning activities, and e-assessment methods, and it eases the teaching and learning process.

• E-assessment methods are fit for purpose, allowing students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.

• Students are clearly informed about the e-assessment.

• Students are aware of plagiarism rules.

• Students are trained in how to appropriately paraphrase, cite, and reference, regarding both online and print sources.

• The educational organisation has established rules for an appropriate online behaviour (netiquette rules).

Guidelines:

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. This means careful consideration of the design and delivery of study programmes and the assessment of outcomes.

The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching

• respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;

• uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;

• flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;

• regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods;

• encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher;

• promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship;

• has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.

Considering the importance of assessment for the students' progression and their future careers, quality assurance processes for assessment take into account the following:

• Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field;

• The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance;

• The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process;

• Where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner;

• The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances;

• Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;

• A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.

Since digitising content alone does not lead automatically to a successful educational setting, institutions should design their curriculum in such a way so as to stimulate and engage students in the learning process and to reflect best practices and research in teaching and learning.

In order to overcome the lack of direct face-to-face interaction, students may need encouragement to engage online with each other. Institutions can help by supporting the formation of online discussion groups for student-to-student contact; where peer interactions are essential for the successful completion of a programme, however, it is essential that institutions make sure to monitor, assess, and inform students of that. Online spaces for communication between teachers and students and among teaching staff can exist, too – the latter serving as a platform for sharing experiences and good practices.

It is important that the selection of the e-learning methodology used to assemble the learning model is appropriate to the level and subject domain of the course. Institutions engaged in e-learning will find it necessary to pay attention to the development of learning materials and to incorporate any appropriate updates. Similarly, staff may need support in updating their knowledge in relation to teaching and assessment methodologies that are adapted to the e-learning environment. Input from several professions is desirable for the development of high-quality e-learning materials; hence, clear processes of coordination between various contributors are also needed.

VLEs offer increased flexibility for teaching, learning, and assessment and can be used to encourage the development of creativity, critical thinking, and in-depth subject knowledge. VLEs, which can be developed based on the pedagogical needs of the course and its learners, may contain a wide range of tools, including: blogs, forums, online video conferencing platforms, internet voice communication, virtual practical training, etc. Regular revision on the basis of learning analytics and learner feedback will help lead to constant improvement.

During the learning design process, it is important to consider how the e-assessment methods, which should be explained to any affected students, are aligned with the learning outcomes. It is important to also consider that when online assessment is carried out, there are established procedures for validating non-classroom-based assessments.

The development and implementation of e-assessment includes protective measures that guarantee learner authentication and work authorship. In addition, the e-assessment system should be secure and fit for purpose. It is important, too, that guidelines are generated, as well as codes of conduct, to encourage appropriate online behaviour for students and that they are also supported in understanding issues of plagiarism.

Standard 4. STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION

Criteria:

• The educational organisation should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

• Students/prospective students are informed about requirements concerning equipment, e-learning and digital skills, pre-knowledge and prerequisite subjects, and attendance.

• Students are informed about the workload and pedagogical model of the e-learning programme.

• The educational organisation has a policy and procedure in place for recognition of prior learning.

Guidelines:

Providing conditions and support that are necessary for students to make progress in their academic career is in the best interest of the individual students, programmes, institutions and systems. It is vital to have fit-for-purpose admission, recognition and completion procedures, particularly when students are mobile within and across higher education systems.

It is important that access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner. Induction to the institution and the programme is provided.

Institutions need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression.

Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on

• institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention;

• cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country.

Graduation represents the culmination of the students' period of study. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

The educational organisation should share information about the e-learning courses, such as ECTS and level, subject content, relationship with other courses, mechanisms for dissemination of course materials, assignments, e-assessment, IT requirements, and an estimate of the amount of time that students will need to dedicate to the course.

E-learning students will expect to be supported in their development and application of new skills and techniques through a range of mechanisms and services.

Academic recognition still has to be assured, and it will be important for institutions to give attention to the qualifications offered by online programmes in order to ensure the same level of recognition by professional bodies and employers providing the same learning outcomes.

The educational organisations that deliver courses internationally are advised to be aware of the national policies and legislation regarding the recognition of qualifications gained by students located abroad.

Standard 5. TEACHING STAFF

Criteria:

• The educational organisation should have fair and transparent processes for hiring, the recruitment and development of all staff members, which enable them to ensure the competence of their teachers.

• The educational organisation has defined the structure, profile, and role of the teaching staff that is aligned with the pedagogical model.

• The educational organisation uses appropriate instruments to guarantee that the profile of the teaching staff corresponds to their duties.

• The teaching staff is trained and proficient in the use of learning technologies and e-assessment methods. There are particular training activities for new staff.

• The educational organisation has developed procedures to identify the support requirements of the teaching staff.

• Technological and pedagogical support services for teachers are adequate, accessible, and timely.

• The teaching staff-student ratio avoids excessive workload for teachers and tutors.

• The educational organisation has implemented appropriate procedures for recruiting and hiring teaching staff.

• During the implementation of e-learning, the work of teaching staff is coordinated effectively.

Guidelines:

The teacher's role is essential in creating a high quality student experience and enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competences and skills. The diversifying student population and stronger focus on learning outcomes require student-centred learning and teaching and the role of the teacher is, therefore, also changing.

Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively.

Such an environment

• sets up and follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment and conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching;

• offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of teaching staff;

• encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research;

• encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

It is important for educational organisations, especially for those transitioning from traditional face-to-face teaching to e-learning, to create conditions for the professional development of personnel, providing opportunities for their growth within the context of e-learning. They may need technological and pedagogical support services for the development of courses and training in the use and mastery of learning technologies. However, educational organisations should be careful that staff are not burdened with a greater workload owing to any additional training. The workload (with extra professional

development trainings included in the calculation) of teaching staff involved with e-learning should be comparable to that of those delivering face-to-face provision.

The design of training programmes for teaching staff may be informed by a training needs analysis that identifies training requirements (for example, by job function) and addresses the needs of existing and newly recruited staff. Training can be further improved if the institution promotes interaction among teaching staff for the sharing of good practices and teaching and learning achievements. Where academic support staff are concerned, innovation will be of key interest.

It is important to bear in mind that, in general, offering e-learning may involve a wider range of staff than is normally required in traditional education settings, and that coordination, also with external suppliers of various services, may be more complex.

Standard 6. LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

Criteria:

• The educational organisation should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

• The VLE supports a variety of methods and tools.

• The technical infrastructure ensures the accessibility of the e-learning programme by students with special educational needs.

• The educational organisation defines the electronic security measures that guarantee standards of quality and information integrity and validity.

• The VLE is based on non-proprietary web standards and is constantly updated to reflect technological changes.

• The educational organisation provides students with an adequate e-library and virtual labs.

• The educational organisation has procedures in place that cover student support, including tutoring, pedagogical, technological, and administrative elements.

• Student support is offered according to the student's profile and their specific needs.

• The student support reflects characteristics of e-learning.

• Support for the development of learning, as well as digital skills (students are guided towards reflection, developing time management skills, etc.), is provided.

• Students receive guidelines/training in using e-learning resources (VLE, e-library, etc.).

• Hours of support are transparent and suit the needs of students; for instance, periods of peak demand (evenings, weekends, holidays, etc.) are considered.

• The educational organisation provides opportunities for the virtual mobility of students and academics.

Guidelines:

Learning resources

During education, students require educational resources, which can be both material (libraries or computers) and human (mentors, tutors, and other consultants). It is considered a good practice for institutions to include in their overall strategies an explanation of the development of their e-learning programmes and technological innovation, an analysis of the particular needs of e-learning programmes, and indicators that define the functionality and good use of the infrastructure. It may prove to be even more beneficial if the institution develops a separate, all-inclusive, fail-safe technology development plan that includes:

• electronic security measures (password protection, encryption, back-up systems, etc.) to ensure standards of quality and information integrity and validity, and

• a centralised system that provides support to the building and maintenance of the infrastructure for online education.

The educational organisations can better guarantee the effectiveness of delivering an e-learning programme by acquiring, operating, and maintaining an information system capable of: registering students for courses and programmes; distributing e-learning materials to students; maintaining and updating records of student performance; and etc.

Institutions often prefer that their chosen technical solutions comply with platform-independent and non-proprietary web standards.

VLEs deserve special attention, for example, in order to ensure that sufficient financial resources are secured, thereby achieving system security and reliability, as well as service availability. Good VLEs are interoperable and robust, aligned with the institution's technical infrastructure, and regularly subjected to internal evaluations, updating, and improvements as needed.

The VLE is secure, safe, reliable, and accessible, meeting the technical requirements of the university. The infrastructure undergoes regular internal assessment, updating, and improvement as necessary. The technical infrastructure should ensure the accessibility of learning materials and the e-assessment system by students with special educational needs.

Providing students with adequate library resources (ie. an e-library service), and any required training, is an institutional responsibility. Study programmes could include virtual labs designed to guarantee the acquisition of particular learning outcomes.

Student support

When distributing, planning, and providing educational resources, support services must consider the needs of various student groups (adults, working students, distance learners, international students, as well as students with disabilities) and take into account the trends of student-centered learning.

Support services and their activities should be organised considering the specific situation of the educational organisation. However, the internal quality assurance system ensures the availability and suitability of all resources for educational goals, as well as informing students about available services. In providing support services, the administration and specialised departments play a key role, so the educational organisation should ensure the professionalism of staff and opportunities for developing their competencies.

Effective student support is tailored to the e-learning environment. Support for learners can be enhanced by analysing the profile of e-learning students (including, for example, their cultural background, technical experience, technological equipment, etc.) and meeting specific needs of students (e.g., students with disabilities).

The educational organisation considers encouraging the virtual mobility of students and academics, providing them with opportunities to participate in activities offered by other institutions.

Standard 7. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Criteria:

• The educational organisation should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

• Collected data is used in order to evaluate e-learning programmes (e.g. comparative analysis of course design).

• The educational organisation has a strategy on the use and purpose of learning analytics within the institution (i.e. the aim is improving student support).

• The information management system includes relevant, updated, and reliable information concerning the educational organisation and its programmes.

•. The educational organisation considers ethical norms and government policy with respect to data protection and the privacy of students.

Guidelines:

Reliable data is crucial for informed decision-making and for knowing what is working well and what needs attention. Effective processes to collect and analyse information about study programmes and other activities feed into the internal quality assurance system.

A good information management system will enable the agile, complete, and representative collection of data and indicators derived from all aspects related to e-learning. Particular indicators for different e-learning scenarios (online learning, distance learning in programmes or modules, and blended learning) can be included (for example, dropout rates, graduation/completion rates, etc.), and, combined with the measuring of processes and key results (specific indicators for e-learning should be defined), will help institutions comply with this standard.

During the implementation of e-learning, it is recommended to conduct research on the profile of students and their specific needs. Employees are advised to have access to reports and information relevant to their functions, as well as students (registration status, academic performance, achievements, etc.), for example, through web interfaces rather than restricted campus-based networks. When implementing e-learning, the quality assurance system ensures that student privacy rights are respected during data collection and intellectual property issues are taken into account.

Various methods of information collection can be utilised. It is important for students and staff to be involved in data collection, analysis, and planning subsequent procedures.

Standard 8. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Criteria:

• The educational organisation should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible.

• The educational organisation publishes reliable, complete, and up-to-date information on study programmes (i.e. recognition of qualifications, learning objectives, credits, requirements, assessment methods, timelines, dates relevant for the programme).

• The educational organisation publishes reliable, complete, and up-to-date information on institutional technical support.

• Technical requirements to enable the full and effective use of the system are clearly identified and published.

• The educational organisation publishes information on completion rates, pass rates, and dropout rates.

Guidelines:

Information on institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students as well as for graduates, other stakeholders and the public.

Therefore, institutions provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer and the selection criteria for them, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students as well as graduate employment information.

Stakeholders appreciate being well informed on issues of recognition of qualifications of programmes, pedagogical development, teaching and learning methods, and resources technology. Transparency, with regard to not only the learning value but also the technological requirements, learning resources technology, and available technical support available, is key.

Standard 9. ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES

Criteria:

• The educational organisation should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society.

• Outcomes of monitoring and periodically review should lead to continuous improvement of the programme.

• All stakeholders should be informed about any planned or undertaken actions regarding these programmes.

• E-learning programmes are reviewed, updated, and improved.

• Pedagogical developments are aligned with the institutional strategy.

• ICT and pedagogy developments are analysed and implemented when appropriate.

• The internal quality assurance system includes feedback to stakeholders (especially to students).

Guidelines:

Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programmes aim to ensure that the provision remains appropriate and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

They include the evaluation of:

• the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline thus ensuring that the programme is up to date;
• the changing needs of society;
• the students' workload, progression and completion;
• the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students;
• the student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme;
• the learning environment and support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme.

Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date. Revised programme specifications are published.

It is important to conduct monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of online programmes, assess teaching and learning methodologies, and systematically use this information for future planning and alignment with the university's strategic objectives. Additionally, developments in ICT and education should be constantly taken into account.

The university has mechanisms for assessing the quality of the educational environment. It is important to demonstrate the distinction of online programmes from other forms of e-learning, as well as the extent to which e-learning activities are integrated into educational programmes as supplements or independent components.

It is crucial to show how in the educational organsation:

- the need for changes in curriculum content and educational programmes is identified (changes in the labor market, employer requirements, and societal demands).
- students, employers, and other stakeholders participate in the review of educational programmes.
- the achievement of goals and objectives of professional practice is guaranteed, ensuring its relevance to future professional activities.
- monitoring of student needs and market demands from employers is conducted.

Standard 10. CYCLICAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Criteria:

• The educational organisation should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

• The educational organisation provides information about the quality of its activities to the wider community.

• The educational organisation aims to ensure that progress made since the last external quality assurance procedure is taken into account in preparation for the next procedure.

Guidelines:

External quality assurance in its various forms can verify the effectiveness of institutions' internal quality assurance, act as a catalyst for improvement and offer the institution new perspectives. It will also provide information to assure the institution and the public of the quality of the institution's activities.

Institutions participate in cyclical external quality assurance that takes account, where relevant, of the requirements of the legislative framework in which they operate. Therefore, depending on the framework, this external quality assurance may take different forms and focus at different organisational levels (such as programme, faculty or institution).

Quality assurance is a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback or report or its follow-up process within the institution. Therefore, institutions ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.

IV. ANNEXES

Annex 1. Recommended Form of the Site Visit Programme

AGREED
Rector _____
(institution of education)

_____ **Full name**
202_ «___» _____

APPROVED
General Director, Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating

_____ **A.B. Zhumagulova**
202_ «___» _____

PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT
FOR THE IAAR EXTERNAL EXPERT PANEL
TO _____
institution of education

Date of the visit: _____202_
Arrival day: _____ 202_
Departure day: _____202_

Study programmes for accreditation
(in case of programme accreditation)

Cluster 1	**SP**
	SP
	SP
Cluster 2	**SP**
	SP
	SP
Cluster 3	**SP**
	SP
	SP

Date and time	EEP work with target groups	Full name and job title of the target groups	Venue
«__» _____ 202__			
During the day	Arrival of the EEP team members		Hotel

16.00-18.00	Preliminary meeting of the EEP team (mutual introduction of the EEP members, distribution of responsibilities, discussion of the key issues and the visit programme)	*External experts of the IAAR*	Hotel/Zoom
18.00-19.00	Dinner (only members of the EEP)	*External experts of the IAAR*	
Day 1, «__» _____ 202__			
9.00-9.30	Discussion of organisational issues with experts	*External experts of the IAAR*	Main building, office for the EEP/Zoom
9.30-10.00	Meeting with the head of EO	Head of the institution (full name)	Office of the head of EO/Zoom
10.00-10.30	Meeting with the deputy heads of the organisation (Vice-rector, Deputy director, Vice-presidents)	*Job title, full name*	Main building, Conference hall/Zoom
10.30-11.15	Meeting with heads of structural units	*Job title, full name (or Appendix no.__)*	Main building, Conference hall/Zoom
11.15-11.30	Coffee-break for working discussions	*Only EEP members*	EEP room/Zoom
11.30-12.45	*Visual inspection of the EO (in the case of specialised accreditation only facilities for SPs under accreditation)*	*Job title, full name*	Itinerary based/Zoom
13.00-14.00	Lunch (only EEP members)	***Lunch break***	
14.00-14.15	EEP work		EEP room/Zoom
14.15-15.00	Meeting with heads of accredited SPs	*Job title, full name (or Appendix no.__)*	Main building, Conference hall/Zoom
15.00-15.45	Meeting with the heads of the chairs of accredited SPs	*Job title, full name (or Appendix no.__)*	Main building, Conference hall/Zoom
15.45-16.00	Coffee-break for working discussions	*Only EEP members*	
16.00-17.00	Meeting with teachers of accredited SP	*Lecturers' list (Appendix No.__)*	1-cluster: lecture theater 1/Zoom

			2-cluster: lecture theater 2/Zoom 3-cluster: lecture theater 3/Zoom
17.00-18.00	Questionnaire survey by lecturers (in parallel)	*Academic teaching staff of the SPs under accreditation*	Computer rooms no.513-519/Zoom
17.00-18.00	Work of the EEP (discussion of results and summarizing outcomes of the 1st day)		EEP room/Zoom
18.00-19.00	Dinner (only EEP members)		
	Day 2, «__» _____ 202__		
09.00-09.30	The work of the EEP (discussion of organisational issues)		EEP room/Zoom
09.30-12.30	Visit to the graduate departments	*Job title, full name*	Academic building no. 5/Zoom
09.30-12.30	Attending classes	According to the schedules of SPs under accreditation	Academic buildings no. 2, 5/Zoom
12.30-13.00	Work of the EEP (exchange of views)		EEP room/Zoom
13.00-14.00	Lunch (only EEP members)	***Lunch break***	
14.00-15.00	Meeting with students	*Students of SPs under accreditation (Appendix no. __)*	1-cluster: lecture theater 1/Zoom 2-cluster: lecture theater 2/Zoom 3-cluster: lecture theater 3/Zoom
15.00-16.00	Questionnaire survey of students (in-parallel)	*Students of SPs under accreditation*	Computer rooms no. 513-519/Zoom
15.00-16.00	Meeting with employers	*Representatives of state and financial institutions, heads of manufacturing enterprises and organisations (Appendix No. __)*	Lecture theater 1/Zoom
16.00-16.30	Coffee-break for working discussions	*Only EEP members*	EEP room/Zoom
16.30-17.00	Meeting with graduates of SPs	*Graduates - representatives for each SP (Appendix no.__)*	Lecture theater 1/Zoom

17.00-18.00	Work of the EEP (discussion of results and summarizing outcomes of the 2nd day)	*Only EEP members*	EEP room/Zoom
18.00-19.00	Dinner (only EEP members)		
	Day 3, «__» _____ 202__		
09.00-09.30	The work of the EEP (discussion of organisational issues)		EEP room/Zoom
09.30-12.30	Site visits to professional internship venues, branches of departments (clinical cites, educational and clinical centers)	*Professional internship venues*	*Appendix no.__ /Zoom*
12.30-13.00	Work of the EEP (collegial coordination and preparation of an oral preliminary review of the visit results)		EEP room/Zoom
13.00-14.00	Lunch (only EEP members)	***Lunch break***	
14.00-16.30	Work of the EEP		EEP room/Zoom
16.30-17.00	Final EEP meeting with the management of the EO	*Management of HEI and its structural units*	Main building, Conference hall/Zoom
18.00-19.00	Dinner (only EEP members)		
Schedule based	***EEP members departure***		
	«__» _____ 202__		
Schedule based	***EEP members departure***		

Annex 2. Recommended Structure of the Self-Assessment Report

The report should be submitted according to the following structure:

Title page indicating name of educational organisation and accreditation body (see Annex 3 below) (1 page)

A statement confirming reliability and accuracy of the data submitted signed by the first head of educational organisation *(usually given in Annex 1 of the self-assessment report)* **(1 page)**

Content (created by using the function of Automatic Table of Contents) **(1 page)**

Symbols and Abbreviations (1-2 pages)
Provides a list of symbols and abbreviations used in text of the Self-Assessment Report.

I. Introduction

1.1 Educational Organisation Profile (formed in accordance with the requirements of section II of this Guide) **(1-2 pages)**

Basis for passing the external assessment, result of the previous accreditation (accreditation body, accreditation standards according to which external assessment was carried out and accreditation status) in case of re-accreditation shall be indicated.
A brief description of methods used in development of the Self-Assessment Report of the educational organisation (appointment of a working group, involvement of stakeholders, etc.) shall be reflected.
The following tables are also included in this section.

Table 1

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Full Name of the Educational Institution	
Contact Information	
Founders	
The Year of Foundation (name and the new name if applicable)	
The Current Accreditation Status:	
Location / Registration Venue	
Rector / Head of Institution	
License (title document)	
Number of Students (full-time, part-time)	

Date of Submission of the Self-Assessment Report	
Name of Contact Person for Preparation of the Report	
Levels of Education Implemented by the Institution in accordance with the NQF (for example, 6,7,8) and QF-EHEA (for example, 1,2,3 cycles)	
The Output of the IAAR Standard according to which the Assessment is Carried Out	
Information about the Working Group that Conducted the Self-Assessment	

Table 2

INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY PROGRAMMES UNDER INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION (EXAMPLE)

(in the case of institutional accreditation, the educational organisation fills in this table for one of the educational programmes being implemented)

PART I	***Examples***
Study Programme/Study Programmes	*"Information Science and Computer Engineering" (230100.62, 230100.68),* *"Applied Informatics" (230700.62, 230700.68)*
Level/ Period of Study	*Bachelor / 4 years* *Master / 2 years*
Levels of Education Programme in accordance with the NQF (for example, 6,7,8) and QF-EHEA (for example, 1,2,3 cycles)	*SP "Informatics"* *NQF - level 7* *QF-EHEA - 2nd cycle* *SP "Mathematics"* *NQF - level 6* *QF-EHEA - 1 cycle*
Structural Unit (Head)	*Faculty of Technical Cybernetics* *(Ahmetov Serik, Dr. of Technical Sciences, professor Smagulov Kanat, Candidate of Technical Sciences, senior lecturer)*
Major Departments (Heads of the Departments)	*The Department of Computer Engineering* *(Nurgaliyev Samat, Dr. of Technical Sciences, professor)*
Dates of Site Visit	*2-4 March 202___*
Person Responsible for Accreditation (tel./fax/ e-mail)	*Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs,* *Sultanova Maral, Dr. of Technical Sciences, professor*

Table 2 continued

PART II	
Number of ECTS Credits	
Study Duration (number of semesters), Type of Studies	
Beginning of Studies (winter semester/summer semester)	
Date of Introduction of Study Programme	
Previous Accreditation (date, term of validity, accreditation agency)	

Entry Requirements	
Possibilities for Further Education (upon the completion of the programme)	
Goals and Objectives of the Programme	
Short Description of the Programme	
Learning Outcomes	
Specialisation	
Additional Features	
Tuition Fees	
Employability, Possible Career Fields	

1.2 Presentation of Education Organisation (1-2 pages)

A brief history, information about types of activities of the educational organisation, directions of educational services indicating quantitative data of the EP by levels of education, information about position and status of the educational organisation in national and international educational space.

Uniqueness of internal quality assurance system functioning in organisation of education shall be noted.

1.3 Previous Accreditation (1-2 pages)

A brief description of results of previous accreditation shall be given with analysis and degree of implementation of each EEP recommendation (for EP, a brief description of results of the previous accreditation with analysis and degree of implementation of each EEP recommendation in the context of EP shall be given).

II. Main section. Compliance with Institutional or Programme Accreditation Standards (30-40 pages)

Evidence and analytical material developed on the basis of self-assessment of an educational organisation for compliance with each standard of institutional or programme accreditation are presented. The result of the analysis of the current state of the activities of the EO or EP shall be reflected. Material shall be presented on the effectiveness of the functioning of the internal quality assurance system and the effectiveness of its mechanisms in accordance with the standards.

2.1 - 2.10 Standards *(the report for each standard is designed according to the following requirements)*:

Each Standard shall contain evidence and analytical materials on compliance of the educational organisation or educational programme with the standard under consideration, thus consistently shall reflect the results of self-assessment. Achievements for the last 3-5 years (except for initial accreditation) according to the standard under consideration are also given.

Substantiations of the positions of the organisation of education or educational programme (strong, satisfactory, suggests improvement, unsatisfactory) shall be given in

accordance with the assessment of standards by the working group on self-assessment of the organisation of education. In the case of an assessment of "suggests improvement" and "unsatisfactory", the proposed measures to strengthen the position shall be indicated.

At the end of each section, the assessment conclusions of the EO working group on the standard shall be given, for example, "According to the standard "(name of the Standard)", the EO (name of the institution) or EP (name of the programme) has a "strong" position, or a "satisfactory" position, or a "suggests to improve" position.

III. Conclusion

3.1 SWOT-ANALYSIS (1-5 pages) (does not apply to programme accreditation)

Analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified during the EO self-assessment for compliance with institutional accreditation standards shall be presented.

3.2 Conclusion of the Self-Evaluation Committee (7-8 pages)

Below is the presented assessment table "Parameters of the Institutional or Programme Profile" (section " Conclusion of the Self-Evaluation Committee") with a mark on the compliance of the EO or EP with each standard (strong / satisfactory / suggest improvements / unsatisfactory) of the evaluation table, considered as the conclusions of the self-assessment working group.

Conclusion of the Self-Evaluation Committee

№	№	IAAR International Standards	Assessment Indicators			
			Strong	Satisfactory	Suggest improvements	Unsatisfactory
Standard 1. POLICY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE						
1.	1.	The educational organisation should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management.				
2.	2.	Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.				
3.	3.	E-learning is part of the overall strategy for the institution's development as well as the policy for quality assurance.				
4.	4.	The educational organisation uses a clearly articulated policy framework and governance structure when deciding on the adoption of new technologies to ensure the expected quality of e-learning provision.				

5.	5.	Institutional policies, structures, processes, and resources are in place to guarantee the successful teaching and learning process of students, including those with special educational needs.				
6.	6.	The educational organisation has a policy and code of practice to ensure academic integrity and freedom and ethical behaviour.				
7.	7.	The quality assurance policy includes electronic security measures				
8.	8.	If external services or expertise are utilised, written agreements/contracts that define the roles and responsibilities exist.				
9.	9.	Stakeholders (especially students) are involved in the internal quality assurance system, even if they are not on campus.				
Total by standard						
Standard 2. DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES						
10.	1.	The educational organisation should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes.				
11.	2.	The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes.				
12.	3.	The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.				
13.	4.	The educational organisation has a clear strategy for digital innovation, e-learning being a part of it. This strategy is known within the institution at all levels and is adopted by teachers in charge of designing the curriculum.				
14.	5.	E-learning programmes are aligned with the institutional mission.				
15.	6.	Curricula design reflects pedagogical practices and innovation, if applicable.				
16.	7.	People involved in designing/developing/evaluating e-learning programmes have expertise in academic and technical aspects.				
17.	8.	Teaching staff involved in designing/developing/evaluating programmes are familiar with the advantages/disadvantages of using e-learning in particular course contexts.				
18.	9.	Student needs are considered when developing the learning model and the curricula design.				
Total by standard						
Standard 3. STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT						

19.	1.	The educational organisation should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.				
20.	2.	Teaching methodologies and learning activities are chosen with the aim of achieving learning outcomes.				
21.	3.	Learning materials fit the pedagogical model and facilitate student learning.				
22.	4.	Authors of learning materials are relevant for the subject. Learning materials are reviewed and updated periodically.				
23.	5.	The technical infrastructure is aligned with the teaching methodology, learning activities, and e-assessment methods, and it eases the teaching and learning process.				
24.	6.	E-assessment methods are fit for purpose, allowing students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.				
25.	7.	Students are clearly informed about the e-assessment.				
26.	8.	Students are aware of plagiarism rules.				
27.	9.	Students are trained in how to appropriately paraphrase, cite, and reference, regarding both online and print sources.				
28.	10.	The educational organisation has established rules for an appropriate online behaviour (netiquette rules).				
Total by standard						
Standard 4. STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION						
29.	1.	The educational organisation should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.				
30.	2.	Students/prospective students are informed about requirements concerning equipment, e-learning and digital skills, pre-knowledge and prerequisite subjects, and attendance.				
31.	3.	Students are informed about the workload and pedagogical model of the e-learning programme.				
32.	4.	The educational organisation has a policy and procedure in place for recognition of prior learning.				
Total by standard						
Standard 5. TEACHING STAFF						
33.	1.	The educational organisation should have fair and transparent processes for hiring, the recruitment and development of all staff members, which enable them to ensure the competence of their teachers.				
34.	2.	The educational organisation has defined the structure, profile, and role of the teaching staff that is aligned with the pedagogical model.				

35.	3.	The educational organisation uses appropriate instruments to guarantee that the profile of the teaching staff corresponds to their duties.				
36.	4.	The teaching staff is trained and proficient in the use of learning technologies and e-assessment methods. There are particular training activities for new staff.				
37.	5.	The educational organisation has developed procedures to identify the support requirements of the teaching staff.				
38.	6.	Technological and pedagogical support services for teachers are adequate, accessible, and timely.				
39.	7.	The teaching staff-student ratio avoids excessive workload for teachers and tutors.				
40.	8.	The educational organisation has implemented appropriate procedures for recruiting and hiring teaching staff.				
41.	9.	During the implementation of e-learning, the work of teaching staff is coordinated effectively.				
Total by standard						
Standard 6. LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT						
42.	1.	The educational organisation should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.				
43.	2.	The VLE supports a variety of methods and tools.				
44.	3.	The technical infrastructure ensures the accessibility of the e-learning programme by students with special educational needs.				
45.	4.	The educational organisation defines the electronic security measures that guarantee standards of quality and information integrity and validity.				
46.	5.	The VLE is based on non-proprietary web standards and is constantly updated to reflect technological changes.				
47.	6.	The educational organisation provides students with an adequate e-library and virtual labs.				
48.	7.	The educational organisation has procedures in place that cover student support, including tutoring, pedagogical, technological, and administrative elements.				
49.	8.	Student support is offered according to the student's profile and their specific needs.				
50.	9.	The student support reflects characteristics of e-learning.				
51.	10.	Support for the development of learning, as well as digital skills (students are guided towards reflection, developing time management skills, etc.), is provided.				
52.	11.	Students receive guidelines/training in using e-learning resources (VLE, e-library, etc.).				

53.	12.	Hours of support are transparent and suit the needs of students; for instance, periods of peak demand (evenings, weekends, holidays, etc.) are considered.				
54.	13.	The educational organisation provides opportunities for the virtual mobility of students and academics.				
Total by standard						
Standard 7. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT						
55.	1.	The educational organisation should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities				
56.	2.	Collected data is used in order to evaluate e-learning programmes (e.g. comparative analysis of course design).				
57.	3.	The educational organisation has a strategy on the use and purpose of learning analytics within the institution (i.e. the aim is improving student support).				
58.	4.	The information management system includes relevant, updated, and reliable information concerning the educational organisation and its programmes.				
59.	5.	The educational organisation considers ethical norms and government policy with respect to data protection and the privacy of students.				
Total by standard						
Standard 8. PUBLIC INFORMATION						
60.	1.	The educational organisation should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible.				
61.	2.	The educational organisation publishes reliable, complete, and up-to-date information on study programmes (i.e. recognition of qualifications, learning objectives, credits, requirements, assessment methods, timelines, dates relevant for the programme).				
62.	3.	The educational organisation publishes reliable, complete, and up-to-date information on institutional technical support.				
63.	4.	Technical requirements to enable the full and effective use of the system are clearly identified and published.				
64.	5.	The educational organisation publishes information on completion rates, pass rates, and dropout rates.				
Total by standard						
Standard 9. ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES						
65.	1.	The educational organisation should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society.				
66.	2.	Outcomes of monitoring and periodically review should lead to continuous improvement of the programme.				
67.	3.	All stakeholders should be informed about any planned or undertaken actions regarding these programmes.				

68.	4.	E-learning programmes are reviewed, updated, and improved.				
69.	5.	Pedagogical developments are aligned with the institutional strategy.				
70.	6.	ICT and pedagogy developments are analysed and implemented when appropriate.				
71.	7.	The internal quality assurance system includes feedback to stakeholders (especially to students).				
Total by standard						
Standard 10. CYCLICAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE						
72.	1.	The educational organisation should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.				
73.	2.	The educational organisation provides information about the quality of its activities to the wider community.				
74.	3.	The educational organisation aims to ensure that progress made since the last external quality assurance procedure is taken into account in preparation for the next procedure.				
Total by standard						
TOTAL						

Attachments to the Self-Assessment Report (formed in a separate file in accordance with the requirements of Section II of this Guide or attachments can be made in the form of hyperlinks in the text of the self-assessment report).

Annex 3. Sample of a Title Page

Name of the EO

Name of the Faculty *(in case of programme accreditation)*

Name of the Department *(in case of programme accreditation)*

APPROVED

Rector

_____ Name, Surname

signature

«_____»_____20__

seal stamp

SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

(institutional accreditation)

or

ON THE CLUSTER OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

“Name of the programmes”

prepared for

“Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR)”

City, year

Annex 4. Responsibilities of IAAR Coordinator in the Framework of the International Accreditation Procedure

Before visit:

- Providing regulatory and methodological materials on organising and performing self-assessment of the educational organisation and (or) the educational programme (a cluster of programmes) developed by IAAR.
- Carry out communication with the EO and participate in meetings on the accreditation procedure;
- Consult the EO on the accreditation procedure, including on self-assessment and the preparation of a self-assessment report;
- Carry out technical evaluation of the self-assessment report for completeness and applicability (if important omissions are discovered, request the missing materials from the EO coordinator);
- Instruct external experts on international accreditation requirements;
- Provide external experts with normative and methodological materials (developed by IAAR) determining the activities of the external expert panel;
- Timely provide the necessary information, including a self-assessment report to the EEP members to study and review;
- If necessary, send to the EO recommendations for finalising the self-assessment report based on expert reviews;
- Agree on the time frame of the visit of the EEP to the EO;
- Organise the visit of EEP (accommodation, meals, transfer, etc.);
- To provide EEP with an approved visit programme;
- Direct the composition of the EEP to the EO to eliminate a conflict of interest 14 calendar days before the visit;
- To act as the main contact person and to maintain communication between the EEP, the EO and IAAR;
- `Organise informational support of the preliminary meeting of the members of the external expert panel prior to the visit to the EO.

During the visit:

- to regulate EEP activities, provide the necessary methodological materials;
- to create favorable psychological climate for the EEP work;
- to monitor the integrity of the accreditation process and ensure compliance with IAAR requirements.

After the visit:

- to send the draft EEP report to the EO to eliminate the actual inaccuracies;
- to ensure timely delivery of materials to the secretary of the AC;
- to send the report of the EEP to the EO after the AC decision on the accreditation of the EO and/or SP is taken (in case of a positive decision by the AC on accreditation, to request.

The Action Plan for the implementation of the EEP recommendations;

- to inform EEP members about the decision of the AC;
- to provide feedback on the accreditation procedure of the EO and/or SP (an online survey of the EEP members and the EO after the accreditation decision).

Annex 5. Interaction with the EO Coordinator

The coordinator is appointed by the head of the EO. It is not required for the coordinator to be the head of the working group for the preparation of the institutional and (or) specialised self-assessment of the EO and/or SP.

The coordinator interacts with the IAAR coordinator on the planning and organisation issues of the visit to the EO.

To maximise the effectiveness of the accreditation procedure, the EO coordinator shall:

- coordinate the process of the self-assessment report preparation related to the EO and/or SP;
- ensure timely submission of a self-assessment report to IAAR;
- facilitate timely coordination of the EEP visit programme;
- ensure the organisation of site visits according to the programme of the visit, including transportation;
- provide meetings of the EEP members with the target groups of EO during the EEP visit;
- organise coordination of the report of the EEP report for the presence of actual inaccuracies.

The EO Coordinator helps to provide the necessary additional information about the EO or educational programme (cluster of programmes) at the request of members of the external expert panel.

Annex 6. Roles and Responsibilities of EEP Members

Chair Functions

- participation in the development of the visit programme to the EO and responsibility for its implementation, management and coordination of the EEP members work, preparation of the EEP final report with recommendations for improving quality of the EO and/or SP and recommendations for the AC;
- interaction with the IAAR coordinator prior to an external evaluation on the organisation of the visit and the coordination of the programme;
- defining the agenda and holding meetings;
- assuring participation of the expert panel members in the meetings with various target groups, as well as monitoring the compliance of the main objective of the external evaluation and of the visit to the EO;
- ensuring collegial discussion by the entire EEP of the assessment table "Parameters of the institutional or programme profile" in accordance with the IAAR Standards;
- holding a concluding meeting with the EEP members to agree on recommendations for accreditation;
- presentation of the visit outcomes to the EO and the main provisions of the EEP report at the meeting of the AC. In the event of his absence for a good reason, the presentation of the visit outcomes to the EO is carried out by one of the members of the EEP.

Chair Duties

Before the visit:

- to get acquainted with the EO related information;
- to study self-assessment report of the EO and write a review according to IAAR requirements;
- to take part in the development of the EEP's visit programme;
- to formally introduce all members of the EEP at a preliminary meeting, communicate the purpose of the visit, conduct a discussion of the visit programme and the self-assessment report of the EO and/or SP.

During the visit:

- to hear the views of the EEP members on self-assessment of the EO and/or SP and to identify areas requiring clarification;
- to distribute responsibilities among the EEP members;
- to have discussions at meetings with target groups;
- to hold a concluding meeting with the EEP members to agree on the recommendations;
- to provide an oral feedback on the EEP's visit outcomes, to familiarise with the draft recommendations of a general nature during the final meeting with the leadership of the EO.

After the visit:

- to prepare a draft report on the results of the EEP visit and coordinate it with the members of the EEP;
- to send a draft report on the outcomes of the EEP visit for consideration by IAAR;
- in the event of any actual inaccuracies revealed after the review of the EEP report by the EO, make necessary amendments therein and coordinate their approval with the EEP members;
- in case of disagreement with the comments of the EO to the EEP report, to prepare jointly with the IAAR observer an official response to the EO with the rationale indicated;
- to prepare EEP report for subsequent presentation to the AC.

Functions of an external expert

- evaluation of the completeness and reliability of self-assessment results of the EO and/or EP in accordance with the Standards of the IAAR;
- preparation for each meeting with the target groups of the EO with the definition of the key issues in accordance with the IAAR Standards;
- drafting report on the external evaluation results of the EO and/or EP for compliance with the IAAR Standards;
- drafting recommendations for improving the quality of the EO and/or EP;
- drafting recommendations for the AC on accreditation in accordance with the level of the EO's and/or EP's preparation to institutional and/or programme accreditation.

Responsibilities of an external expert

Before the visit:

- to study all the documentation, including self-assessment report and any other available information (Standards, legal acts in the field of education, websites of IAAR, EOs, etc.);
- to maintain liaisons with IAAR and the EEP Chair;
- to prepare a review (except for employers and students) for compliance with the international standards for accreditation in accordance with IAAR requirements;
- to discuss a visit to the EO with the IAAR Coordinator and the Chair;
- to agree with the IAAR Coordinator on the details of the visit;
- to participate in preliminary meeting of the EEP.

During the visit:

- to actively participate in all meetings and discussions, contribute to the EEP work;
- to carry out duties within the EEP related to the evaluation procedure;
- to inform the IAAR Coordinator and the Chair about any doubts and questions arising in the course of the EEP work;
- not to interrupt EEP work during the whole period of the visit;
- to speak at meetings as it may be agreed with the EEP Chair;
- to document the data received;
- to provide the EEP Chair with the necessary documentation related to the data received during the external evaluation;
- to conduct interviews with the target groups;
- to attend various types of classes, study rooms, training places, etc. according to the programme of the EEP visit;

- to participate in the online survey of teachers and students aiming to identify the degree of satisfaction with the educational process;
- to receive through the IAAR observer and the Chair additional information necessary for the analysis of the prospects of the EO or EP.

After the visit:

- to participate in the preparation of the EEP report;
- to destroy confidential materials received during the visit;

not to disclose the external evaluation results of the EO and/or EP prior to the adoption of a formal decision by the AC.

Annex 7. Preparation of the Site Visit by the Expert Panel

The purpose of the visit to the educational organisation of the external expert panel of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating is to assess the quality of the EO or the educational programme according to international standards for accreditation of IAAR and to develop recommendations for accreditation for consideration by the Accreditation Council.

To achieve the goal, the following tasks are defined:

• control of the completeness and reliability of the results of the self-assessment of the EO or the EP;

• assessment in accordance with international standards of IAAR, developed on the basis of ESG;

• development of the EEP report on the results of the evaluation of the EO or EP;

• preparation of recommendations for improving the quality of EO or EP;

• preparation of recommendations for the Accreditation Council on accreditation in accordance with the level of preparedness of the EO or EP for institutional or programme accreditation.

Materials to be reviewed by the review panel before a site visit

The following methodological and legal documentation are circulated to the members of the external review panel:

– Normative documents relating to external reviews EO or educational programme(-s)

- Standards and guidelines for international accreditation of IAAR abroad (based on ESG)

– Self-assessment report provided in the framework of the accredited EO or educational programme(-s)

– Information about the composition of the review panel

– The schedule (programme) of the site visit in EO

– Additional information about the educational programme or educational organisation (upon request of the external review panel members)

Review of the self-assessment report of the accredited EO or EP

Upon receipt of the self-assessment report (SAR) of the educational programme (a cluster of programmes) accredited by IAAR, copies of the SAR are sent to the expert panel no later than 6 weeks before the date of the visit.

Every panel member must carefully study the SAR and write a review (except for the employer and the student) according to the requirements of IAAR.

Preliminary meeting of EEP

The preliminary meeting of the EEP is held with a view to mutually agree and have the responsibilities of the EEP members being allocated by the Chair, discuss the programme of the EEP visit, the report on the institutional or programme self-assessment to identify key issues and matters requiring additional information.

The preliminary meeting of the EEP is held according to the programme the day before the visit to the EO. Only EEP members shall be present at the meeting.

The preliminary meeting will consider the following questions:

– Does the SAR contain sufficient information regarding all aspects specified in Guidelines at the level of EO or a programme?

– What additional information on the programme(-s) under review should be provided?

– To what extent is the specificity of the programme(-s) under review reflected?

– Are strategic purposes achieved?

– Are the mechanisms of strategic management of the EO clearly defined within the framework of the accredited educational programme (s)?

– Are the problems related to the realisation of the programme(-s) under review clearly formulated? Have any concrete ways to address the problems been presented?

– What are the main lines of inquiry which need particularly to be addressed during the site visit?

The chair of the external review panel and the panel members should discuss their impressions gained from the pre-visit information so that they can identify any additional documentation which they would like to have access to, as well as determine the basic structure and strategy of the site visit.

Recommendations for scheduling the expert panel work

The EO submits to IAAR of the expert panel a preliminary schedule of events planned during the visit.

The agenda of the site-visit should be well-planned in order to make schedule more efficient. The planned meeting should provide opportunity for crosschecking the facts provided in the self-assessment report.

The timetable should include meetings with institutional management, department chairs, employees, students, postgraduate students, graduates and representatives of professional associations.

When planning the site visit, it should be kept in mind that the review panel should have a sufficient amount of time for conducting panel meetings at which the panel members can review the evidence presented, draw and discuss preliminary findings, as well as decide the basic structure and agenda of the following meetings and interviews with key institution and programme personnel and stakeholders. The panel should also have a reasonable amount of time for the panel to meet with the Institution's staff members and students individually.

The site visit timetable of EO for the external evaluation of the review panel should also include the information on participants from the educational institution.

To use the time allocated for the site visit with maximum benefit, the panel may be divided in smaller teams for conducting meetings and interviews at the Institution.

Meetings and interviews on site

During meetings and interviews with representatives of the educational institution the panel checks information provided by the institution in the self-assessment report. The planned meeting should provide opportunity for crosschecking of the facts.

Results of the meetings and interviews provide the basis for evaluation of an educational programme (a cluster of programmes). For this purpose, each panel member is provided with reference tables with the review criteria.

Meeting with the managerial staff

Meeting with the managerial staff is aimed at getting general information about the activity of the educational institution, mechanisms of quality assurance policy, the fulfillment of regional and national requirements in quality assurance.

In the course of interaction, the parties discuss issues of the involvement of all the stakeholders (administrative bodies, teaching staff, students and employers) in determining goals and the development strategy of the educational institution and separate educational programmes.

Meetings with department heads

Interviews with department heads are aimed at the discussion of issues related to the development and implementation of the programme(-s) under review, as well as research activities and general management.

The optimum number of group discussions participants is from five to fifteen people.

Meetings with students

Students are a valuable source of information, though students' opinions should be compared with the information provided by the teaching staff.

From interviews with students, the panel gain impressions on the amount of the workload, the level of teachers' professional competency, consistency and coherence of the study programmes, clarity of goals and objectives, curriculum design, as well as on the material resources available for carrying out the educational process.

Interviews with students should be conducted in a safe atmosphere, at the meetings organised for communication of the panel with students only. The optimum number of students for the meeting – no more than twenty people. The students invited to the meeting should study the programme under review.

It is advised that it's the panel members who are to carry out the selection of student candidates for the meeting.

Meetings with the teaching staff

During the meetings and interviews with the teaching staff issues connected with the delivery of the educational programme (cluster of programmes) as well as research, mobility, resources and financing are discussed.

Also, themes/questions are raised that have been earlier discussed at meetings with students.

The preferred number of participants is 15-25 people.

Meeting with undergraduates and doctoral students

A survey of undergraduates and doctoral students provides information on the continuity and sequence of educational levels; the role of research at every level of education; quality and availability of material and technical resources for research.

The expert panel should include undergraduates, doctoral students of different years of study, graduates of the educational programme being accredited (clusters of programmes).

Meeting with graduates

Graduates are a very important source of information. Opinions of graduates provide information on satisfaction with the level of education, the realisation of expectations in promotion and salary increase, employment opportunities and opportunities for further education.

Interviews should be conducted in the absence of teaching staff so that respondents can express their opinions. The optimal number of group members is up to 25 people. The group must include graduates who have studied the accredited educational programme (cluster of programmes) (in the case of programme accreditation).

Meeting with employers

The key issue that should be discussed during the meetings with employers is the level of competence of graduates of the programme (cluster of programmes) under review, demand for the graduates on the regional labor market. The problems of cooperation and interaction with the educational organisation in the field of management, agreeing the content of the educational programme and quality evaluation are also discussed at the meetings.

Teaching staff members are not supposed to participate in the meeting. The group of employers must include representatives of organisations that regularly employ graduates of the programme (a cluster of programmes) in question. If possible, employer organisations should not be represented by former students of the institution offering the education programme under review.

The optimal number of group participants is 15-25 people.

Summing up and preparation of recommendations

Summing up in accordance with the evaluation table "Institutional or programme profile parameters" is carried out on the basis of an individual external assessment collectively.

The evaluation table “Institutional or Programme Profile Parameters” is a final document to summarise the work of EEP.

The evaluation table “Institutional or Programme Profile Parameters” allows EEP to determine the position of the EO or EP, which is evaluated for each criterion as follows:

- “Strong” is characterised by a high level of indicators of one criterion of international accreditation. This position of this criterion makes it possible to serve as an example of good practice for dissemination among other EOs.
- “Satisfactory” is determined by the average level of indicators of one criterion of international accreditation and means compliance with the creteria.
- “Suggests Improvement” is characterised by a low level of performance of one criterion of international accreditation.
- “Unsatisfactory” means that indicators of EO or EP does not meet the criteria of international accreditation.

Based on a collegial decision on the results of the assessment, EEP prepares a report with recommendations on accreditation for the AC and on improving the quality of the EO or EP.

EEP makes the following recommendations for the Accreditation Council:

- accredit the EO or EP for a term of 1/3/5/7 years (in case of re-accreditation the panel may recommend other terms);
- do not accredit EO or EP.

In case of compliance of the EO or EP with the standards of IAAR, EEP makes a recommendation on quality improvement.

In case of non-compliance of the EO or EP with the IAAR Standards, EEP recommends defining the measures necessary to bring the EO or the EP into conformity with the IAAR Standards.

The final meeting of the external expert panel members with representatives of the educational organisation

The chair of the external expert panel should clearly and laconically present the key issues, which are important for effective realisation of educational programmes (clusters of programmes), point out advantages and disadvantages of the educational programme

in question, propose alternative ways of solving identified problems and recommendations on the plan of actions aimed at improving the quality of the educational programme (the cluster of programmes).

Conclusions on the results of the review should not be mentioned. There is no discussion on the findings of the review.

Working facilities for the review panel

For the time of the site visit the educational organisation must provide the review panel with a separate working room as a place for panel meetings and review sessions. For the whole time of the site visit only panel members will have access to the room.

The room for the panel work should be spacious and separated from other rooms, and contain a big table for the documents, a table for the panel collegiate work, and be equipped with a telephone with international access, and a computer with an access to the Internet, and a printer.

All the documentation related to the external review process including the list of the teaching staff members, curricula, work programmes, student works, research papers, catalogues, leaflets, etc. should be gathered in the specified working room.