National Centre for Public Accreditation

SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

2018
Yoshkar-Ola, Russia

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The procedure for accreditation in the Russian Federation was enacted in the Law on Education in 1992. However, quality assurance in higher education was put into practice in 1995, when the first state accreditation agency was established, and the first procedure of state accreditation was conducted. Since then the system of quality assurance in Russia has undergone significant changes and transformation. In particular, along with the state accreditation agency, which carries out the state accreditation of study programmes, independent organizations began to emerge, which offered a voluntary procedure of professional-public accreditation (hereinafter referred to as public accreditation).

The autonomous non-profit organization the National Centre for Public Accreditation (NCPA), established in 2009, was one of the first independent accreditation agencies in the country, which based its procedures on Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). NCPA has established itself as a reputable and trusted accreditation agency with the mission of promoting quality culture in Russian higher education and has been recognized as such nationally and internationally.

NCPA is a learning organization with the focus on the quality enhancement of its own activities. Internal self-assessment and external evaluation are paramount to its development. With this objective in view NCPA applied for external evaluation seeking to renew its full membership in ENQA as well as its continued registration in EQAR.

The self-assessment procedure is a preliminary stage of external evaluation coordinated by ENQA. The SAR contains all the necessary information and documentary evidence of compliance with the ESG Standards Part 2 and 3. Besides, the SAR reflects the main changes, which have been introduced in the procedures and documentation of NCPA since the previous ENQA's evaluation in 2014. The SAR covers the period from January 2014 to November 2018.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR)

The self-assessment procedure was conducted according to the following plan of action.

Table 1 – Action plan

Date	Action
May 2018	Decision of the NCPA staff to initiate the external evaluation procedure
May 2018 – June 2018	Developing the action plan for the preparation of the SAR Collecting internal and external feedback for the SAR
July 2018 – September 2018	Collecting internal and external feedback for the SAR Self-evaluation procedure
September 2018	Agreeing on the Terms of Reference
October 2018 – November 2018	Collecting internal and external feedback, discussion and approval of the SAR
November 2018- December 2018	Translation into English and publication of the SAR on the website
December 2018 – February 2019	Preparation for the visit of the External Panel
March 2019	Visit of the External Panel

In order to prepare the SAR a special working group headed by Director V. Navodnov and Deputy Director G. Motova was appointed. NCPA developed a road map, which specified the responsibilities of each member of the working group.

The working group met once a week to reflect on the progress.

As part of the procedure a survey of stakeholders was conducted. The survey was aimed at receiving feedback from the representatives of professional associations and organizations, members of the students' unions, members of the National Accreditation Board and others

about their opinion on NCPA's activities and its contribution to the quality assurance of higher education. (the SAR, Section 11 and Annex 4).

The SAR was approved at the NCPA's general meeting on 12 December 2018.

3. HIGHER EDUCATION AND QA OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AGENCY

NCPA provides accreditation services to higher education institutions and institutions of further professional education.

The Russian system of higher education is regulated by the new version of the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" of 29.12.2012 No 273.

Since 2012 the following main changes into the Law have been introduced:

– Federal State Educational Standards have been amended in order to include Occupational Standards;
– The functions of the state and public bodies in quality assurance of education have been differentiated;
– The concepts of independent evaluation of the quality of education, public and professional accreditation have been determined;
– The concepts of network, distance and e-learning have been introduced into the Law;
– Particular emphasis has been made on creating accessible educational environment for special needs persons;
– International academic mobility has been given a greater prominence.

These changes have been taken into account in NCPA's accreditation procedures. Thus, when applying for accreditation the educational institution identifies the professional standards, which are applicable in its study programmes. During the accreditation procedure the external experts scrutinize the documents (curricula, syllabi, working programmes, etc), hold meetings with stakeholders. NCPA's standards take into account the occupational standards[1].

The Federal State Educational Standards[2] include:

1) requirements to the contents of education;

2) requirements to the conditions of study programmes delivery;

3) requirements to the student learning outcomes.

In compliance with the Federal State Educational Standards the Federal Educational and Methodological Associations develop sample study programmes, which serve as a model for HEIs to develop their own programmes.

In May 2018 the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation was reorganized and two independent bodies were formed: the Ministry of Public Education with the responsibility for preschool and secondary school education, and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation.

At the moment the Ministries are developing their structures, functions and staff composition.

By the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of July 2018 the Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor) was separated from the Ministry of Education and is now an independent state body of executive power. Rosobrnadzor is subordinated to the Government of the Russian Federation.

Rosobrnadzor carries out the state accreditation of study programmes for compliance with the Federal State Educational Standards. Rosobrnadzor functions as a federal body for control over the performance and quality of programmes delivered by educational institutions. It also supervises the regional education authorities, licensing in the sphere of education and nostrification of foreign documents of education.

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[1] Occupational standards are the description of the qualifications necessary to carry out a certain type of professional activity, including the fulfillment of a certain labor function. https://ncpa.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=251&Itemid=375&lang=en

[2] Federal State Educational Standards (FSES) are a set of requirements that are mandatory for the implementation of basic educational programs of higher education (HE) by educational institutions having state accreditation (https://ncpa.ru/images/pdf/fgos_eng.pdf)

Public accreditation is implemented by independent accreditation organizations (NCPA being one of them (Fig.1).
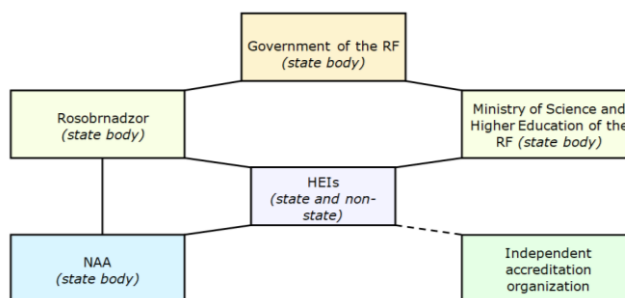

Figure 1 – QA system of higher education in Russia

There are three kinds of HEIs in the Russian Federation: academies, institutes and universities. The type of HEI is determined by the founder.

Institute is a higher education institution which offers educational programmes of undergraduate education (mostly bachelor's programmes) in a specific field of studies.

Academy is a higher education institution, which offers educational programmes of undergraduate and graduate education and conducts fundamental and applied research mainly into one of the spheres of science and culture (for example, Agricultural Academy, Medical Academy, Economics Academy, Music Academy).

University is a higher education institution that offers educational programmes of undergraduate and graduate education according to the wide range of fields of studies, carries out fundamental and applied research into a wide range of sciences.

In the Russian Federation universities are categorized into federal and national research universities. The status of these HEIs is determined by the RF Government. 29 HEIs were assigned this status. Federal Universities train highly professional personnel and carry out research aimed at regional development in line with the requirements of World Class Universities. While national research universities train highly professional personnel and carry out research into priority areas in line with the requirements of World Class Universities.

21 HEIs participate in the government-run program "Project 5-100". The program was launched by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science and by the President's Decree No 599 of 7 May, 2012. The project aims at improving the prestige of Russian higher education and bringing at least five universities from among the project participants to the top hundred universities in the world listed in world rankings.

In the last four years the number of HEIs has considerably decreased, partly as a consequence of the measures of state control, supervision and monitoring by Rosobrnadzor. Table 2 shows the reduction of HEIs and HEIs' branches (official annual data of the Ministry of Education and Science Monitoring the effectiveness of educational institutions of higher education).

Table 2 – Number of HEIs

Academic year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of HEIs	968	887	830	769
Number of branches	1356	1229	932	692

According to the Federal Law there are the following levels of higher education:

Table 3 – Levels of higher education

Level	Duration of study	ECTS
Bachelor	4 years	240
Specialist	5 years	300
Master	2 years	120
Postgraduate	3 years	180

Quality assurance in education is a prerequisite of effective institutional performance. The key principle of the quality of education is close interrelation between internal and external quality assurance.

The Russian system of quality assurance is governed by the "Law on Education", Articles 28 and 97, and also by the regulatory acts of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. The internal quality assurance procedures include:

– Systematic monitoring and evaluation of programmes and qualifications;
– Educational resources adequate and sufficient for effective programme delivery;
– Collection, analysis and use of information ensuring the transparency of educational institutions for the public;
– Development of the HEI's internal quality assurance system;
– Involvement of students and employers in quality assurance procedures;
– Development of information systems in all spheres of institutional activities.
– Transparency for all stakeholders: students, parents, employers, the general public;
– Sustainability of the institution (development and autonomy).

External quality assurance

The Russian legislation identifies state and public and professional-public accreditation.

State accreditation confirms the compliance of the educational process with the Federal State Educational Standards (Article 92, Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" of 29.12.2012 No 273-ФЗ). State accreditation is a mandatory procedure conducted by Rosobrnadzor and its subordinate organization the National Accreditation Agency (NAA). As a result of successful state accreditation the HEI is awarded a certificate of state accreditation for a period of six years. In case of non-compliance with the Federal State Educational Standards, Rosobrnadzor issues an ordinance or orders an unscheduled inspection, suspends or withdraws accreditation.

Public and professional-public accreditation is a voluntary and independent procedure. It can be conducted by Russian, foreign and international organizations. It can use national (e.g. occupational standards) and international standards **(**Article 96, Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" of 29.12.2012 No 273-ФЗ).

NCPA carries out **programme accreditation of study programmes delivered by higher education institutions** against 10 standards of NCPA developed in compliance with ESG, the requirements of occupational standards and the labour market and in line with the Federal State Educational Standards.

NCPA carries out **programme accreditation of study programmes delivered by further education institutions** against 7 standards of NCPA developed in compliance with ESG, the requirements of occupational standards and the labour market, in line with the "Procedure of implementing educaitonal activity on further professional educational progammes" from 01.07.2013 No 499.

NCPA carries out **institutional accreditation of further educational institutions** against 7 standards of NCPA Institutional accreditation establishes the compliance of the institution of further professional education with the NCPA's standards and criteria of public accreditation.

The outcomes of public accreditation are taken into account:

- in state accreditation procedures;
- in monitoring and supervision procedures;
- in distributing admission quotas.

The outcomes of such accreditation may also be relevant for promoting the image of a HEI in the international arena, thus facilitating the cooperation between HEIs at the national and international levels.

Public accreditation is viewed by HEIs as one of the effective mechanisms of educational quality management.

The priority project "Development of Export Potential of the Russian Education System" was launched in Russia in May 2017. The project is aimed at enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of Russian education on the international market. Public accreditation is regarded as a mechanism for attaining this aim.

As envisaged by the Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" of 29.12.2012 N 273-ФЗ the list of public accreditation bodies is currently being compiled. An automated information monitoring system of public accreditation of study programmes is in place. As of 31 October, 2018 there are 105 accreditation bodies registered in the system, NCPA being one of them.

4. HISTORY PROFILE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY

NCPA was founded in December of 2009 on the initiative of the organizations working in the sphere of quality assurance and mass communications.

The core of the team is represented by experts in quality assurance having over 20 years of experience in the field of state accreditation (as management and staff members of the National Accreditation Agency).

NCPA is an autonomous non-profit organization. NCPA performs its functions in compliance with the legislation of the Russian Federation.

The legal status of NCPA, the rights and responsibilities of its founders are regulated by the Statutes (Annex 1), the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, the Federal Law "On Non-Profit Organizations", the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" and other legislative and regulatory acts [3] and international agreements in the sphere of education, whose participant the Russian Federation is.

In 2017 NCPA was included in the list of public accreditation bodies compiled by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (http://accredpoa.ru).

NCPA's mission involves improving quality of education, forming the culture of quality in educational institutions, promoting the image of Russian education nationally and internationally by way of undertaking public accreditation of educational programmes in compliance with European standards of quality assurance using the European four-stage model[4] with due account of Russian legislation and traditions of Russian higher education.

The NCPA conducts its activities in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, Statutes of NCPA as well as the strategic development plan of the organization.

National Centre for Public Accreditation carries out the following activities:

- Accrediting educational programmes of HEIs in alignment with ESG;
- Accrediting institutions of further education;
- Accrediting programmes of further education;
- Project work;
- Raising public awareness of the quality of study programmes.

Goals and objectives and main directions of NCPA's activities are published on its official website.

The organizational structure of NCPA

The organizational structure of NCPA is presented in Figure 2.
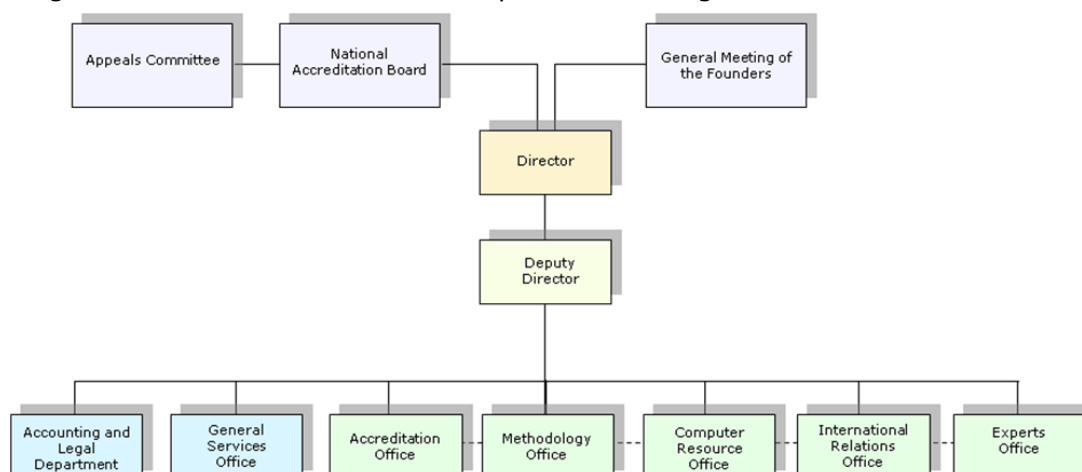

Figure 2 – NCPA's organizational chart

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[3] Legal Framework

[4] European four-stage model includes the process involving independent quality assurance organisations, an internal self-examination and an external component based on appraisal and visit by external experts and the publication of a report (taken from "Quality procedures in European Higher Education", 2003, p. 7).

The supreme managing body is a collective body the General Meeting of the Founders of the Organization. The key responsibility of the General Meeting is to assure that the Organization pursues the goals it was established to achieve.

The General Meeting of Founders elects a collegiate body – **the National Accreditation Board** for accreditation decision-making.

The National Accreditation Board comprises 30 members - representatives of academic community, students, Mass Media, employers and quality assurance bodies and associations (including international ones). The procedure of members' appointment is described in detail in the Regulations on the National Accreditation Board, section 2.

The National Accreditation Board is competent to consider and make decisions concerning the outcomes of the procedures of evaluation and accreditation of study programmes and education institutions.

In order to ensure objectivity and fairness of the decision-making of accreditation procedures the Appeals Committee of 3 members was established. Members of the Appeals Committee are elected by simple majority of votes of the members of the NCPA's founders. The Appeals Committee is formed of independent persons, who are not members of the National Accreditation Board and are not employed by NCPA. The Appeals Committee considers appeals from educational institutions. The Appeals Committee acts in compliance with the Regulations on the Appeals Procedures and the Appeals Committee.

The daily management of NCPA is carried out by Director and Deputy Director. The Director is appointed by the General Meeting of NCPA's founders.

The organizational structure comprises seven departments:

- *Accreditation Office* is responsible for support of accreditation procedures, preparation of analytical materials, summary reports and other presentation documents for the use by the National Accreditation Board for decision-making.

- *Methodology Office* is responsible for development of instructive and methodological materials on public accreditation.

- *Computer Resource Office* develops software for accreditation of educational institutions and maintains NCPA's websites; develops a unified automatic information system of the data base management of NCPA (CRM NCPA); is responsible for project design, developing and maintenance of the local automatic systems, administration and maintenance of NCPA's information and telecommunication systems.

- *International Relations Office* is responsible for cooperation with international networks for quality assurance, selection and support of international experts and translation.

- *Experts Office* is responsible for selection and training of experts for expert panels.

- *Accounting and Legal Department* forms and executes accounting policy in accordance with accountancy legislation, drafts agreements with experts and educational institutions, prepares documents for tenders in the sphere of expertise and accreditation.

- *General Services Office* is responsible for paperwork; logistics, provision of material and technical resources.

Every week the Director conducts staff meetings with the participation of all staff members, where each department accounts for its work, different issues are discussed and new tasks are set for the following week. The issues of staff development are also discussed at the meetings.

There are regular research seminars (2-3 times a month) where the issues of thematic analysis in the sphere of quality assurance are discussed.

NCPA staff members have extensive work experience in the field of quality assurance in higher education: 4 staff members –20 years; 7 staff members – over 7 years.

The NCPA's management pioneered both state and public accreditation in Russia.

Over the past five years the system of independent quality assurance has established itself as the driving force of quality assessment in higher education with NCPA as one of the key actors in the field.

NCPA has made itself more visible on the international arena by being included in EQAR and APQN, conducting joint accreditations together with European and Asian partners, and hosting international forums and conferences in the field of quality assurance (the SAR, Section 8).

EVIDENCE:

Statutes of the National Centre for Public Accreditation (Annex 1)
Regulations on the National Accreditation Board
Regulations on the Appeals Procedures and the Appeals Committee
NCPA's website

5. HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE ACTIVITY OF THE AGENCY

NCPA undertakes regular quality assurance activities on the programme and institutional levels including joint accreditation procedures of study programmes with foreign QA agencies and associations.

In the period of 2014-2018 485 study programmes from 45 educational institutions were accredited, including 372 higher education programmes, 48 further education programmes, 61 postgraduate programmes and 4 vocational education programmes. Since 2016 NCPA has started accrediting study programmes of foreign HEIs.

NCPA carried out joint accreditation procedures together with foreign accreditation agencies: evalag (Germany) – 9 study programmes of 2 HEIs; ACQUIN (Germany) – 3 study programmes; HEEACT (Taiwan) – 2 study programmes; HEEC (China) – 9 clusters of programmes in Russian and Chinese HEIs.

The principles set forth in the following documents underpin the international accreditation procedures: the System of Internal Quality Assurance, Code of Ethics, and Code of Ethics for Members of External Review Panels. All people involved share the values outlined in these documents and take responsibility for joint accreditation procedures.

Preparing for international and joint accreditation procedure NCPA and a partner-agency develop joint guidelines and internal regulatory documents taking into consideration national and international requirements to international accreditation procedures and the operative principles of both agencies.

Conducting joint accreditation procedures is one of priority directions of NCPA. It facilitates the development of quality assurance systems and ensures the transparency of external quality evaluation of study programmes and institutions. There is a separate set of guidelines for each joint accreditation procedure (Annex 8)

6. PROCESSES AND THEIR METHODOLOGIES

The main activities the Agency performs are described in Section 4 of the SAR.

The procedures of public accreditation of study programmes are regulated by the Russian legislation in the sphere of education and the main principles and documents of the Bologna process.

Public accreditation (national, international, joint) of study programmes of higher and further professional education delivered by higher education institutions

Step 1. Application

An educational institution submits an application to NCPA for public accreditation of a study programme(s). The application is considered by the Directorate for one week. Should there be discrepancies in the applicant programme(s) and NCPA's requirements (Regulations on Public Accreditation, Section 1.7) the application for the accreditation procedure is denied.

After filing the application NCPA appoints a coordinating person from among the staff members, and the educational institutions appoints a person responsible for accreditation. NCPA agrees the dates of the site visit of the External Review Panel a week after the application is filed, develops the draft agreement between NCPA and the educational institution undergoing accreditation and sends it to the applicant institution for signing.

The preliminary stage of accreditation is public opinion research into the candidate institution for accreditation. The public opinion may be collected based on NCPA's project Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia, or on recommendations of field associations or

regional professional associations. The letters of recommendation[5] for accreditation of study programmes are sent to NCPA.

Step 1* (applicable only in case of joint accreditation)

When conducting public accreditation of study programmes jointly with a foreign QA agency there is a procedure of aligning NCPA's standards and terms of reference with those of the partner-agency (duration of site visit, number of meetings, mutual obligations, order and procedure of external evaluation, etc). European agencies follow ESG and NCPA uses ESG in its standards, as practice shows, it is not difficult to align and agree on the set of joint standards and criteria (Annex 8).

Step 2. Self-evaluation of study programmes

Within one week after the agreement becomes effective the Coordinator emails to the educational institution all the legal and methodological documentation on execution of self-evaluation and development of the self-evaluation report of educational programme(s); registers the educational institution in the Automated Support System and provides the person responsible for accreditation with a login and password.

The educational institution organizes and conducts self-evaluation of the study programmes to be accredited for compliance with the NCPA's standards.

The person responsible for accreditation prepares the self-evaluation report and enters additional information about the study programmes into the System (admission data, leading teachers and achievements).

The Coordinator provides briefings to the educational institution related to the issues arising in the process of preparation for accreditation.

The self-evaluation report is submitted to NCPA via the System in Russian and English (if necessary) not less than 35 days before the external review of a study programme.

The Coordinator previews the self-evaluation report for the consistency of its structure and content and correspondence to the NCPA's requirements and provides commentaries and recommendations, if necessary.

NCPA has the right to return the self-evaluation report to the educational institution for follow-up revision.

Step 3. External evaluation of study programmes

External evaluation of study programmes is carried out by an External Review Panel with a site visit to an educational institution and preparation of the Final Report on the outcomes of the review.

In order to conduct the external review of a study programme NCPA forms a Review Panel of 4-5 independent experts: qualified academic experts, representatives of the professional community (employers) and a student representative (undergraduates/postgraduates). Selection criteria are available in the Regulations on Public Accreditation. In case of international or joint accreditation the Review Panel includes 1-2 foreign experts. Since 2009 when NCPA began its work participation of foreign experts has been among the priorities of the agency. The duration of a site visit is 2-3 days. Upon the completion of the site visit the Review Chair holds the final meeting of the External Review Panel and representatives of the educational institution under review speaking about the preliminary results of the external review of the study programme. NCPA issues a certificate of the external evaluation of the study programme(s) and awards it at the final meeting. Based on the analysis of the self-evaluation report, presented documentation and evidence, interviews with representatives of the professional community, students, management and staff of the educational institution the External Review Panel prepares the Final Report and enters it into the Automated Support System. The Coordinator makes the Final Report available to the person responsible for accreditation in the system no later than a month after the site visit. Within a week after the access to the Final Report is provided the educational institution is supposed to check it for factual and technical errors and send its comments to NCPA.

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[5] Available upon request.

Step 4. Making an accreditation decision

Based on the analysis of the documents and the data provided by the educational institution, Self-Evaluation Report and Final Report NCPA prepares informational and analytical materials (Summary Report), publishes them on its website in Russian and English and submits to the National Accreditation Board for deciding on public accreditation of a study programme.

The National Accreditation Board is a collegiate body of NCPA that considers issues related to accreditation and makes decisions on accreditation of study programme(s). The decision on accreditation of a study programme or denial of accreditation and on the terms and conditions of accreditation as well as the terms and conditions of public accreditation shall be taken by the National Accreditation Board based on Summary Reports prepared by NCPA. The National Accreditation Board makes one of the following decisions: (Regulations on Public Accreditation, Section 5):

− to accredit for a full term (6 years);

− to accredit for a reduced term (4 or 2 years). In this case the institution has to rectify deficiencies;

− to deny accreditation.

Upon the decision on accreditation the educational institution is awarded the Accreditation Certificate of public accreditation of the study programme(s) for the period of up to 6 years.

Step 5. Appeals

In case of a breach of the accreditation procedure the educational institution has a right to apply about its disagreement with the accreditation decision (denial of accreditation) on the study programme, or with the dates and conditions of accreditation to the independent Appeals Committee. The appeals procedure is stipulated in the agreement with the educational institution. Educational institutions can file an application with the chairperson of the Appeals Committee. Within one month after the receipt of the appeal from the educational institution the Appeals Committee considers if breaches of the accreditation procedure and/or evidential errors exist. The Appeals Committee requests copies of all documents used in the course of accreditation including the materials prepared by the National Centre for Public Accreditation, the educational institution and the External Evaluation Panel. The meeting of the Appeals Committee is closed and can be run using interactive communication technologies (videoconference, video call, Skype, etc.). The meeting of the Appeals Committee is authorized (has quorum) if more than a half of the Appeals Committee members took part in the meeting. Decision on the appeal is taken on the basis of a unanimous decision of the Appeals Committee members (if a quorum is present) and recorded in the report signed by the Chairperson or member of the Appeals Committee acting as chairperson. The Appeals Committee informs the National Accreditation Board about an incoming appeal and on the decision on the appeal within 14 work days. The Appeals Committee sends a written notice on the decision taken to the educational institution within 14 work days after the decision has been taken. (Regulations on the Appeals Procedure and the Appeals Committee).

Step 6. Follow-up

After the National Accreditation Board makes a decision on Accreditation of a study programme NCPA within a month informs the educational institution and the members of the Review Panel on the decision made, enters the information of accredited study programmes in the Register of accredited programmes, carries out post-accreditation monitoring as per Section 8 of the Regulations on Public Accreditation. In case of a reduced term of Accreditation (less than 6 years) the educational institution has to: submit to NCPA a plan of actions (road map) on addressing recommendations of the External Review Panel and the National Accreditation Board 60 days after a decision on accreditation. NCPA examines the plan for 15 days and informs the educational institution about necessary changes; submit to NCPA a report on corrective actions which have been undertaken to address the recommendations in accordance with the plan. After considering the Report on corrective actions at a meeting of the National Accreditation Board a decision may be taken on extending the accreditation term for 2 years (in certain cases, an additional site visit by 1-2 experts could be recommended). In case of a failure of the institution to submit to NCPA a plan of actions (road map) within 60 days, NCPA has the right to suspend or retract accreditation. In case of a full term accreditation (6 years) the educational institution has to submit to NCPA a plan on improvement of the study

programme (cluster of programmes) with the account of comments and recommendations of the External Review Panel (if available) within a month after the decision on accreditation. On the expiry of the full period of accreditation (6 years) the educational institution has the right to apply for re-accreditation. In this case the educational institution delivering the study programme is required to include the information on how the recommendations of the External Review Panel (if applicable) have been addressed by the programme. NCPA keeps a register of accredited study programmes, which serves as a tool for monitoring the implementation of decisions of the National Accreditation Board. NCPA in advance (no less than a month) reminds the educational institution to submit the report on corrective actions and sends guidelines on the preparation of the report on corrective actions to the educational institution. In case of the decision by the National Accreditation Board to deny accreditation of the study programme NCPA sends to the educational organization delivering the study programme an abstract of the Minutes with the justification of the decision. The abstract of the Minutes is published on NCPA's official website. The educational institution has a right to apply for re-accreditation not less than a year after the first application. The application is reviewed according to the standard procedure.

Step 7. The use of accreditation results

The educational institution delivering the accredited study programmes has a right to publish information about its public accreditation including the NCPA's logo on its website, on information stands, in learning and teaching materials of the relevant programmes, in information newsletters. On the basis of the outcomes of public accreditation ratings (rankings) may be compiled of accredited study programmes with the identification of educational institutions delivering these programmes. Stakeholders (secondary school leavers, students, parents) can use the information on public accreditation when making a choice of a study programme.

NCPA implemented several pilot projects of public accreditation of further education programmes delivered by further professional education institutions (Tyumen Academy of Economics, Retraining Institute) and public accreditation of further education institutions (1 project). Regulation documents are available at NCPA's website.

The procedure of public accreditation of further education programmes delivered by further professional education institutions includes the seven steps as described above, however, 7 standards are used, the accreditation term is 3 years, there is no student representative in the Review Panel.

The procedure of public accreditation of further education institutions includes the same seven steps as described above. The difference is in the application of 7 standards of public accreditation of further education institutions instead of ten standards, accreditation term is 3 years. There is no student representative in the Review Panel. When conducting institutional accreditation the focus is on the performance of the institution as a whole.

Changes in the processes and procedures of public accreditation:

It is a standard practice for NCPA to regularly review and update its regulatory documents to reflect the national and international developments in education and QA, changes in the national legislation and feedback on the conducted QA procedures from the educational institutions and stakeholders.

The following changes have been introduced by NCPA:

1. The Regulations on Public Accreditation have been reviewed (the Regulations on Public Accreditation, Section 8).
2. The Regulations on the National Accreditation Board have been reviewed and updated.
3. The transition has been made from seven standards ESG (2005) to 10 standards ESG (2015).
4. Public accreditation procedures have been provisionally subdivided into national, international and joint.
5. The transition has been made from 3 to 7 standards of public accreditation of further professional programmes delivered by further education institutions.
6. The Guidelines for External Review of Further Education Institutions have been developed and piloted.

7. NCPA'S INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

NCPA has an internal quality assurance system in place, which ensures effective management of its internal processes, accuracy, coherence and consistency of decisions. The key principle of NCPA's activity is on-going enhancement of its performance.

The core corporate values shared by all NCPA staff are:

Quality – NCPA assures the quality of its activity through the implementation of its policy of internal quality management and periodic external review of its activities. Working with the best – be the best!

Efficiency and effectiveness – NCPA achieves its goals and objectives through the optimization of material and human resources, rational use of time and cost saving.

Integrity and openness – NCPA builds relationship with all stakeholders based on the transparency of its activity, independence and impartiality of decisions.

Cooperation – NCPA promotes cooperation with all parties working for quality assurance of education. NCPA supports the accredited programmes after the procedure. We become responsible, forever, for those we have accredited.

Accountability – NCPA provides credible, accessible and up-to-date information on the quality of education.

Proactive position - NCPA takes initiative in developing and implementing quality assurance in practice. Every day take a step forward!

Tolerance – NCPA guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination of participants of accreditation procedures by applying uniform criteria for evaluation in all the cases.

The system of internal quality assurance and procedures of external evaluation of educational programmes are based on continuous improvement of the quality of procedures and standards of NCPA. The agency's goal is to achieve compliance of its activity with needs and expectations of every internal and external stakeholder, which provides a basis for continuous improvement of quality.

The system of internal quality assurance is an integral part of NCPA's general management system, which includes the following documents, processes and resources:

The strategic document "Internal Quality Assurance System" outlines the key goals and priorities in quality assurance and describes the internal management and operation of the agency.

Internal quality assurance processes are regulated by internal documents: job descriptions, regulations on structural subdivisions, internal code of professional conduct, etc.

The regulating documents are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Thus, in 2017 a new document the Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct for NCPA Staff was developed.

The internal quality assurance is implemented in all spheres of NCPA's activities. The continuous quality control is exercised by heads of departments throughout the year. The periodic quality control includes regular (at least twice a year) meetings of NCPA's directorate with the heads of the departments and staff members on issues related to the performance of their functions.

NCPA is subject to regular checks and audits by external bodies of control and supervision.

The quality of evaluation procedures is ensured by a thoroughly developed procedure of public accreditation and the monitoring of its implementation.

The internal and external feedback tool *Corrector-NCPA* is used to monitor the internal quality. The *Corrector-NCPA* describes the internal and external feedback mechanisms at every step of the accreditation procedure.

Table 4. Corrector-NCPA

The internal and external feedback tool «Corrector-NCPA» is used to monitor the internal quality.

	Mechanisms of collecting information	Sources of information	Methods of collecting information
Information collection	Internal mechanism for collecting information from administration, review coordinators, external review panels and members of the National Accreditation Board	NCPA's staff	At weekly operative meetings procedures of public accreditation executed by NCPA are discussed
		Coordinators of external reviews	Information exchange on organization of visits to educational institutions at weekly operative meetings
		NCPA's administration, NCPA's staff	Oral reports on business trips and research visits abroad at weekly operative meetings
		Members of the National Accreditation Board	Harmonization and discussion of NCPA's procedural documentation
	External mechanism for collecting feedback information from experts and educational institutions undergoing accreditation	Members of the External Review Panel	NCPA surveys and analyzes opinions of members of External Review Panels (Russian experts, foreign experts, representatives of professional community, students)
		Educational institutions which underwent external review	NCPA surveys and analyzes opinions of representatives of educational institutions which underwent external review
		International experts	NCPA maintains contacts with foreign experts who participate in expert procedures
		Expert community	Annual discussion of quality of experts' activities and development prospects
		Academic community	Survey and discussion of opinions of academic community on the issues of quality assurance
Corrective actions	NCPA uses the internal mechanism of change to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement of its activity	ERP members, coordinators of a HEI, international experts, academic and expert community	Preparation of draft documents with the account of comments and recommendations; document approval at National Accreditation Board meeting and revision of documents
	Evaluation, analysis and enhancement of NCPA's activity	Director	On the basis of feedback from stakeholders recommendations for correcting NCPA's activity are prepared; the recommendations are approved by NCPA's administration and are submitted for discussion and approval by the National Accreditation Board

It also includes regular staff surveys, which are analyzed and brought to attention of NCPA's Director for decision-making (Annex4).

The opinions of stakeholders are of primary importance for NCPA. Stakeholder feedback on all the aspects of NCPA's performance is collected in different ways: surveys of national and international experts and representatives of HEIs, questionnaires conducted during conferences, seminars and webinars and face-to-face meetings.

High quality of accreditation procedures is ensured by highly professional personnel. Professional development of the staff is one of NCPA's priorities. The examples of professional development of the staff can be found on p. 24 of the SAR.

In order to provide effective methodological and information support of review procedures in 2014 NCPA developed an Automated Support System of public accreditation. The system was tested in several Russian HEIs and launched in September 2016.

There are currently 32 HEIs registered in the system.

A personal account is created with a number of interactive functions. The User Manual is available at www.i-msd.ru upon request (Internal Quality Assurance System, Section 4).

Table 5 – Advantages of Automated Support System

Groups of users	Advantages and possibilities of the Automated system
Staff members of the Accreditation Office	− planning and control of HEI's work on preparation for accreditation; − carrying out joint work on preparation of a HEI for self-evaluation and accreditation: developing a review schedule; examining evidence, etc.
Representatives of a HEI	− uploading information about a HEI, leading teachers, developing a review schedule, downloading regulating documents on expert procedures (guidelines and draft documents), generating and printing out documents; − availability of a self-evaluation report template; − access to review outcomes (the Final Report of the External Review Panel).
Experts	− updates on information and documents; − downloading necessary operative documents: the HEI's self-evaluation report, annexes; site visit schedule, composition of the External Review Panel; − changing personal data (if necessary); − notification about the changes in the sections.

NCPA's programmers have developed the NCPA CRM system, which includes a list of academic experts, representatives of professional community and students; a reference list of HEIs and study programmes.

All information uploaded into the System is available to all NCPA departments. The information is regularly updated. The System allows NCPA to timely respond to the needs of experts and HEI representatives.

The feedback from experts demonstrated a high level of user satisfaction with the System (Annex 4).

At present the NCPA developers are working on the expansion of functions including the English version of the interface.

EVIDENCE:

Internal Quality Assurance System.

Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct for NCPA's Staff (Internal Quality Assurance System, Section 5).

User Manual "Automated Support System of Public Accreditation" (Available in Russian on request).

Regulations and Guidelines of NCPA

Automated Support System

Survey of Experts and NCPA's Staff (Annex 4, 7)

8. NCPA'S INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Involvement in internationalization and integration of the Russian system of higher education in European and world higher education area, awareness of global changes in the sphere of quality assurance constitute an integral part of NSPA's activity. International cooperation is carried on in accordance with the mission statement, goals and objectives of the agency.

NCPA is a full member of the following networks and associations:

− International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) – full member since 2011;
− European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) – full member since 2014;

– Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) – full member since 2010;
– Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education, CEENQA – full member since 2010;
– Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence (IREG) – full member since 2013.

NCPA takes part in General Assemblies, conferences, forums, seminars and projects organized by these networks.

NCPA staff have wide experience of international activity in quality assurance. The Director and the Deputy Director have been among the founders and board members of international networks. Thus, for example, Dr. V. Navodnov represented NCPA as one of CEENQA founders, Deputy-Director Dr. G. Motova was a CEENQA steering committee member from 2006 to 2010, and since 2016 until the present time she has been an active member of the APQN Board responsible for the publication of APQN's annual conference proceedings.

NCPA is an active participant of international working and project groups on the issues of quality assurance, it regularly contributes to ENQA, CEENQA and APQN newsletters, and takes part in discussions of QA documents and materials. Thus, NCPA contributed to the preparation of the collection of materials The Concept of Excellence in Higher Education, which was published as a result of joint effort of ENQA's working group on excellence. Among the authors were G. Motova and O. Matveeva of NCPA.

In 2014 in St. Petersburg NCPA hosted the annual ENQA forum, and in 2017 in Moscow NCPA welcomed the annual APQN Conference and General Assembly.

NCPA actively cooperates with QA agencies in Europe and Asia. Within the framework of bilateral agreements the agencies nominate experts for External Review Panels and participate in joint accreditation procedures organized by NCPA. In its turn NCPA nominates Russian experts for accreditation of foreign HEIs and study programmes. This type of cooperation promotes internationalization of all NCPA's activities in the sphere of external quality evaluation. The agency concluded Memorandums of Understanding with 23 QA agencies from Europe and Asia (Annex 5).

Three NCPA's staff members were trained as ENQA experts and were included in the External Review Panels when evaluating QA agencies in Poland, Bulgaria and Romania and HEIs in Kazakhstan (2015) and Sri-Lanka (2018).

NCPA carries out international project and research work in the sphere of quality assurance. From 2013 to 2017 NCPA was involved in the EU project TEMPUS IV (EACEA 35/2012) ALIGN (Achieving and checking the alignment between academic programmes and qualification frameworks).

NCPA actively disseminates the ideas and principles of ENQA and EQAR at the national and international levels:

- Standards and Guidelines ESG (2015) were translated into Russian (available at https://enqa.eu) and disseminated among stakeholders;
- ENQA and EQAR activities are made public in "*Accreditation in Education"* journal and "*Vestnik Akkreditatsii"* news bulletin;
- ESG standards are used in NCPA's accreditation procedures;
- NCPA's staff members promote ENQA's and EQAR's values and disseminate ideas and good practices of these networks nationally and internationally (APQN conferences of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, forums, seminars, conferences, round tables on the issues of quality assurance and higher education development in Russia);
- NCPA is an active participant of surveys and projects and also contributes to ENQA and CEENQA newsletters.

At the same time NCPA shares information and its own experience of evaluation procedures by presenting at international QA forums, conferences and seminars. In June 2017 the National Accreditation Board was attended by the President of the High Council for Evaluation of Research, Michel Cosnard, and the Director of the European and International Department (HCERES), François Pernot. NCPA's international cooperation is a dynamic field with a potential for further development. Thanks to its geographical position Russia and its QA system is represented in both European and Asian networks. NCPA presents a unique platform for information and experience exchange between the two regions and effectively uses this

opportunity. Thus, two analytic articles on QA systems in India and China have been published. These countries have higher education systems comparable in scope with the Russian higher education system.

NCPA is a holder of international awards: APQN Quality Award 2018 of International Cooperation in QA, Champion in QA (V. Navodnov).

The agency is planning to expand its participation in international Erasmus+ projects, promote staff visits to partner QA agencies in order to exchange good practices and carry out joint research into QA of higher education, publish and disseminate research outcomes nationally and internationally.

9. COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (PART 3)

9.1 ESG Standard 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

Standard:

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

The main function of NCPA is conducting external evaluation of HEIs and study programmes on a regular basis, which is implemented in accordance with its mission, principles, goals and objectives. Accreditation Board meets twice a year in January and June. All the accreditation procedures are implemented in the period from September to December and from February to May.

In order to attain the set goals NCPA undertakes the following activities (the SAR, Section 5 and 6):

– Accreditation (national, international, joint) of educational programmes of HEIs in alignment with ESG.
– Accreditation (national, international, joint) of institutions of further education;
– Accreditation (national, international, joint) of programmes of further education;
– Project work;
– Raising public awareness of the quality of study programmes.

The main principles of NCPA's external quality evaluation are: high quality of expert procedures; public nature of external evaluation procedures; voluntary basis of accreditation procedures; independence; objectivity and competence; transparency, validity and relevance of information on QA procedures; regularity of external QA procedures; collegiality of decision-making; publicity.

All the documents regulating external QA procedures and the order of interaction between HEIs and NCPA are publicly available at NCPA's official website.

NCPA engages with the stakeholders – HEIs, experts, employers and students – through the Automated Support System.

The stakeholder survey is one of the effective tools of getting feedback from external experts, students, employers and representatives of HEIs involved in external evaluation procedures (Annex 4). The results of the surveys are taken into consideration in order to improve QA procedures.

One of the main principles of NCPA's work is transparency. Thus, the NCPA staff regularly present about QA issues using for this purpose different platforms, such as conferences (for example, the WHO high-level conference Working together for better health and well-being) expert and public council meetings set up by executive power bodies, the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, "*Accreditation in Education*" journal, where they discuss different aspects of the Bologna process implementation (ESG, EQAR, DEQAR), international accreditation as a tool for international recognition of Russian educational programmes.

Internationalization is one of the priorities of NCPA's policy, which involves adherence to the Bologna agreements, using ESG in its QA procedures and involvement of international experts in external evaluation panels.

NCPA enjoys confidence of educational institutions and other stakeholders. This is evidenced from numerous applications for subsequent accreditation (for example, North-Caucasus Federal University, Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Far Eastern Federal University, Stavrolpol Agrarian University, St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, etc.). Personal invitations to NCPA Director, Deputy Director and staff members to present as key speakers at forums, conferences organized by governmental authorities, public academic and student associations; interview proposals on behalf of federal Mass Media. This is the only accrediting body in Russia, which is listed in three QA registers: EQAR, APQR, www.accredpoa.ru.

NCPA is working on implementing an institutional approach in its accreditation procedures. In our view it may enhance the responsibility of a HEI's administration to develop internal QA system more effectively.

EVIDENCE:

Regulations on Public Accreditation
Regulations on the National Accreditation Board
Guidelines for External Reviews of Study Programmes
Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Study Programmes
Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Further Education Programmes
Guidelines for External Review of Further Education Programmes
Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of an Institution of Further Professional Education
Automated Support System

9.2 ESG Standard 3.2 Official Status

Standard:

Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognized as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.

NCPA is an autonomous non-profit organization, which has an official status in the Russian Federation and is recognized by the competent state and public bodies.

Over the past five years some changes have been introduced into the RF Legislation (the SAR, Section 3; analytic reviews of NCPA)

In 2014 NCPA was officially included in the list of the national accrediting bodies (http://accredpoa.ru).

As and when necessary, changes are introduced in the NCPA Statutes.

The legal status of NCPA, the rights and responsibilities of the founders are determined by the Statutes, the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, the Federal Law "On the Non-Profit Organizations" the Russian Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" and other legal and normative acts, international agreements in the sphere of education, where Russia is a participant.

NCPA is a legal entity and has an independent balance sheet.

The results of NCPA's activities are recognized by different professional and public bodies (Annex 5).

In the framework of MoUs concluded with NCPA the partner-organizations can nominate experts for participation in accreditation procedures.

Over the past five years bilateral agreements on cooperation have been signed with the following public organizations:

– *Line ministries and institutions:* Ministry of Public Health of the Republic of Bashkortostan, Department of Health of Primorsky Kray;

– *Regional, national and international professional associations of employers*: international public organization the "Union of Designers", Association of Music Education Institutions, Association of Forest Education, the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Arkhangelsk Region, the Union of Architects of Russia, Interregional Association of Industrial Managers, Siberian Agency of Qualifications Development;

− *Independent educational and research organizations:* The Free Economic Society of Russia, The Russian Society "Znanie", Central Institute of Continuous Education of the Russian Society "Znanie", The Educational and Methodological Association for Education in Building;

− *Student unions:* the Russian Union of Students, the National Students' Union.

Among NCPA's priorities is extending partnerships.

EVIDENCE:

[Federal Law of the Russian Federation of December 12, 2012 No. 273 "On Education in the Russian Federation"](#)

Statutes of the National Centre for Public Accreditation (Annex 1)

[Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of 11.04.2017 No. 431](#) "On Forming and Keeping the List of Organizations Implementing Public Accreditation of the Basic Professional Study Programmes, Basic Programmes of Professional Training and (or) Further Education Programmes"

[Automated Information System for Monitoring of the results of public accreditation of study programmes](#)

[Wikipedia website](#)

NCPA's cooperation agreements (Annex 5)

9.3 ESG Standard 3.3 Independence

Standard:

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

NCPA is an independent non-profit organization, which bears autonomous responsibility for its actions in the sphere of quality assurance of education.

Organizational independence. The independence of the Agency's work from third parties such as HEIs, governments and other stakeholder organizations is determined by the Statutes (Annex 1), NCPA's internal documents and documents regulating public accreditation procedures of study programmes and HEIs of the Russian Federation.

Operational independence. NCPA bears full responsibility for its evaluation processes and the development of methods and procedures. The nomination and appointment of external experts are undertaken independently from third parties, such as HEIs, governments and other stakeholder organizations in compliance with the [Regulations on Public Accreditation](#).

External experts are selected from the database of certified experts; experts can be nominated by national and international QA agencies, professional associations of employers, Regional Rectors' Unions, regional education authorities, students' associations. The composition of the panel is agreed on with the HEI in order to avoid any possible conflict of interest. The final composition of the expert panel and the dates of the site visit are approved by the Director of NCPA. In their work the experts follow the [Code of Ethics for Members of External Review Panels](#) and sign a no-conflict of interest document.

Independence of formal outcomes. NCPA is responsible for the final outcomes of the QA processes. The educational institution is consulted with regard to removal of any possible factual errors in the Final Report. However, neither the HEI, nor any other stakeholders can influence the findings and conclusions of the External Review Panel.

The decision on public accreditation is made by the National Accreditation Board on the basis of the Final Report of the Review Panel and analytical materials (Summary Reports) prepared on the results of the external review.

Analytical materials (Summary Reports) are prepared by NCPA independently from third parties, and are considered by the National Accreditation Board. The decision on accreditation is recorded in the Minutes and the Minutes are published on NCPA's website.

The HEI has the right to appeal the decision made by the National Accreditation Board. For more detailed description of the appeals procedure refer to Section 6 Step 5 of the SAR.

Conclusions and implementation of ENQA and the register committee recommendations:

In 2014 ENQA's external evaluation panel suggested that NCPA should formalise the independence of the National Accreditation Board in a 'code of ethics' and provide more transparency in the selection of the National Accreditation Board members. Having scrutinized the application documents EQAR's Register Committee also considered that the election to the National Accreditation Board was not transparent enough. The Register Committee noted that the review report provided limited analysis of the role of the Guild of Experts in relation to the independent operations of the agency.

In June and October 2015 NCPA provided the Register Committee with clarifications on the role of the Guild of Experts and the selection of the National Accreditation Board members, which were accepted by the Register Committee and on 17 November 2015 NCPA was listed in EQAR.

In 2016 NCPA submitted a Follow-up Report to ENQA about the measures undertaken to implement the recommendations of the ENQA External Review Panel for the improvement of NCPA's performance (NCPA's Follow-up Report for ENQA)

EVIDENCE:

Federal Law of the Russian Federation of December 12, 2012 No. 273 "On Education in the Russian Federation"

Regulations of Public Accreditation

External Review Reports

Code of Ethics for Members of the National Accreditation Board

Regulations on the National Accreditation Board

NCPA's Follow-up Report.

9.4 ESG Standard 3.4 Thematic Analysis

Standard:

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

In order to enhance its performance and introduce meaningful changes at the national level NCPA carries out the following activities:

1. Analysis of changes in the Russian legislation in the sphere of higher education and QA.

2. Reflection on its own activity, searching for new ideas and solutions.

3. Comparative analysis of the higher education systems in the country and abroad and also benchmarking of Russian and international QA agencies for determining its place in the QA system, identifying new tendencies and learning good practices.

4. Meta-analysis of obtained data and developing recommendations on the improvement of QA system (research work).

5. Dissemination of accreditation and research outcomes[6] among stakeholders and the general public (publishing and project work, presenting at conferences and seminars).

NCPA operates in full compliance with the Russian legislation. The staff members examine the changes in the legal sphere of QA, especially related to licensing and accreditation, and their impact on independent processes of QA in education and adjust the activities of NCPA accordingly.

NCPA reflects on its own performance. After each accreditation procedure the NCPA staff members collect feedback from experts with the view of finding out their opinion about NCPA's practice of conducting QA procedures. NCPA also surveys HEI staff about the effectiveness of NCPA's procedures and their impact on enhancement of the institution's performance. The collected feedback is discussed at NCPA's regular staff meetings and research seminars in order to improve the agency's performance.

NCPA carries out benchmarking for examining good practices and tendencies in the sphere of QA in Russia and abroad and for determining its place in the QA system.

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[6] NCPA website, journals, Mass Media websites, conferences, seminars, public hearings.

NCPA studies recommendations and conclusions of external evaluation panels given to HEIs and programmes undergoing accreditation in order to prepare system-wide analysis for further improvement of QA procedures.

NCPA staff members carry out the meta-analysis of the data collected on different levels (legislation, higher education system, NCPA's and other QA agencies' performance) and present the findings in research papers and theses.

NCPA disseminates the outcomes of its activity, changes and amendments in the legal framework related to QA through annual reports, newsletter "*Vestnik Akkreditatsii*" news bulletin (2-3 times a year), *Accreditation in Education* journal (8 issues a year), Analytical Review (2015, 2016, 2017).

Over the past five years NCPA staff members published

– 48 research articles;

– One monograph, two issues of conference proceedings, 11 guidance manuals;

– One dissertation was defended, two dissertations are being prepared.

In the framework of the TEMPUS IV (EACEA 35/2012) ALIGN project NCPA developed the National Guidelines on Alignment and Compliance of Learning Outcomes with the National Qualifications Framework, which was approved by the Federal Institute of Education Development and the RF Ministry of Education and recommended for implementation by HEIs.

The NCPA staff present at conferences, forums, round tables, research and practical conferences of experts, meetings of public bodies and organizations.

Twice a year NCPA reports on the results of its activity at the meetings of the National Accreditation Board and the Founders' Board.

Table 6 – Thematic analysis

Subject of analysis	Regularity	What and where	Evidence
Analysis of law enforcement practices in QA in Russia	1-2 times a year	Presenting at the events organized by representatives of executive and legislative authorities	https://ncpa.ru/id=572 https://ncpa.ru/id=374 https://ncpa.ru/id=570
Analysis of legal framework and changes	2-3 times a month	*"Vestnik Akkreditatsii"*	https://ukc-nica.ru/biblioteka/vazhnye-dokumenty.html
Analysis of NCPA's performance, statistics	Once a year	*Analytical Review*	2015 2016 2017
Analysis of content and structural changes in the system of education	1-2 times a year	Peer-review journals	https://ncpa.ru/vovr11_18.pdf https://ncpa.ru/vovr4_2018.pdf https://ncpa.ru/vovr10_17.pdf https://ncpa.ru/vovr11_16.pdf https://ncpa.ru/vovr11_15.pdf https://ncpa.ru/vovr5_2015.pdf https://ncpa.ru/vos10_2015.pdf
Analysis of accreditation procedure	3-4 times a year	National and international conferences, publication of conference materials	https://ncpa.ru/images/pdf/publications/vpgtu22_2014.pdf
Analysis of NCPA's performance	2 times a year	Meetings of the National Accreditation Board, *Accreditation in Education"* Journal	http://www.akvobr.ru/mezhd_akkred http://www.akvobr.ru/itogi_mezhd_akkred https://ria.ru/abitura_rus/20160122 http://www.akvobr.ru/vysokoe_priznanie https://ria.ru/abitura/20180124 https://ria.ru/education/20170127
International tendencies in QA systems	2-3 times a year	*"Accreditation in Education"* Journal	https://ncpa.ru/avo88_2016_2.pdf https://ncpa.ru/avo79_2015.pdf https://ncpa.ru/avo88_2016.pdf https://ncpa.ru/avo104_2018.pdf https://ncpa.ru/avo103_2018.pdf https://ncpa.ru/avo100_2018.pdf

NCPA considers thematic analysis to be one of its priorities mainly because it helps identify the main trends in HE and QA development in Russia and abroad. On the one hand, NCPA identifies the trends, which enhance the Agency's activities. On the other hand, the results of NCPA's thematic analysis (publications, presentations at different levels, etc) influence the development of HE and QA system in the country.

NCPA has sufficient and adequate human potential to enhance and expand the thematic analysis.

EVIDENCE:

Annual reports (2014, 2015, 2016)
Publications of NCPA's staff
Journal «Accreditation in Education»
TEMPUS IV (EACEA 35/2012) ALIGN project

9.5 ESG Standard 3.5 Resources

Standard:

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

NCPA has adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial to efficiently and effectively carry out its activities.

NCPA is situated at 206-a Volkov Str., Yoshkar-Ola, the Republic of Mary El, Russia. The total office space occupied by the NCPA is 348,8 m^2.

NCPA has undergone through organizational and structural changes. In comparison with 2013 the staff has been reduced by 10 people. At present NCPA's staff (31 people) includes full time (16) and part time (15) personnel.

All employees have a necessary level of qualification and experience of work in the sphere of higher education. 19.3% of the staff have Doctorate (2) and Candidate of Science (4) Degrees.

The age composition is presented in Fig.3.
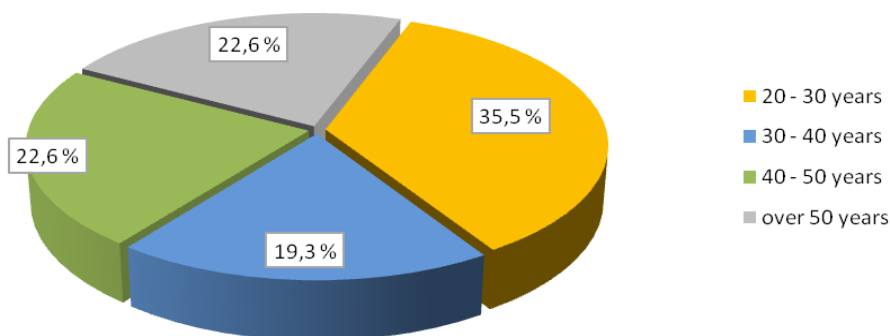
Figure 3 – Age composition of NCPA's staff

The management of NCPA pays much attention to human resource development and has put in place a robust system for ensuring that members of the staff have access to development opportunities through:

– Participation in NCPA's seminars (once a month);
– Participation in national conferences, seminars and training programmes;
– Participation in ENQA organized seminars (Deputy Director, Head of Methodology Office and Deputy Head of Accreditation Office have been trained as ENQA experts in Belgium, France and Hungary);
– Research exchange visits (Director, Head of Methodology Office (Italy, France, Romania); Head of Accreditation Office, Head of Experts Office (Austria, Greece), Deputy Director, Deputy Head of Accreditation Office (Belgium);
– Participation of NCPA's staff members in the work of External Review Panels when evaluating QA agencies in Poland, Bulgaria and Romania and HEIs in Kazakhstan and Sri-Lanka;

- Participation in EU conferences and seminars within the TEMPUS IV (EACEA 35/2012) ALIGN project (Armenia, Belgium, Ireland, Germany);
- Research;
- Attending professional training courses organized by the Council for Professional Qualifications of the Financial Market (in May, 2018 three staff members completed the programme "Expert on Public Accreditation".

There is a research school at NCPA doing research into issues of QA in education.

The management of NCPA views its staff as the most important factor in the agency's success and encourages its employees to maintain their professional development. In order to find out the level of satisfaction of the staff with the working conditions there is a regular survey of NCPA's personnel. According to the latest (2018) survey, 78% of NCPA's staff expressed their commitment to further education and training.

One of the most important conditions of NCPA's effectiveness is friendly and supportive work environment, which is created, in the first place, by the management. Thus, according to the satisfaction survey, 85% of the staff believe that they have good working relationship with their colleagues, 96.3 % consider their relationship with the Director to be good.

This is achieved due to the fact the NCPA's staff are committed to the organizational values and are result-oriented.

Information and Technical Support of NCPA's activities

NCPA's material and technical resources are regularly updated and improved. Thus, in 2018 a new webinar room was equipped.

NCPA provides equipment that is sufficient and appropriate for the organization's working requirements. Every working place at the agency is equipped with a personal computer. All working places have access to Internet.

Information support of the employees is provided through the Intranet. Data collecting operations are processed automatically through the CRM system.

According to the internal survey all NCPA's staff members (100%) are highly satisfied with the technical equipment of their working places.

NCPA maintains a website, https://www.ncpa.ru (Russian, English versions) where all the information on the agency's performance and current events in the QA sphere is published.

NCPA also has in place a data base of final reports of Review Panels and accreditation decisions on the accredited study programmes.

Financial resources

NCPA is financed through different sources. The major source is accreditation fees paid by HEIs undergoing accreditation and project activities (for example, participation in the TEMPUS IV (EACEA 35/2012) ALIGN project).
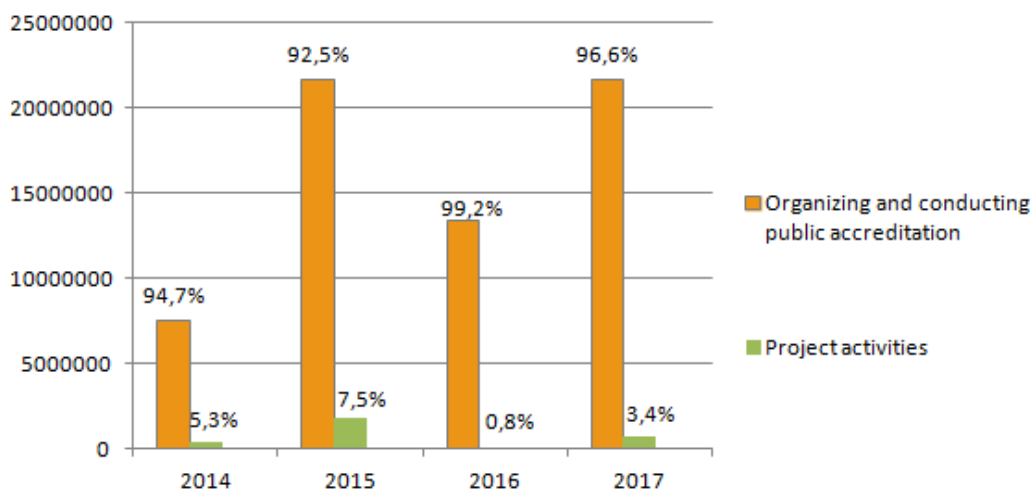
NCPA's budget (2014-2017)

Figure 4 – NCPA's Budget in 2014-2017, million rubles

In 2014 NCPA's budget came up to 7,929,877 rubles, in 2015 – 23,412,375 rubles, in 2016 – 13,525,582 rubles, in 2017 – 22,406,641 rubles (Fig. 4). Significant income differences are caused by different numbers of accreditation procedures in different periods.

NCPA's financial resources are sufficient for the current activities of the Agency. However, for the development of the agency it is necessary to increase the financial income from accreditation procedures. The number of accreditation procedures is unevenly distributed throughout the year, depending on the applications from HEIs. Increasing the income from accreditation procedures could contribute to the areas that need further development. The statistical data on the accreditation procedures are available in Annex 2 of the SAR.

EVIDENCE:

Survey of NCPA's staff (Annex 7)
NCPA's website

9.6 ESG Standard 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

Standard:

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

Based on its mission NCPA consistently implements its internal quality assurance principles laid out in the System of Internal Quality Assurance. NCPA's internal QA policy includes the main values, principles and procedures of external evaluation, quality standards, and also the Code of Ethics and the rules of professional conduct. Additionally the Agency has Code of Ethics for Members of the National Accreditation Board.

NCPA's management has additional responsibility for the maintenance of high professional standards, conscientious fulfillment of job duties by their staff.

The goals, objectives and the strategy of NCPA's development are laid out in the Strategic Plan, and in the annual action plans of the organization.

The agency takes measures against any kind of discrimination. When organizing and documenting internal processes the opinions of NCPA staff members and other stakeholders are taken into consideration.

NCPA's internal quality assurance policy is based on the following:

– NCPA's management makes sure that all staff members are competent and professional workers having adequate and relevant education and are constantly involved in professional development. Every NCPA's staff member should get familiar with the regulations on the internal quality assurance system and be guided by them in their everyday work, avoid inappropriate conduct, report to the immediate supervisor should any questions arise concerning moral and ethical issues.

– NCPA has in place different external and internal feedback mechanisms which are indispensable for enhancing the agency's performance: operational, methodological, informational. For example, the management holds weekly meetings where the staff members discuss the outcomes of external evaluation procedures and the current issues of the agency's work. All staff members take part in the regular job satisfaction survey as part of the internal quality assurance mechanism. Based on the feedback from the employees steps are taken to improve the activities of the organization.

– Internal and external communication processes have been improved in order to make collecting feedback from stakeholders more efficient. For example, to get feedback from experts NCPA has developed a questionnaire in English and in Russian. 163 experts have been surveyed. The findings are presented in Annex 4.

– In order to have an impact on the educational policy at the regional and national levels NCPA uses opportunities presented by legislative and executive bodies on their communication platforms. Thus, for example, Director and Deputy Director of NCPA present their expert point of view at the Parliamentary Hearings of the Committee on Education under the State Duma (December, 2014; October, 2018, November 2018) and at the Forums and Meetings of the Civic Chamber (October, 2017; November, 2018). Such

analytic presentations based on the research into the quality and effective evaluation of higher education promote the further development of the national educational system.

– NCPA makes sure that accreditation undertaken by NCPA provides additional status and recognition to the accredited institutions and programmes: recognition of public accreditation results by state accreditation and taking them into account when allocating admission quotas for state funded places; listing accredited programmes in NCPA's register, the Register of Ministry of Higher Education and Science and DEQAR; enhancing the programme's export potential; improving the public image of the programme.

EVIDENCE:

Internal Quality Assurance System

Survey of experts and HEIs' representatives 2014-2018 (Annex 4)

Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct for NCPA Staff (*Internal Quality Assurance System*, *Section 4*)

9.7 ESG Standard 3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies

Standard:

Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

There is no requirement for external evaluation of accreditation agencies in Russian legislation. However, NCPA undertakes external evaluation coordinated by ENQA on its own initiative in order to enhance its own quality and ensure the transparency of its activities at the national and international levels.

In 2019 NCPA will undergo ENQA's external evaluation for the second time (the first evaluation was undertaken in 2014. The Review Report of the External Evaluation Panel).

The self-evaluation exercise in preparation for the external review will enable the agency to analyze its own activities and to confirm their compliance with the ESG. It will also help to reveal the areas, which need further improvement. The external review process will give HEIs tangible evidence of the agency's credibility, reliability and adherence to the Bologna principles.

NCPA was included in EQAR in 2015 and listed the accredited programmes in DEQAR in 2018.

EVIDENCE:

Report of the Panel of the External Review of the National Centre for Public Accreditation (NCPA)

EQAR membership

NCPA's role in the DEQAR project

10. COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (PART 2)

10.1 ESG Standard 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

Standard:

External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

According to the Russian legislation, educational institutions in their autonomous capacity duly develop and adopt local regulatory documents, which describe the operation of the internal quality assurance system.

According to the Russian legislation educational institutions develop and implement their own internal quality assurance systems, which comprise the following aspects: mission statement, policy, strategy, goals and objectives of quality assurance; human, material and financial resources; mechanisms of implementation and intended outcomes.

With its mission in mind NCPA developed its standards based on ESG. These standards make it possible to assess the effectiveness of HEIs' internal quality assurance. The correlation between ESG and NCPA's standards is provided in Table 7.

Table 7 – Correlation between ESG and NCPA's standards.

ESG (Part 1)	NCPA's Standards and criteria for public accreditation of study programmes delivered by HEIs	NCPA's Standards and criteria for public accreditation of study programmes deliveredby further professional education institutions	NCPA's Standards and criteria for public accreditation of further professional education institutions
1.1. Policy for quality assurance.	Standard 1. Policy (mission, vision) and procedures for quality assurance.	Standard 1. Policy (goals, development strategy) of the education institution and the programme. Standard 6. Internal quality assurance system of the programme.	Standard 1. Policy (goals, development strategy) of the institution of further professional education. Standard 6. Internal QA system.
1.2. Design and approval of programmes.	Standard 2. Design and approval of programmes.	Standard 1. Policy (goals, development strategy) of the education institution and the programme (Criterion 2). Standard 2. The content of the programme.	Standard 2. Educational programmes Standard 4. Teaching staff and methodological support (Criterion 4). Standard 5. Organization of the educational process (Criteria 1, 3, 6, 7). Standard 6. Internal quality assurance system (Criterion 3).
1.3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment.	Standard 3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment.	Standard 5. Organization of the academic process. Standard 4. Human resources and methodological provision of the programme (Criterion 2).	Standard 5. Organization of the educational process. Standard 6. Internal quality assurance system (Criterion 4).
1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification.	Standard 4. Student admission, support of academic achievements and graduation.	Standard 7. Competitiveness of the programme (Criterion 2).	Standard 7. Competitiveness of the programme (Criteria 3, 4).
1.5. Teaching staff.	Standard 5. Teaching staff.	Standard 4. Human resources and methodological provision of the programme (Criterion 1).	Standard 4. Teaching staff and methodological support (Criterion 1).
1.6. Learning resources and student support.	Standard 6. Learning resources and student support.	Standard 3. Resource provision of the programme. Standard 4. Human resources and methodological provision of the programme (Criterion 2).	Standard 3. Resources Standard 4. Teaching staff and methodological support (Criteria 2, 3, 4).
1.7. Information management.	Standard 7. Collection, analysis and use of information for managing the study programme.	Standard 6. Internal quality assurance system of the programme.	Standard 6. Internal quality assurance system (Criteria 1, 2).

ESG (Part 1)	NCPA's Standards and criteria for public accreditation of study programmes delivered by HEIs	NCPA's Standards and criteria for public accreditation of study programmes deliveredby further professional education institutions	NCPA's Standards and criteria for public accreditation of further professional education institutions
1.8. Public information.	Standard 8. Public information.	Standard 7. Competitiveness of the programme.[7]	Standard 7. Competitiveness of programmes.[8]
1.9. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes.	Standard 9. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes.	Standard 6. Internal quality assurance system of the programme. Standard 7. Competitiveness of the programme.	Standard 6. Internal quality assurance system (Criteria 3, 4, 5). Standard 7. Competitiveness of programmes (Criterion 1).
1.10. Cyclical external quality assurance.	Standard 10. Cyclical external quality assurance of study programmes.	Are being developed	Are being developed

Standards and criteria for NCPA's public accreditation of educational programmes of higher education fully correlate with the ESG internal quality assurance procedures.

Standards and criteria for NCPA's public accreditation of educational programmes for further professional education and public accreditation of further professional education institutions take into account nine ESG standards. Currently standards and criteria are being developed, incorporating Standard 1.10. Periodic external quality assurance procedures (ESG).

The joint international accreditation procedure serves the common goal of quality evaluation of higher education study programmes and adhering to the European standards. When conducting joint international accreditation the specific legislation of relevant countries is taken into account by NCPA.

The standards and procedures of joint international accreditation comply with the current Russian legislation in the sphere of education (Federal Law of the Russian Federation of 29 December 2012 N 273-ФЗ), legislation of the country the foreign QA agency is from and the main principles and documents of the Bologna process.

The main principles of joint 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 outcomes.

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[7] *Specific criterion(a) from Standard 7. Competitiveness of the programme is impossible to single out but the assessment of the competitiveness of the programme includes the availability of complete information on the official website of the educational institution and the frequency of updates.*

[8] *Specific criterion(a) from Standard 7. Competitiveness of the programme is impossible to single out, but this standard allows us to conclude about monitoring and periodic evaluation of programmes, as it includes an analysis of benchmarking with similar programmes in other organizations; motivational mechanisms that favorably distinguish the programme from other similar programmes.*

Table 8 – Correlation between standards and criteria for joint accreditation and ESG internal quality assurance procedures

ESG (Part 1)	NCPA and evalag's (Germany) Standards and Criteria for joint accreditation of programmes delivered by HEIs	NCPA and ACQUIN's (Germany) Standards and Criteria for joint accreditation of programmes delivered by HEIs	NCPA and HEEC's (China) Standards and Criteria for joint accreditation of study programmes delivered by Chinese HEIs	NCPA and HEEC's (China) Standards and Criteria for joint accreditation of study programmes delivered by Russian HEIs
1.1. Policy for quality assurance	Standard 6. Quality assurance (Criteria 2, 3, 4)	Part 4. Quality management 4.1 Quality assurance	Standard 1. Educational objectives (Criterion 1.3) Standard 3. Curriculum (Criterion 3.4) Standard 6. Quality assurance (Criterion 6.1)	Standard 1. Policy (mission, vision) and procedures for quality assurance
1.2. Design and approval of programmes	Standard 1. Programme profile (Criteria 1-7) Standard 2. Curriculum (all criteria)	Part 1. Goals and objectives 1.2 Objectives of the study programme and learning outcomes Part 2. Concept 2.1 Study programme structure 2.2 Learning objectives, modularization, ECTS 2.3. Learning context	Standard 1. Educational objectives (Criteria 1.1, 1.2) Standard 2. Graduate outcomes (all criteria) Standard 3. Curriculum (Criteria 3.1, 3.3)	Standard 2. Design and approval of programmes
1.3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	Standard 2. Curriculum (Criteria 2, 3) Standard 4. Organisation of the study programme (Criteria 2, 3, 6, 7) Standard 6. Quality assurance (Criterion 7)	Part 2. Concept 2.3 Learning context Part 3. Implementation of the study programme 3.2 Decision-making processes, organization and cooperation *(participation of students (in decision making))* 3.5 Gender equality and equal opportunities	Standard 3. Curriculum (Criterion 3.2) Standard 4. Faculty (Criterion 4.4) Standard 7. Student development (Criterion 7.3)	Standard 3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Standard 3. Student assessment (all criteria) Standard 4. Organisation of the study programme (Criteria 1, 2)	Part 2. Concept 2.4 Admission requirements Part 3. Implementation of the study programme 3.3 The system of assessment of the students' knowledge/competencies 3.4 Transparency and documentation *(Certifying documents (certificate, diploma, Diploma Supplement…))*	Standard 7. Student development (Criteria 7.1, 7.2)	Standard 4. Student admission, support of academic achievements and graduation

ESG (Part 1)	NCPA and evalag's (Germany) Standards and Criteria for joint accreditation of programmes delivered by HEIs	NCPA and ACQUIN's (Germany) Standards and Criteria for joint accreditation of programmes delivered by HEIs	NCPA and HEEC's (China) Standards and Criteria for joint accreditation of study programmes delivered by Chinese HEIs	NCPA and HEEC's (China) Standards and Criteria for joint accreditation of study programmes delivered by Russian HEIs
1.5. Teaching staff	Standard 1. Programme profile (Criterion 8) Standard 5. Resources (Criteria 2, 3)	Part 3. Implementation of the study programme 3.1 Resources *(3.1.2 Current material resources…)*	Standard 4. Faculty (all criteria)	Standard 5. Teaching staff
1.6. Learning resources and student support	Standard 4. Organisation of the study programme (Criterion 7) Standard 5. Resources (Criteria 1, 4, 5)	Part 3. Implementation of the study programme 3.1 Resources *(3.1.2 Current material resources…)* 3.4 Transparency and documentation *(availability of the support system)*	Standard 5. Teaching and learning resources (all criteria)	Standard 6. Learning resources and student support
1.7. Information management	Standard 6. Quality assurance (Criterion 6)	Part 3. Implementation of the study programme 3.2. Decision-making processes, organization and cooperation *(Availability of documents regulating decision-making and organizational processes)*	Standard 6. Quality assurance (Criterion 6.3)	Standard 7. Collection, analysis and use of information for managing the study programme
1.8. Public information	Standard 6. Quality assurance (Criterion 8)	Part 3. Implementation of the study programme 3.4 Transparency and documentation *(availability of published documents …)*	Standard 8 Distinctive highlights	Standard 8. Public information
1.9. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Standard 6. Quality assurance (Criteria 1, 5, 7)	Part 4. Quality management 4.1 Quality assurance *(Internal evaluation as a mechanism for systematic further improvement of the programme)*	Standard 1. Educational objectives (Criterion 1.3) Standard 3. Curriculum (Criterion 3.4) Standard 6. Quality assurance (Criterion 6.2)	Standard 9. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
1.10. Cyclical external quality assurance	Standard 6. Quality assurance (Criterion 3)	Part 4. Quality management 4.1 Quality assurance *(External evaluation as a mechanism for systematic further improvement of the programme)*	Standard 6 Quality Assurance (Criterion 6.2)	Standard 10. Cyclical external quality assurance of study programmes

Based on the table, the following general conclusions can be made.

Standards and criteria for joint accreditation of educational programmes developed by NCPA with evalag (Germany), ACQUIN (Germany) and HEEC (China) are fully harmonized with the internal quality assurance procedures (ESG part 1).

Cross-border QA in case of accreditation of Chinese Universities is a part of NCPA development activities within external quality assessment. It aims at promoting the European principles of higher education quality assurance beyond the EU. Taking into account the growing number of international students, particularly from China, it is very important to harmonize the approaches to QA in partner countries in order to increase academic mobility.

NCPA has aimed to have all the standards and guidelines described in Part I of the ESG covered by its key processes, avoiding overlaps between assessment criteria.

NCPA considers joint accreditation procedures to be one of its priorities. Being a learning organization NCPA uses these procedures for self-education.

NCPA believes it is necessary to continue analyzing the impact of joint accreditation on the quality of educational programmes, HEIs' performance and the national system of higher education.

10.2 ESG Standard 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

Standard:

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

The aim of public accreditation is recognition of the quality of graduates' education and training, identifying achievements of the educational institution in research.

Public accreditation was originally regulated by Article 25 of the Federal Law "On Education" of 10.07.92 No 3266-I (not in force).

In 2012 the new version of the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" of 29.12.2012 No 273 specified the concept of public accreditation, the procedure for its conduct and the requirements to accrediting bodies. The new version of the Law emphasized the key role of employers and the importance of occupational standards. The accrediting institutions got the right to rank the accredited study programmes and educational institutions.

All these changes were reflected in NCPA's work. Thus, in order to increase the involvement of employers in QA procedures NCPA has signed agreements on cooperation with professional and employer associations. It is NCPA's requirement to include representatives of employers in External Review Panels. Furthermore, representatives of employers were introduced into the National Accreditation Board: Irina Arzhanova, Executive Director of the National Training Foundation, Galina Mayarovskaya, President of the Association of Russian Music Educational Institutions, Elena Soboleva, Director of the Department of Educational Programmes of the Fund for Infrastructure and Educational Programmes ("RUSNANO").

Following the adoption of ESG-2015, NCPA revised its own standards and guidelines: Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Study Programmes, Guidelines on External Review of Educational Programmes, etc. The members of the National Accreditation Board and representatives of stakeholders (representatives of the Russian Student Union, Commission for Public Control and Cooperation with Public Committee of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, Union of Architects of Russia, and others) were involved in standards revision.

In 2017 the RF Government issued Order of 11 April, 2017. No 431 on establishing the National Register of Accrediting Organizations. All the programmes accredited by NCPA have been included into this Register. Besides, NCPA developed additional instruments of quality assurance: a star awarding ranking system for educational programmes and NCPA's quality label for educational institutions.

Being an EQAR-registered agency, NCPA includes its accredited programmes in DEQAR.

Since 2016 NCPA has been conducting different types of accreditation: national, international, and joint based on the way of conducting. Thus, in national accreditation only Russian experts are included in External Review Panels. In case of international accreditation the review panel comprises Russian and foreign experts. Whereas joint accreditation is conducted jointly with a foreign accreditation agency and requires aligning the accreditation standards and procedures.

NCPA practices individual approach when it comes to estimating the cost of accreditation procedures. The cost of accreditation varies depending on logistics, accommodation costs, the number of programmes applying for accreditation, whether it is first or subsequent procedure, etc. The cost of the procedure is agreed on with a HEI.

Taking into consideration the mission of a HEI (orientation on the national or international labour market) NCPA developed three types of accreditation procedures: national, international and joint. Refer to p.9 of the SAR for more detail on each procedure.

For the educational institutions which have previously been successfully accredited by NCPA, the subsequent procedure is implemented by fewer reviewers than in case of the ordinary procedure as the educational institution has already demonstrated the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system. For example, Pushkin State Russian Language Institute applied for reaccreditation of its study programme of "Philology" after the previous accreditation term expired. In the subsequent procedure the External Review Panel comprised only 4 experts, not 5 as in case of first accreditation: 1 Russian expert, representative of the academic community, 1 foreign expert, representative of the academic community, 1 Russian expert, representative of employer, 1 Russian expert, representative of student community.

NCPA is constantly expanding the range of QA procedures. Thus, in 2013 NCPA developed and piloted three standards of public accreditation of further education programmes at the Russian Institute of Qualification Advancement for the Executive and Professional Personnel in Forestry Sector. In 2018 the standards for further professional education have been reviewed and now seven standards are applied in the procedure (Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Further Professional Education available in Russian and Guidelines on External Reviews of an Institution of Further Professional Education. NCPA piloted the developed procedure at the institution of further professional training "Research and Education Medical Center".

NCPA regularly surveys its external experts and representatives of HEIs involved in accreditation procedures. The findings of these surveys are taken into consideration for improvement of NCPA's procedures. Thus, on request of HEIs in 2016 Guidelines on external reviews of educational programmes were developed.

After the National Accreditation Board makes a decision on Accreditation of a study programme NCPA within a month informs the educational institution and the members of the Review Panel on the decision made; enters the information of accredited study programmes in the Register of accredited programmes (Register of Accredited Programmes, www.accredpoa.ru; DEQAR), carries out post-accreditation monitoring, collects reports on corrective actions.

NCPA undertakes steps to improve its performance following the recommendations and suggestions given by ENQA External Review Panel and the Register Committee (EQAR).

Thus, the revised the Regulations on Public Accreditation and the Regulations on the National Accreditation Board have more detailed descriptions of follow-up procedures; the criteria for selection of the National Accreditation Board members have become more transparent; the Regulations on the Appeals Procedure and the Appeals Committee have been developed.
NCPA is open and receptive to the changing requirements of stakeholders by constantly improving and diversifying its QA procedures.
Some stakeholders expressed an opinion that 10 standards of public accreditation are excessive and their number should be reduced to seven to avoid unnecessary repetition. Following stakeholders' feedback NCPA is planning to discuss this issue with different focus groups and launch pilot projects in the nearest future.

EVIDENCE:

Law «On Education in the Russian Federation» № 3266-1 of 10.07.1992 (Not in force).

Federal Law of the Russian Federation of December 12, 2012 No. 273 «On Education in the Russian Federation».

State Programme of the Russian Federation "Development of Education".

Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of 11.04.2017 No. 431 "On Forming and Keeping the List of Organizations Implementing Public Accreditation of the Basic Professional Study Programmes".

NCPA's Guidelines and Regulations
Automated Support System

10.3 ESG Standard 2.3 Implementing processes

Standard:

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent;

- an external assessment normally including a site visit;

- a report resulting from the external assessment;

- a consistent follow-up.

The procedures and processes are described in more detail in Section 6. Processes *and their methodologies*. NCPA accreditation processes are reliable, useful, pre-defined, consistent and published. The main principle of NCPA's work is the quality of all the processes. The description of the accreditation procedure and the regulating documents are publicly available on NCPA's website and are uniform for all the educational institutions. Standards and procedures of public accreditation of study programmes used by NCPA are developed in compliance with the Russian legislation in the sphere of education (Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation", Article 96), and the main principles and documents of the Bologna process, particularly, the ESG.

NCPA's accreditation procedures include a number of successive steps, which are documented, published and are subject to bilateral agreement with the HEI undergoing accreditation. These steps are as follows: application; self-evaluation of study programmes against pre-defined standards; site-visit of an external review panel; preparing the Final and Summary Reports with the expert conclusion; making an accreditation decision; publication of the Final and Summary Reports; entering the accreditation data into registers, follow-up.

The reliability of the procedures is ensured by the following:

-detailed documentation of all steps of accreditation;

-specially developed forms, guidelines, surveys, software;

- an NCPA's staff member(s) coordinates the external review procedure.

After every accreditation procedure NCPA's staff members analyze good practice, emerging problems, the work of experts and other related issues.

The results of public accreditation are considered by the state during control procedures, and when distributing state-funded places. The accredited programmes become more recognizable nationally and internationally, thus attracting more international students; there are more opportunities for international cooperation (joint projects and programmes). Besides, at the time of preparation for the external evaluation the study programme is improved to comply with the international requirements. Students can benefit from expanding opportunities for academic mobility and employment. Teaching staff can benefit from peer communication and experience exchange. Experts benefit from being introduced to new practices and gaining new expertise.

However, NCPA is aware that the increase in the number of accreditation procedures can impact their quality. For example, some procedures are labour-consuming: in case of international or joint accreditation the reports should be translated into English, which means additional human, time, and financial resources. Issuing visas to international experts is another challenging issue: sometimes delays occur for reasons outside NCPA's or experts' control.

When planning the logistics of site visits NCPA has to form external review panels taking into account Russia's vast territory in order to avoid ineffective use of resources.

One of the challenging technical issues for NCPA IT personnel is integrating all the accreditation data into one system to make data import more effective.

EVIDENCE:

Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation» of December 12, 2012 No. 273 (revised)
Regulations on Public Accreditation
Guidelines for External Reviews of Study Programmes
Guidelines for External Review of Further Education Programmes

Guidelines for Self Evaluation of Study Programmes
Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area
Dublin Descriptors
Recommendations on the Preparation of the Report on Corrective Actions
Regulations on the Appeals Procedure and the Appeals Committee
"Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia" project
Template of a self-evaluation report (available at i-msd.ru)

10.4 ESG Standard 2.4 Peer-review experts

Standard:
External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

Experts are the key actors of public accreditation procedures. The quality of the procedure is ensured by the competence of the experts involved. Depending on the type of accreditation (national, international, joint) the external review panel comprises 4-6 members – national and international academic experts, representatives of student community and employer associations.

The External Review Panel comprises 4-5 Russian experts in case of national accreditation, 3 Russian Experts and 2-3 foreign experts in case of international and joint accreditation. In joint accreditation procedures foreign experts are nominated by a partner-agency, in international accreditation procedures foreign experts are nominated by foreign agencies on the basis of bilateral agreements (Annex 5).

Under the agreement with the Guild of Experts in Higher Education academic reviewers are selected from the database of over 1,000 Russian experts. The Guild of Experts is an independent association of experts in different research areas from different Russian regions. The Guild selects 10-15 nominees; out of this number NCPA selects one academic expert. Besides, Russian experts can be nominated by the associations of HEIs and also by the Federal Methodological Associations in the relevant field of study.

The criteria for selection of experts are: for representatives of academic community – work experience in the sphere of education not less than 7 years, research and industry; work experience in leadership positions; academic degree and title; professional competency in the field of the study programme under review.

Experts – representatives of professional community (employers) are nominated by professional organizations – the key stakeholders in graduates' employment, relevant ministries (departments), or employers' unions. The selection criteria are competency and work experience in leadership positions in the field of activity that is relevant to the study programme under review.

Experts – representatives of student community (undergraduates, post graduate students) are nominated by student organizations and unions or by external educational institutions. Selection criteria are: recommendation of the institutional administration; good knowledge of regulatory and legal framework in the sphere of higher education; good knowledge of the basic principles of the Bologna process.

Since the beginning of NCPA's accreditation activity 761 experts have participated in the procedures (Fig.5).
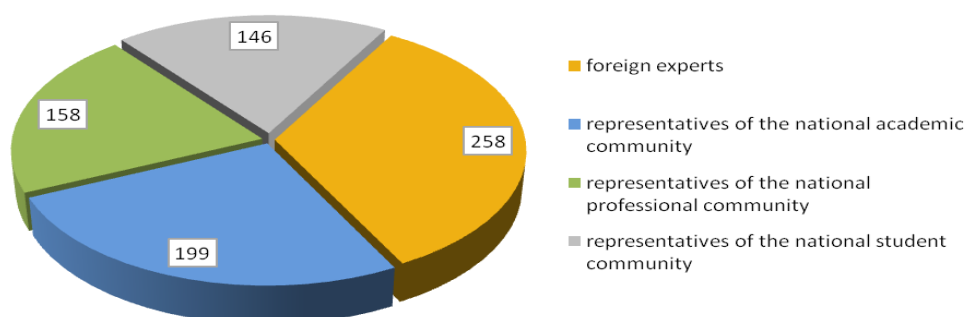

Figure 5 – Number of foreign and national experts involved in NCPA's procedures

In order to ensure the objectivity and transparency of NCPA's accreditation procedures, with the consent of the HEI, observers can be present during the meetings of the External Review Panel without the right to evaluate the accreditation results.

External Review Panel

NCPA puts great effort in ensuring the independence of experts and the absence of conflict of interest. NCPA nominates experts independently of a HEI and other bodies.

– NCPA's coordinator has to ensure that prospective Panel members have relevant qualification and competency for the expertise of the study programmes undergoing accreditation.

– In order to be eligible to serve as a Panel member an expert should have no conflict of interest with the institution under accreditation.

– The key principles of an expert's work are honesty, commitment, good faith, objectivity, confidentiality in the work with documents.

– All Panel members are provided with the guidelines regulating the procedure and describing their responsibilities. All Panel members sign the document about the absence of conflict of interest with the HEI undergoing accreditation.

– The Chair of the Review Panel is appointed from among representatives of the academic community, who has extensive experience of participation in QA procedures. The accreditation report is usually drafted by the Deputy Chair and agreed on with all the Panel members.

– After the approval of the Panel composition by the NCPA's Director, the NCPA's coordinator agrees the Panel composition with the HEI. The educational institution has the right to decline the suggested nominations of experts in case identifying of the conflict of interest the reasons for doing so. If the reasons are well grounded NCPA changes the candidates (no more than two). In this case NCPA initiates the second procedure of selecting experts.

Training of experts

NCPA organizes a training session for experts. A month before the site visit they are given access to their personal accounts in the Automated Support System developed by NCPA.

The Regulations, Guidelines and other methodological materials, as well as HEIs' self-evaluation reports are placed in the system for experts' convenience.

Two weeks before the site visit the experts receive the programme of the site visit and the External Review Panel composition.

A day before the site visit a preliminary meeting of the External Review Panel is held, where the NCPA's coordinator introduces the members of the Panel, conducts a briefing, distributes guidelines and instruction manuals.

At the preliminary meeting the experts are briefed by the NCPA Coordinator about the issues related to higher education in the Russian Federation, quality assurance, goals and objectives of the forthcoming procedure, lines of inquiry based on the self-evaluation report of the HEI and responsibilities of each Panel member.

NCPA conducts satisfaction surveys of experts and representatives of the evaluated institutions after the accreditation procedure (online questionnaire).

For more information refer to the SAR, Section 11.

It is NCPA's position to include only high-quality experts in external review panels with extensive academic and/or professional experience. In case of international or joint accreditation in addition to academic and/or professional experience an expert should have a good command of English in order to maintain communication in an international panel. Since 2015 NCPA's representatives have conducted training sessions and workshops for students at the annual National Student Quality of Education Forum. NCPA is an active participant of different events organized by employers' associations (meetings of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, the National Council under the President of the Russian Federation on Vocational Qualifications, etc.).

Taking into consideration the importance of preliminary training sessions for experts, especially for employers and students NCPA equipped a special webinar room, which partly reduces time and financial costs. Taking into account the effectiveness of NCPA's Automated Support

System for Russian experts, NCPA should additionally develop an English language version of the System for foreign experts.

EVIDENCE:

NCPA's cooperation agreements (Annex 5)
Guidelines for external reviews of study programmes
The Regulations on Public Accreditation.
Online questionnaire of experts participating in NCPA's external reviews

10.5 ESG Standard 2.5 Criteria for outcomes

Standard:

Any outcomes or judgments made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

In order to maintain justice and credibility all formal decisions made as a result of public accreditation are based on clearly defined published criteria that are applied consistently.

On the basis of the self-evaluation report, documentary evidence, and also interviews with representatives of professional associations, students, post-graduate students, teaching staff and the management of an educational institution the external evaluation panel makes a conclusion about the degree of compliance of an educational programme to NCPA's standards and criteria. This conclusion is not binding and is a recommendation as to the possibility of public accreditation of the educational programme.

NCPA has developed special Guidelines for the expert panel members which include the description of standards developed in compliance with the ESG. Every standard comprises a list of criteria. Every standard and every criterion is evaluated against NCPA's assessment scale: full compliance, substantial compliance, partial compliance, non-compliance. Every expert is provided with the assessment form, which includes marks, achievements and recommendations. The Guidelines for the expert panel members contain the description of criteria and the assessment scale. The final assessment form is collegially discussed with all panel members and for every standard a collegiate decision is made.

NCPA prepares a Summary Report of the External Evaluation of an Educational Programme for the National Accreditation Board. This Summary Report is based on the analysis of the self-evaluation report, the final report by the external evaluation panel.

Based on the consideration of the Summary Report of the External Evaluation of an Educational Programme the National Accreditation Board makes a collegiate positive or negative decision.

In case of a positive public accreditation decision NCPA awards the educational institution a Certificate of Public Accreditation of an educational programme, and enters the accredited programme into the Register of accredited programmes. The information about the accredited educational programme (a cluster of programmers) is published on NCPA's website and in mass media.

Standards and criteria for public accreditation are developed on the basis of the ESG with consideration of the specific features of the Russian education system. Beside ENQA's recommendations NCPA's standards comprise sets of criteria which structure the public accreditation procedure and ensure consistency of decision-making even if the decision is made by different groups of people.

Taking into account the recommendations of ENQA's External Review Panel from 2014 NCPA has clarified its criteria for full term (6 years), reduced term (4 or 2 years), and denial of accreditation (Regulations on Public Accreditation, p.8-9).

All the official decisions and the underlying criteria are discussed, agreed on, published and applied consistently in all the accreditation procedures implemented by NCPA.

The survey results obtained from the representatives of accredited HEIs show that NCPA's accreditation procedures enhance the quality of accredited study programmes. For example, Altai State University emphasized that public accreditation by NCPA promoted the programme

on the national educational market and attracted new students. For other feedback refer to Annex 4, Section 2 of the SAR.

The results of experts' survey (Annex 4 Section 1 of the SAR) show their satisfaction with the documentation of the accreditation procedure prepared by NCPA.

Accreditation decisions have a significant influence on the programmes and HEIs. The results of public accreditation are recognized by the state (distribution of state funded places, etc) and the community on the national (accredpoa.ru) and international (DEQAR) levels.

EVIDENCE:

Regulations on Public Accreditation
Regulations on the National Accreditation Board
Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Study Programmes
Guidelines for External Reviews of Study Programmes
Regulations on the Appeals Procedure and the Appeals Committee
External Review Reports
NCPA's website

10.6 ESG Standard 2.6 Reporting

Standard:

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

NCPA considers reporting to be very important for the procedure. The Final Report of the External Review Panel is published on NCPA's website in Russian. In case of an international or joined accreditation procedure Final Reports are published in English, and/or Chinese. The important sections of each report are HEI's achievements, good practices, areas for improvement and recommendations of the Panel.

The structure of the Self-Evaluation Report should cover the general information on the educational institutions and the study programmes, standards and criteria of public accreditation of study programmes of higher education, conclusions and annexes. The procedure of self-evaluation is regulated by the Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Study Programmes. The Final Report should cover the context and main stages of the review, composition of the Review Panel, purposes and objectives of the review, stages of the review, self-evaluation, site visit, and description of the study programme(s) under review, findings according to the standards, recommendations for improvement, conclusion and annexes. The contents and structure of the Final Report are described in the Guidelines for External Reviews of Study Programmes.

In addition to Final Reports NCPA publishes Summary Reports in Russian and English. Apart from concise information about the findings of the review Summary Reports contain analytical and statistical information, which can be useful for stakeholders.

The educational institution is consulted with regard to removal of any possible factual errors in the Final Report *(p. 21 of the Final Report).*

As a result of the accreditation procedure NCPA prepares two reports: a Final Report prepared by the external review panel and a Summary Report, which is prepared by NCPA and is based on the information obtained from Self-evaluation Report and Final Report. The Final Report contains achievements and recommendations and is used by the accredited HEI for improvement of its programmes. The Summary Report is intended for the general public. With the growing number of accreditation procedures NCPA should develop software which would partly automate the process of report preparation (some factual information, data, etc.).

EVIDENCE:

Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Study Programmes
Guidelines for External Reviews of Study Programmes
External Review Reports

Statement of the University (p. 21 of the [Final Report](#)).
[NCPA's website](#)

10.7 ESG Standard 2.7 Complaints and appeals

Standard:

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

NCPA has in place the appeals and complaints procedure, which is applied in cases of breach of accreditation procedure or evidential errors.

In accordance with the [Regulations on the Appeals Procedure and the Appeals Committee](#) in order to consider appeals of the educational institution going through public accreditation of study programmes the Appeals Committee was established for all NCPA's activities.

Responding to the recommendations of the External Evaluation Panel (May 2014) new [Regulations on the Appeals Committee](#) were developed and approved (June, 2014). Accordingly, a new Appeals Committee, independent of the National Accreditation Board, was formed. Now the Appeals Committee comprises three independent members including the Chair. The members of the Appeals Committee are elected by simple majority of votes of the members of the NCPA's founders. The Appeals Committee is formed of independent persons, who are not members of the National Accreditation Board and are not employed by NCPA.

The Appeals Committee is informed on the accreditation decisions made by the National Accreditation Board. The Appeals Committee members may be present as observers at the meetings of the National Accreditation Board.

As of today, there haven't been any appeals from HEIs. Though there were two cases of denial of accreditation: Moscow State Pedagogical University, the programme cluster "Special needs (defectological) education" (Minutes of the National Accreditation Board of 27 June, 2014); Bashkir State Agrarian University, the programme cluster "Economics" (Minutes of the National Accreditation Board of 29 June, 2017).

HEIs can reject a nominated expert because of a conflict of interest. NCPA has considered a few requests for replacement of an expert which have been satisfied.

NCPA considers that [Regulations on the Appeals Procedure](#) should elaborate the steps of the procedure for dealing with complaints and the procedure for dealing with appeals in more detail.

EVIDENCE:

[Regulations on the Appeals Procedure and the Appeals Committee](#)

11. INFORMATION AND OPINIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS

The NCPA's key stakeholders are HEIs, experts involved in accreditation processes, students and student bodies, employers, bodies for public evaluation of education, Accreditation Board members.

NCPA regularly collects stakeholder feedback in different format:

1. Surveying the members of External Review Panels, coordinators from HEIs involved in NCPA's accreditation procedures. NCPA regularly collects and analyzes feedback on accreditation procedures from experts and representatives of the HEIs involved in the assessment process. The feedback is collected through the online survey ([Experts' survey template](#)) that is available on NCPA website in Russian and English after the review is finalized. The survey provides evaluation of the content and organization of the procedure and recommendations for improvement.

Since 2014 163 respondents have been surveyed. The summarized views, suggestions, recommendations and evaluations are discussed internally (NCPA's meetings) and externally (meetings of the National Accreditation Board, reports, mass media, etc).

The findings are presented in Annex 4, section 1.

2. A stakeholder opinion survey which is conducted twice a year (January, June) after each meeting of the National Accreditation Board (Annex 4, section 2). As a result NCPA updated the Regulations on accreditation in sections concerning the algorithm of decision-making process in order to formalize the criteria for decision-making.

3. Every 5 years NCPA collects feedback from representatives of HEIs, student unions, national and international experts who have been involved in evaluation procedures of NCPA more than 3 times on strategic aspects of the agency's work (Annex 4, section 3).

Experts' recommendations resulted in:

– revision of the standards for their compliance with the occupational standards, the national context and the national legislation;

– wider media coverage of NCPA's performance, that is why NCPA reached out to the leading media (e.g. conference in International News Agency «Rossiya Segodnya» etc.);

In 2018 NCPA's best practice on international and joint accreditation was included in the national Database of Good Practice.

NCPA's new Strategy and Action Plan have been developed with the involvement of NCPA's staff members, the members of the Accreditation Board and founders. Suggestions and comments from stakeholders after Accreditation Board meetings have been gathered and published in mass media ("Accreditation in Education" journal).

During its self-evaluation procedure NCPA surveyed Russian and international experts and representatives of HEIs who have participated in NCPA's accreditation procedures at least three times or more. The survey covered the strategic issues of NCPA's development and QA procedures. The results of the survey showed that 100% of respondents positively evaluated NCPA's work. NCPA is going to thoroughly analyze the recommendations made. For more detail refer to Annex 4, Section 3 of the SAR.

EVIDENCE:

Survey of experts and HEIs' representatives (Annex 4)

Questionnaire of Russian experts, foreign experts, HEI's representatives

12. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MAIN FINDINGS FROM PREVIOUS REVIEWS AND AGENCY'S RESULTING FOLLOW-UP

In 2014 the ENQA's External Evaluation Panel made recommendations for enhancing NCPA's performance and ensuring its compliance with ESG.

Table 9 – Follow-up on ENQA's External Evaluation Panel's recommendations

Recommendations of ENQA's Review Panel (2014)	NCPA's actions
Clarify the procedure and criteria for granting limited accreditation (1,2 or 3 years)	The procedure and criteria for granting limited accreditation have been reviewed and clarified in new Regulations on Public Accreditation in accordance with Recommendations of ENQA's Review Panel (2014) (Accreditation decision-making, Section 5; 8 – Follow-up, 8.3-8.7). A programme may be accredited for a reduced term if the following conditions take place: – 3 standards receive a C mark (partial compliance) – 4 years accreditation term; – more than 3 standards receive a C mark (partial compliance) – 2 years accreditation term.
Provide feedback on the accreditation decision to the expert panels	All the experts involved in the accreditation procedure are informed on the accreditation decision with reference to the Minutes of the National Accreditation Board by email.

Recommendations of ENQA's Review Panel (2014)	NCPA's actions
Publish the accreditation decision on the website	After the National Accreditation Board makes a decision on Accreditation of a study programme (cluster of programmes) NCPA within a month publishes on the NCPA's website the materials of the National Accreditation Board Meeting (presentations, Minutes, for example, http://ncpa.ru/protocol_21_01_2016_en.pdf (English), https://ncpa.ru/protocol_27_06_2018.pdf) (Russian), enters the information on accredited study programmes in NCPA's Register of accredited programmes and the Ministry's Register of Accredited Programmes www.accredpoa.ru.
Improve the briefing of experts before the site visit (especially for the student members and members of labour market)	NCPA organizes training and briefing of its experts including students and employers on public accreditation procedures in the form of: - webinars; - briefing (online, telecommunication, etc.) before the site visit; - communication through the Automated Support System. - Students' training during the Annual Forum of the Russian Student Union (2015-2018).
Design clearer follow-up procedures	The follow-up procedures have been revised and outlined in 8 Regulations on Public Accreditation (Section 8.1-8.9)
Regulate follow-up procedures in the evaluation contract signed with the university	The follow-up procedure is described as a part of the Agreement with the HEI (para 3.9-3.15 of the Agreement). After the National Accreditation Board makes a decision on Accreditation of a study programme NCPA within a month publishes on its website the materials of the National Accreditation Board−meeting (presentations, Minutes); enters the information of accredited study programmes in the Register of accredited programmes on NCPA's website; publishes information on accredited programmes in mass media, reference books and Internet; forwards to the HEI a copy of the Minutes of the National Accreditation Board containing the information about the accreditation decision. In case of a decision by the National accreditation Board to deny accreditation NCPA sends to the HEI a letter with the justification of the decision. In case of a reduced term of Accreditation (less than 6 years) the educational institution has to: −to submit to NCPA a plan of actions (road map) on addressing recommendations of the External Review Panel and the National Accreditation Board60 days after a decision on accreditation. After the plan is agreed on with NCPA, the HEI submits a report on corrective actions which have been undertaken to address the recommendations in accordance with the plan. After considering the Report on corrective actions at a meeting of the National Accreditation Board a decision may be taken on extending the accreditation term for 2 years (in certain cases, an additional site visit by 1-2 experts could be recommended). In case of a failure of the HEI to submit a plan of actions (road map) within 60 days, NCPA has the right to suspend or retract accreditation (repeal the accreditation certificate). In case of a full term accreditation (6 years) the HEI has to submit to NCPA a plan on improvement of the study programme with the account of comments and recommendations of the External Review Panel (if available) within a month after the decision on accreditation. NCPA keeps a register of accredited study programmes, which serves as a tool for monitoring the implementation of decisions of the National Accreditation Board.
Set up a process to encourage follow-up demands	Regulations on Public Accreditation (Follow-up (Section 8.3, 8.5) requires from the HEI to submit the report on corrective actions.

Recommendations of ENQA's Review Panel (2014)	NCPA's actions
Provide feedback on the accreditation procedures to the evaluated universities	NCPA forwards to the educational institution delivering the study programme a copy of the Minutes of the National Accreditation Board containing the information about the accreditation decision to the educational institution delivering the study programme; electronic logo of NCPA; the original of the Accreditation certificate; (Regulations on Public Accreditation, p.8)
Increase the impact of external evaluation results in order to encourage universities to be re-evaluated	Competency and professionalism of NCPA's staff members and the experts involved in accreditation procedures, listing the accredited programmes in the registers of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and in DEQAR encourage educational institutions and programmes to be re-evaluated by NCPA. Over the past five years 3 HEIs (Baltic Federal University, the Gnesins' Russian Academy of Music, Pushkin State Russian Language Institute) applied for re-evaluation of their programmes after the expiry of the accreditation term. NCPA actively employs different platforms to disseminate good accreditation practices. NCPA implements follow-up of the accredited programmes after procedure. In its practice NCPA has numerous examples when HEIs after the first accreditation procedure of one cluster of study programmes applied for subsequent accreditation of other clusters of programmes.
Carefully define the boundaries of consultancy and set up regulations allowing to separate clearly public accreditation and consultancy	NCPA provides consultations only on practical arrangements and logistical issues of organizing the procedure of public accreditation. NCPA doesn't offer any consultancy services on a fee-paying basis.
Establish an independent Appeals Committee	Taking into consideration the recommendations by the External Evaluation Panel (May 2014) new Regulations on the Appeals Committee were developed and approved (June, 2014). Accordingly, a new Appeals Committee, independent of the National Accreditation Board, was formed. The Committee members were reelected in 2018.
Provide more transparency in the selection of the National Accreditation Board members	The selection procedure of the National Accreditation Board members is carried out based on recommendations of Russian and foreign educational institutions, public and professional bodies, unions, foundations, associations (national and international) in the sphere of education. The revised Regulation on the National Accreditation Board and the Code of Ethics for the National Accreditation Board members (2015) address the issues of independence of the National Accreditation Board and selection of its members. It is available at Regulations on the Appeals Procedure and the Appeals Committee. The composition of the National Accreditation Board is available at the NCPA's website.

The fulfillment of EQAR Committee recommendations for enhancing NCPA's performance.

Table 10 – Follow-up on EQAR's Committee recommendations

Recommendations of EQAR	NCPA's actions
ESG 2.6: Dissemination of information on quality assurance	
Register Committee recommended that NCPA should ensure that the follow-up procedures should be consistently implemented, in particular in cases where the institution might not re-apply for accreditation	The Regulations on Public Accreditation in Part 8 «Follow-up» (8.3; 8.5) makes provision for obligatory follow-up procedure which involves writing the report by the institution on corrective actions within the stated period indicated in the accreditation decision.
Recommendations of EQAR	**NCPA's actions**
ESG 2.6: Dissemination of information on quality assurance	
Following the end of the Board's mandate in 2016, NCPA announced that they would replace one third of the current members, including the members who are rectors or presidents. While NCPA clarified how the Board is composed, the next external review of NCPA should cover the nomination and selection process for Board members	In accordance with the new Regulation on the National Accreditation Board in January 2016 1/3 of the Board members were rotated. The list of the National Accreditation Board members The Regulations on the National Accreditation Board, Section 4.
ESG 3.6: Independence	
The Register Committee concurred with the conclusion of the panel that NCPA should formalise, in a 'code of ethics', the independence of the National Accreditation Board from higher education institutions or other stakeholders.	The Regulation on the National Accreditation Board and the Code of Ethics for the National Accreditation Board members address the issues of independence of the National Accreditation Board.
ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies	
The Register Committee was unable to find the published guidelines for the external reviews of educational programmes, the guidelines for the self-evaluation of educational programmes and the guidelines for the preparation of a report on the results of corrective actions.	The revised guidelines for the external reviews of educational programmes, the guidelines for the self-evaluation of educational programmes and the guidelines for the preparation of a report on the results of corrective actions are available on NCPA website.
The Register Committee also noted that NCPA only published on its website the accreditation advice provided by the experts (p. 16), but not the final accreditation decisions taken by the National Accreditation Board.	The final accreditation decision taken by the National Accreditation Board is recorded in the Minutes of the National Accreditation Board's meetings and the accredited programmes are entered into NCPA's Register, the Ministry's Register of accredited programmes (www.accredpoa.ru) and DEQAR. NCPA's Register The links to the Minutes of the National Accreditation Board's meetings with the final decision (available in English) are: http://ncpa.ru/protocol_21_01_2016_en.pdf http://ncpa.ru/resolution_25_06_2015.pdf (available in Russian): http://ncpa.ru/protocol_30_01_2015.pdf http://ncpa.ru/protocol_27_06_14.pdf

13. SWOT-ANALYSIS

	Opportunities	Threats
	- There has been a greater emphasis on QA issues as a key element of integration into EHEA since Russia joined the Bologna process. - The focus on independence of accreditation agencies in revised ESG-2015. - Establishing DEQAR - The support of public accreditation by the RF President and the Government. International accreditation as a tool for international recognition has been included into the national priority project "The Development of Export Potential of the Russian Education System". The state programme of the Russian Federation "Development of education" envisages that 30 % of all study programmes will be accredited by public and professional accreditation bodies by 2020. The outcomes of public accreditation are taken into account in distributing admission quotas. - Regulating the accreditation market by establishing the national register of accrediting organizations www.accredpoa.ru (RF Government Order of 11 April, 2017. No 431). - Expanding the international cooperation in the sphere of education to the Asia-Pacific region (establishing Russian-Chinese associations of universities (economic, technical, etc). - Increased interest of HEIs in international accreditation (participation in discussions in international conferences, at the meetings of expert and public councils at competent public authorities in the sphere of education). - Increase in the number of employer associations and their focus on QA issues.	- Unfavourable geopolitical and external socio-economic situation with a possibility of further deterioration. - Unstable state educational policy. The Ministry of Education and Science has been reorganized into the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the Ministry of Public Education and is currently undergoing a transition period. - The right to conduct professional-public accreditation could be delegated by law to employer associations. - Low threshold requirements for organizations conducting external evaluation procedures, which results in the excessive number of accrediting bodies (105 accreditation agencies in Russia). This situation is conducive to emerging of accreditation mills. - When conducting public accreditation some agencies duplicate the procedures of state accreditation, thus discrediting public professional accreditation in the eyes of stakeholders. - The volatility of the national currency makes international accreditation implausible.

Strengths	Using opportunities	Mitigating threats
- Positive image of NCPA in national and international QA. - The management has 22 years' experience in the sphere of accreditation. - NCPA is recognized nationally and internationally (listing in accredpoa.ru, EQAR, APQR; 23 cooperation agreements with foreign QA agencies. - High quality services, international awards in the sphere of QA (APQN QualityAwards, etc). - Through informative and well-designed website the agency's activities are made visible to its stakeholders. - Participation of NCPA's management in policy making decisions at the meetings of expert and public councils at competent public authorities in the sphere of education. - Conducting joint accreditation procedures in cooperation with MusiQuE, ACQUIN, evalag, HEEACT, HEEC and other foreign QA agencies). - Variety and flexibility of the offered accreditation procedures: public, international and joint. - The members of the National Accreditation Board are recognized, reputable and highly experienced experts in the sphere of higher education. - Automated Support System of public accreditation developed by NCPA. - The loyalty of HEIs whose programmes have been accredited by NCPA (30 % apply for accreditation of other programmes). - Participation in competitions for QA grants organized by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, Grants of the President of the Russian Federation, Erasmus+, etc. - Effective personnel management, high intellectual potential, professionalism and extensive experience in QA of NSPA's staff members.	- Using the expert and public councils at competent public authorities in the sphere of education, organizations of public control of the quality of education, Accreditation in education journal as communication platforms for informing stakeholders about key issues of the Bologna process (ESG, EQAR, DEQAR); about the best practices of the independent evaluation of education quality; and about international accreditation as a tool for recognizing Russian study programmes. - Informing the general public through Mass Media and NCPA's website on the Government's initiatives of supporting professional-public and international accreditation (Priority Project "The Development of export potential of the Russian education system", State programme "Development of education". - Improving the Automated Support System of public accreditation by developing the English version for foreign experts. - Maximizing the effectiveness of NCPA's participation in national and international project and grant competitions. - Increasing the attractiveness of institutional accreditation and the accreditation of quality assurance systems in the eyes of stakeholders.	- A wide range of the offered accreditation services (national, international and joint) and the loyalty of educational institutions ensure relative stability of NCPA's work in the changing political and economic environment. - International recognition of NCPA as a reliable and reputable agency (EQAR, APQR) and cooperation with foreign QA bodies facilitatedthe increase of international and joint accreditation procedures (for example, in China and some countries of the former Soviet Union), which decreases currency exchange risks. - Joint accreditation carried out by NCPA is attractive for federal universities which have enough resources to undergo this type of accreditation.

- Data bases and software developed by NCPA's programmers have certificates of registration. - The QA journal Accreditation in education is published 8 times a year with the participation of NCPA. - NCPA publishes QA e-bulletin "*Vestnik akkreditatsii*" (over 4,500 subscribers) - The QA research school headed by V. Navodnov and G. Motova. - Adequate and sufficient material resources.		
Weaknesses - Rigid pricing policy, limited possibilities for either increasing or reducing accreditation costs. - Financial dependence on the number of accreditation procedures. - Available technical and human resources don't allow the agency to significantly increase the number of accreditation procedures. - Insufficient attention to advertising and promotion of NCPA's accreditation services on the market. - Limited participation of major employers in accreditation procedures. On a regular basis NCPA cooperates with the employers in the sphere of building, architecture, forestry and some others. - NCPA's existing organizational structure precludes from effective implementation of grants and projects without overburdening human resources. - Excessive number of standards, which complicates the accreditation procedure (10 standards).	**Factors preventing NCPA from using opportunities** - Due to insufficient attention to advertising and promotion of accreditation services on the market, technical and human constraints NCPA can't benefit from the state support of public accreditation for increasing the number of accreditation procedures (especially international). - The increase in the number of employer associations, which appeared in the field of accreditation conducting evaluation procedures in their professional field. - Diverting human resources for implementing projects not directly related to NCPA's primary activity may result in ineffective functioning of the organization.	**Major threats for NCPA** - Unfavourable geopolitical and external socio-economic situation and the risk of its further deterioration may result in the termination of all cooperation in the sphere of education with the European countries, deviation from the principles of the Bologna process and HEIs' diminishing motivation to undergo public accreditation. - If the right to conduct professional-public accreditation is delegated to employer associations only rather than accreditation agencies, then professional public accreditation could be ousted from the national market.

14. NCPA'S CURRENT CHALLENGES AND AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Challenges:

1. There is no clear position in the government and in the society with regard to accreditation in education. There has been a lot of controversy concerning further development of the system of quality evaluation in education. The issue is being discussed in the Civic Chamber and the State Duma. A working group has been established from the leading national HEIs to work out the strategy for modernizing state accreditation of education. However, a question has been raised as to the necessity of state accreditation. Under these conditions NCPA has to be ready to meet new challenges and respond to the changing legal framework. The Agency has to identify its own position and actively promote its view on further development of accreditation in Russia.

2. The current situation of multiple forms of accreditation in Russia causes a dubious approach to quality evaluation on the part of the general public and state authorities. The role of employer associations in accreditation is overestimated. There is a danger of delegating the task of evaluating the quality of education to employer associations exclusively. Thus, in fact, the accreditation procedure is substituted by certification of graduates. Therefore, NCPA has to raise the general public's awareness of the key principles of accreditation, in particular, the consideration of interests of all stakeholders.

3. Because of Russia's vast territory logistic issues remain challenging with regard to forming external review panels. NCPA has to avoid ineffective use of resources.

4. The language barrier further complicates international accreditation procedures and often requires the involvement of translators, which makes the procedure more expensive and besides it prevents direct communication between the panel members and stakeholders.

Areas for further development:

1. To preserve the high quality of accreditation procedures as means of improving the competitiveness, demand and recognition of NCPA's accreditation on the national and international level.

2. To become the leading innovation hub in the sphere of quality assurance with professional highly qualified staff members.

3. To participate in projects and programmes on quality assurance.

4. To enhance its impact on quality of education in the country and through their accreditation procedures to facilitate positive changes in quality assurance.

5. To become the leading actor in the national system of quality assurance promoting its transparency, objectivity, independence and effectiveness.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. STATUTES OF NCPA

Approved by the General Meeting
of the Founders

Minutes No 4 of May 7, 2015

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. The autonomous non-profit organisation "The National Centre for Public Accreditation" (further - the Organisation) is a non-profit, non-membership-based organisation which was established by legal entities on the basis of voluntary asset contributions in compliance with the legislation of the Russian Federation in order to provide services and achieve the aims stipulated in the present Statutes.

1.2. The legal status of the Organisation, the rights and responsibilities of its establishers are determined by the present Statutes while in the part not regulated by the Statutes, they are determined by the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, the Federal Act of the Russian Federation «On Non-Commercial Organisations», the Federal Act «On Higher Education in the Russian Federation» as well as by other legislative and normative legal acts, international agreements in the field of higher education in which the Russian Federation acts as a participant.

1.3. The full name of the Organisation in Russian shall be - Автономная некоммерческая организация «Национальный центр профессионально-общественной аккредитации».

The abbreviated name in Russian shall be AHO «Нацаккредцентр».

The full name of the organisation in English shall be the Autonomous non-profit organisation «National Centre for Public Accreditation».

1.4. The location of the Organisation is: 424000, 206A Volkov Street, Yoshkar-Ola, the Republic of Mari El, and the Russian Federation.

1.5. The Organisation is considered to be established as a legal entity from the moment of its state registration in accordance with the federal laws.

1.6. The Organisation has been established for an indefinite period of time.

1.7. The Organisation has the right to set up a corporate bank account, a foreign currency account, or any other types of bank accounts in the Russian Federation and beyond in accordance with the applicable procedure.

1.8. The Organisation may act as a claimant or a respondent in courts of general jurisdiction, in courts of arbitration, acquire and exercise property and non-property rights in its name in conformity with the Organisation's aims stipulated in its Statutes and incurs obligations related to these aims.

1.9. The Organisation shall have a round stamp with the full name of the Organisation in the Russian language as well as seals and forms with its name.

1.10. The Organisation is not responsible for the obligations of its founders. The founders do not bear liability for the obligations of the Organisation. The Organisation is not responsible for the obligations of the state and its authorities. The state and its authorities do not bear liability for the obligations of the Organisation.

1.11. The Organisation shall be liable for its obligations with the property which may be levied upon against the legislation of the Russian Federation.

1.12. The Organisation has its own label. It represents a blue triangle, the acute corner of which is elongated leftwards and the lower side is curved. There are three lobes of different colours (top-down: white, blue, and red), two of which (blue and red) extend beyond the triangle.

1.13. The Organisation may establish branches and open representative offices on the territory of the Russian Federation in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation.

1.14. The branches and the representative offices are not legal entities, they are endowed with property at the expenses of the Organisation and act in accordance with the approved regulations. The assets of the branches or the representative offices are listed on a separate balance sheet or the balance sheet of the Organisation.

1.15. The branches or the representative offices shall act in the name of the Organisation. The Organisation is liable for the activities of its branches and the representative offices.

1.16. For the purpose of achieving the goals stipulated in the present Statutes the Organisation may establish other non-profit organisations and become a member of associations and unions.

1.17. State or public bodies shall not interfere with the activities of the Organisation except as otherwise permitted by the legislation of the Russian Federation.

2. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

2.1. The National Centre for Public Accreditation was established with the purpose of delivering services in the sphere of independent evaluation of education quality and accrediting (including public accreditation) study programmes delivered by educational institutions, embedding quality culture in higher education through the process of accreditation of study programmes; formation of positive public opinion of those educational institutions working honestly in Russia and beyond.

2.2. The subject of the Organisation's activity is independent evaluation of education quality and public accreditation of study programmes delivered by educational institutions.

2.3. To achieve the goals, indicated in Item 2.1 of the present Statutes, the National Centre for Public Accreditation carries out the following activities:

- Develops methods and technologies of education quality assessment, including test-based technologies and sociological surveys; develops technologies of internal quality assurance systems establishment;

- Organizes and conducts education quality assessment procedures upon an application submitted by higher education institutions in Russia or beyond; carries out public accreditation of higher education institutions, study programmes and courses;

- Carries out research activities, develops software, information and communication technologies for the Internet environment, works out reference and instruction materials on the evaluation and quality assurance in education;

- Undertakes research activities in the area of social sciences and the Humanities, as well as natural and technical sciences;

- Carries out activities aimed at the development and maintenance of data bases and information resources;

- Produces publications relevant to the area of state and public accreditation, evaluation and quality assurance of education in educational institutions;

- Studies, analyses and disseminates good practices of Russian and International experience in the area of assessment and quality assurance of education;

- Participates in the preparation of regulatory legal acts on education quality assessment and other relevant issues of legal regulation developed by legislative and executive bodies and professional organisations; and contributes to their implementation;

- Provides information, methodological and technical support to experts in the sphere of education quality evaluation involved in review procedures and accreditation of study programmes and education institutions;

- Organizes conferences, seminars, and round-table discussions;

- Carries out research activities, takes part in scientific and research projects;

- On request of education institutions provides advisory services and audit of educational quality;

- Maintains contacts with international and national organisations operating in the field of education quality assessment in the established order; participates in drafting process of international agreements relating to quality evaluation procedures; represents the interests of Russian education institutions in the area of quality assurance in the above mentioned organisations; establishes and develops relations with similar organisations from other countries; participates in the activities implemented by international organisations.

2.4. The Organisation's right to carry out the activities which are stipulated in the present Statutes and require a license arises immediately upon receiving such a license or during the term specified in it and terminates after the expiry of the license validity.

2.5. The Organisation may carry out entrepreneurial activities which are not prohibited by law and correspond with the goals it was established to achieve. For the purpose of carrying out entrepreneurial activities the Organisation may set up commercial partnerships and have a share in them.

2.6. The Organisation does not carry out activities which are aimed at achieving the statutory goals for the purpose of generating profit.

3. MANAGEMENT OF THE ORGANISATION'S ACTIVITIES

3.1. The highest decision-making body is *the General Meeting of the Founders of the Organisation* (further – the General Meeting).

The daily management of the Organisation shall be carried out by the Director – a permanent sole executive body of the organisation. The Director is appointed by the General Meeting for a term of five years.

3.2. The key responsibility of the General Meeting is to assure that the Organisation pursues the goals, it was established to achieve.

3.3. The following tasks fall within the competence of the General Meeting:

1) making amendments to the Statutes;

2) determination of the priority areas of the Organisation's activities, principles of generating and using its property;

3) appointment of the Director and early termination of his/her term of office;

4) reorganisation and liquidation of the Organisation;

5) approval of the annual report and the annual balance sheet;

6) approval of the financial plan of the non-profit organization and making amendments to it;

7) establishment of branches and open representative offices of the Organisation;

8) having a share in other organisations;

9) fixing the remuneration of the Director of the Organisation.

The areas stipulated in the paragraphs from the second to the fifth of the present subsection fall within the exclusive competence of the General Meeting of the founders.

The General Meeting is eligible to make decisions on any matters concerning the activities of the Organisation.

3.4. The General Meeting shall meet as and when necessary. The Director shall call the General Meeting and preside over it. An Extraordinary General Meeting can be called at the initiative of the Director or any of the founders of the Organisation. The notice day shall be the day when the letter requesting an extraordinary General Meeting was received.

3.5. Each founder of the Organisation is represented by one person.

3.6. Each founder of the Organisation has one vote.

3.7. The General Meeting of the founders is duly constituted if more than half of the Organisation's founders are present at the meeting.

3.8. The decisions of the General Meeting shall be adopted by the majority of votes of the Organisation's founders being present.

3.9. Decisions on all issues falling under the exclusive competence of the General Meeting shall be adopted unanimously.

4. PERMANENT COLLEGIATE BODY

4.1. For implementation of goals set forth in the Statutes of the Organisation, members are elected at the General Meeting of Founders to form a collegiate body – *the National Accreditation Board* (further – Board).

For the purpose of efficient and fast solutions of problems the General Meeting elects *the Chair*, *the Presidium*, and *special-purpose committees* from among the National Accreditation Board members.

4.2. The Board members may be elected from among representatives of authorities, organisations, corporations, foundations, associations (including international ones) operating or having their area of interest in education and/or science.

4.3. Nomination to the Accreditation Board is carried out basing on agreements with authorities, organisations, corporations, foundations, associations sharing the goals of the Organisation, indicated in the Statutes. The number of representatives and the term is fixed in the agreement.

4.4. The Accreditation Board is competent to deal with the following issues:

4.4.1.   consideration and making decisions concerning the outcomes of the procedures of evaluation and accreditation of study programmes (education institutions);

4.4.2.   consideration and approval of public accreditation procedure of study programmes, forms and methods of evaluation during public accreditation, as well as the rights submitted to educational institutions implementing educational programmes undergoing accreditation and/or to graduates of those programmes;

4.4.3.   election of Presidium members from among the Board's composition.

4.5. The Members of Presidium elect the Chair form among themselves and his deputies by a simple majority of vote.

4.6. Solving current matters of the Board in between its sessions is the exclusive competence of the Board's Presidium.

4.7. Conducting meetings of the Board, approval of the agenda, provision of just and non-biased decisions based on the results of meetings, holding inter-session meetings of the Accreditation Board when needed, is the exclusive competence of the Accreditation Board Chair.

4.8. The National Accreditation Board holds sessions as and when required, but not less than once a year. The Director convenes and organises the work of the Board.

4.9. The Accreditation Board's decision is approved if the majority of members voted. Not less than 50% of members should be present at the session.

4.10. Decisions of the Accreditation Board are fixed in the session Minutes which are signed by the Chair.

4.11. The Chair of the Accreditation Board presides at the sessions, signs Minutes, and controls fulfillment of decisions taken at the sessions.

4.12. Preliminary consideration of quality assurance and study programme accreditation procedure outcomes is the exclusive competence of the subject specific committees. A subject specific committee is entitled to elect the Chair of the subject specific committee, who will represent it at the Accreditation Board session. Activities of subject specific committees are regulated by the Provisions, approved by the Accreditation Board.

5. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIRECTOR

5.1. The *Director* shall manage the daily operations in the Organisation and deal with the matters that do not fall under the exclusive competence of the General Meeting, the Accreditation Board, and the competence of its Chair, stipulated in the present Statutes.

5.2. The Director shall facilitate the implementation of the decisions made by the General Meeting and the National Accreditation Board. The Director shall be accountable to the Organisation for the outcomes and the legality of the activities.

5.3. The Director shall act in the name of the Organisation without a power of attorney, represent its interests and negotiate deals and other legal acts in conformity with the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and the present Statutes.

5.4. The Director shall have the right:

5.4.1. to dispose property and monetary funds;

5.4.2. to sign agreements, including employment agreements, issue a power of attorney, open settlement and other accounts, issue orders and decrees relevant to his/her competence;

5.4.3. to provide financial and technical support to the Organisation within the limits of its internal funds;

5.4.4 to resort to additional financial and material resources in order to carry out the activities stipulated in the present Statutes;

5.4.5. to convene and manage regular and extraordinary meetings of the Accreditation Board;

5.4.6. to approve of the organisational structure, the schedule of positions and salaries, assign duties and salaries to the employees; determine the size of bonuses and additional payments;

5.4.7. to control the activities of the branches and the representative offices;

5.4.8. to resolve personnel matters:

– to hire and dismiss employees of the Organisation including his/her deputies, the chief accountant, heads of departments, branches and representative offices;

– to use incentives and impose penalties;

– to create favourable and safe working conditions for employees;

– timely inform employees about the decisions that influence working conditions.

5.4.9. to carry out obligations of the Organisation towards counterparts on administrative agreements;

5.4.10. to organize accountancy and reporting;

5.4.11. to organise control over reasonable and economical use of material, labour and financial resources; monitor Organisation's activities in compliance with the legislation;

5.4.12. to solve other issues of current Organisation's activities.

5.5. The Director has the right to devolve power or the part of it to his/her deputies.

5.6. Deputies (Deputy) of the Director are appointed by the Director and preside over the work in accordance with allocation of responsibilities approved by the Director. In cases when the Director can not perform his/her duties (being on annual holiday, business trip, during temporary incapacity to labour) his/her First Deputy, or employee appointed by order of the Director, fulfils his/her duties.

6. DOCUMENTATION OF THE ORGANISATION

6.1. The Organisation keeps accounting records and statistical reports in accordance with procedures established by the legislation of the Russian Federation.

6.2. The Organisation provides information concerning its activities to the state authorities for statistics and tax authorities, members of the Organisation and other parties in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation.

6.3. The Director is responsible for organisation, keeping and adequacy of accounting of the Organisation, timely submission of annual reports and other financial documents to authorities as well data concerning activities of the Organisation, provided to members of the Organisation, creditors and mass media.

6.4. The Organisation keeps the following documentation:

– the Statutes of the Organisation, amendments and supplements to the Statutes, registered as required in accordance with established procedures; resolution on establishment of the Organisation; State registration document;

– documents proving the Organisation's title of property on its books;

– Internal documents of the Organisation;

– annual reports;

– accounting records;

– accounting reports;

– Minutes of the General Meeting of Founders, National accreditation Board, sessions of audit commissions of the Organisation;

– other documents required according to legislation of the Russian Federation;

– other documents stipulated by the local acts of the Organisation, as well as documents, stipulated by legal enactments of the Russian Federation.

7. PROPERTY OF THE ORGANISATION

7.1. The sources of the Organisation's property are:

– regular and one-time payments received from the founders;

– voluntary contributions and donations;

– return on sales of goods, services, works;

– business income;

– dividends (income, interest) on shares, bonds and other securities and investments;

– organisation property income;

– grants and financial obligations, connected with or resulting from implementation of goals of the Organisation and its main activities;

– other incomes allowed by the legislation.

7.2. Order and amount of regular and one-time payments from the founders of the Organisation are approved at the General Meeting of the founding members.

7.3. Property conveyed to the Organisation by its founders is the property of the Organisation.

7.4. The founders do not maintain ownership of the property conveyed by them to the Organisation.

7.5. All property of the Organisation, its business income is owned by the Organisation and cannot be redistributed by its founders. The Organization performs possession, usage and management of its property according to its purpose and only for the accomplishment of statutory goals and objectives.

7.6. The Organization may possess buildings, constructions, housing facilities, technical equipment, stocks, monetary resources in rubles and foreign exchange, securities and other property.

7.7. Profit acquired by the Organization may not be distributed between its founders.

8. REORGANIZATION AND LIQUIDATION

8.1. The organization may be voluntarily reorganized in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation.

8.2. The Organization has the right to be transformed into a foundation. The decision on transformation is made by the Founders unanimously.

8.3. The Organization may be voluntarily liquidated in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation.

8.4. From the moment of appointing the liquidation committee, all the managing powers devolve on the liquidation committee.

8.5. In the absence of a legal successor or in the case of liquidation, permanent records, which have scientific and technical significance, shall be transferred to the State Record Office, personnel records (orders, personal records, personal accounts and other) are transferred to the assigned record office. The transfer and consolidation of documents is performed using the Organization's funds according to the requirements of the record office.

8.6. Upon liquidation, property which is left after satisfaction of all the creditors' claims, unless otherwise provided by the Federal act "On Non-Commercial Organizations" and other Federal acts, is spent on statutory purposes and (or) charitable purposes according to the conditions specified by the Meeting of Founders.

8.7. In case the utilization of the property of the liquidated Organization according to its Statute is not possible, such property is forfeited to the State.

9. PROCEDURE OF MAKING AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTE.

9.1. Amendments to the Statute are approved by the decision of the General Meeting of the Founders and are subject to the state registration.

9.2. The state registration of amendments to the Statute of the Organization is performed according to the procedures established by the current legislation of the Russian Federation.

9.3. Amendments to the Statute of the Organization come into effect from the moment of their state registration.

ANNEX 2. NCPA'S STATISTICS ON ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES FOR 2014-2018

Since 2014 the National Centre for Public Accreditation has accredited 485 study programmes from 45 educational institutions, including 372 higher education programmes, 48 further education programmes, 61 postgraduate programmes, 4 programmes of secondary vocational education and training. 19 study programmes from 3 educational institutions have not been accredited.

During the joint review with the Accreditation Agency evalag (Germany) 9 study programmes of higher education from 2 educational institutions were accredited.

During the joint review with the Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute (ACQUIN, Germany) 3 study programmes of higher education from 1 educational institution were accredited.

During the joint review with the Higher Education Evaluation Centre of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (HEEC, China) 15 study programmes of higher education from 2 Russian and 3 Chinese educational institutions were accredited.

During the joint review with the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT, Taiwan) 2 study programmes of higher education from 1 educational institution were accredited.

Since 2014 618 experts from 23 countries have participated in external review (Russia, Austria, Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Germany, Greece, Spain, Kazakhstan, China, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Taiwan, Finland, Czech Republic, Estonia).

Figure 1 – Experts participated in external reviews over the reporting period

WORK OF THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD IN 2014–2018
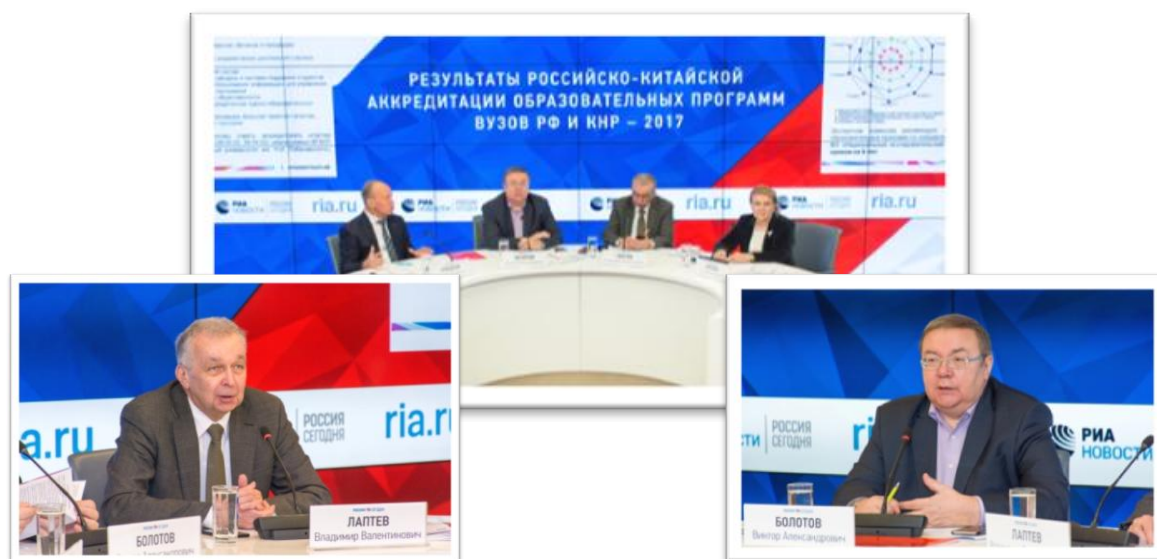
The composition of the National Accreditation Board was renewed and enlarged from 25 to 30 people. It is represented on Fig. 2.
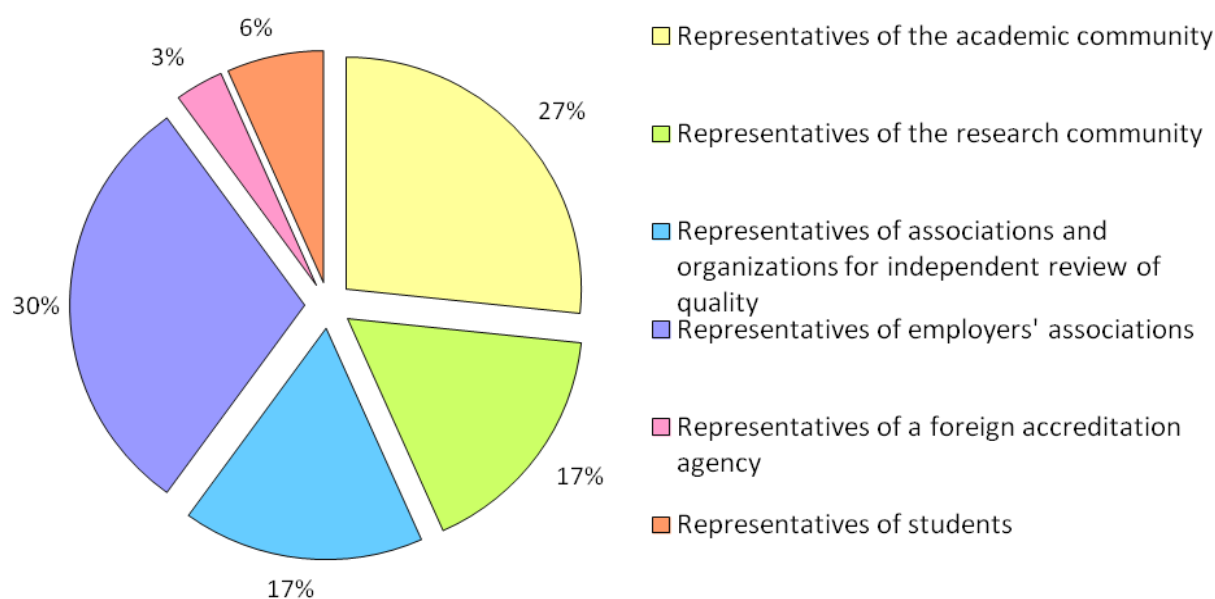

Figure 2 – Composition of the National Accreditation Board

Since 2014 ten meetings of the National Accreditation Board have been held in Moscow.

Michel Cosnard, President of the High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES), François Pernot, Director of the Europe and International Department, HCERES, Madina Tsoroeva, employee of the Department of Science, Technologies and Space of the Embassy of France, and Alexis Michelle, Councilor for Science and Technologies, were invited guests at the Board meeting in June 2017.

In January 2018 the meeting of the National Accreditation Board and the press conference "Results of the Russian-Chinese accreditation of the educational programmes in higher education institutions of Russia and China – 2017" were held at the International News Agency "Rossiya Segodnya".

In June 2018 the issues of independent quality assessment of educational programmes in the sphere of culture and art were discussed. Representatives of the leading higher education institutions in the sphere of culture and art participated in the event. A. Grigorieva, Head of

the Department of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, G. Maiarovskaia, Rector of Gnessin Russian Academy of Music, Hillar Bauman, and Secretary of the Estonian Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education spoke at the meeting.

Following the results of the meeting the decision to publish articles in leading research journals was made. Proposals on improvement of the systems of education quality evaluation in art higher education institutions were sent to the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

The following issues have been considered and discussed at the National Accreditation Board meetings:

1. Examining the results of external review of study programmes to make decisions on:
   – public accreditation of study programmes of higher education and further professional education;
   – international public accreditation of study programmes;
   – joint international accreditation of study programmes;
   – joint international accreditation of Chinese higher education institutions.

The decisions of the National Accreditation Board and the register of accredited programmes are published on NCPA's website.

2. Examining organizational and methodological issues.

The Board considered and discussed:

– regular rotation of the National Accreditation Board members;
– involvement of representatives of employers and students in the Board composition;
– setting up the Appeals Committee;
– plan of actions on fulfilling the recommendations of the ENQA External Review Panel;
– results of independent quality evaluation of Russian education: Federal Internet Exam for Bachelors, Federal Internet Exam in Professional Education;
– listing in EQAR APQR;
– results of the meeting of the Ministers of Education of the countries-participants of the Bologna process in Yerevan (May 14-15, 2015): revised ESG and the European approach to quality assurance of joint programmes;
– review of NCPA's regulatory documents following up on ENQA's Review Panel and EQAR Committee's recommendations;
– DEQAR database;
– requirements for selection of external review panel members and improving the quality of the final reports;
– results of the project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia";
– annual reports on NCPA's and the National Accreditation Board's performance;
– outcomes of the TEMPUS IV (EACEA 35/2012) ALIGN project «Achieving and Checking the Alignment between Academic Programmes and Qualification Frameworks».

The following documents were approved:

– Guidelines on External Review of Study Programmes: joint international accreditation with the Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute (ACQUIN, Germany);
– Guidelines on External Review of Study Programmes: joint international accreditation with the Higher Education Evaluation Centre of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (HEEC, China);
– Guidelines on External Review of Study Programmes: joint international accreditation with the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT, Taiwan);
– Guidelines on External Review of Study Programmes: joint international accreditation with the Accreditation Agency EVALAG (Germany);
– Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of an Institution of Further Professional Education;
– Guidelines on External Review of an Institution of Further Professional Education;

- Regulations on Public Accreditation, Standards and Criteria, Code of Ethics for Members of External Review Panels;
- Guidelines on External Review of Educational Programmes;
- Methodological Recommendations for External Review of Educational Programmes;
- Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Study Programmes;
- Recommendations on the Preparation of the Report on Corrective Actions;
- Regulations on the Appeals Procedure and the Appeals Committee;
- Regulations on the National Accreditation Board;
- Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation of Further Education Programmes.
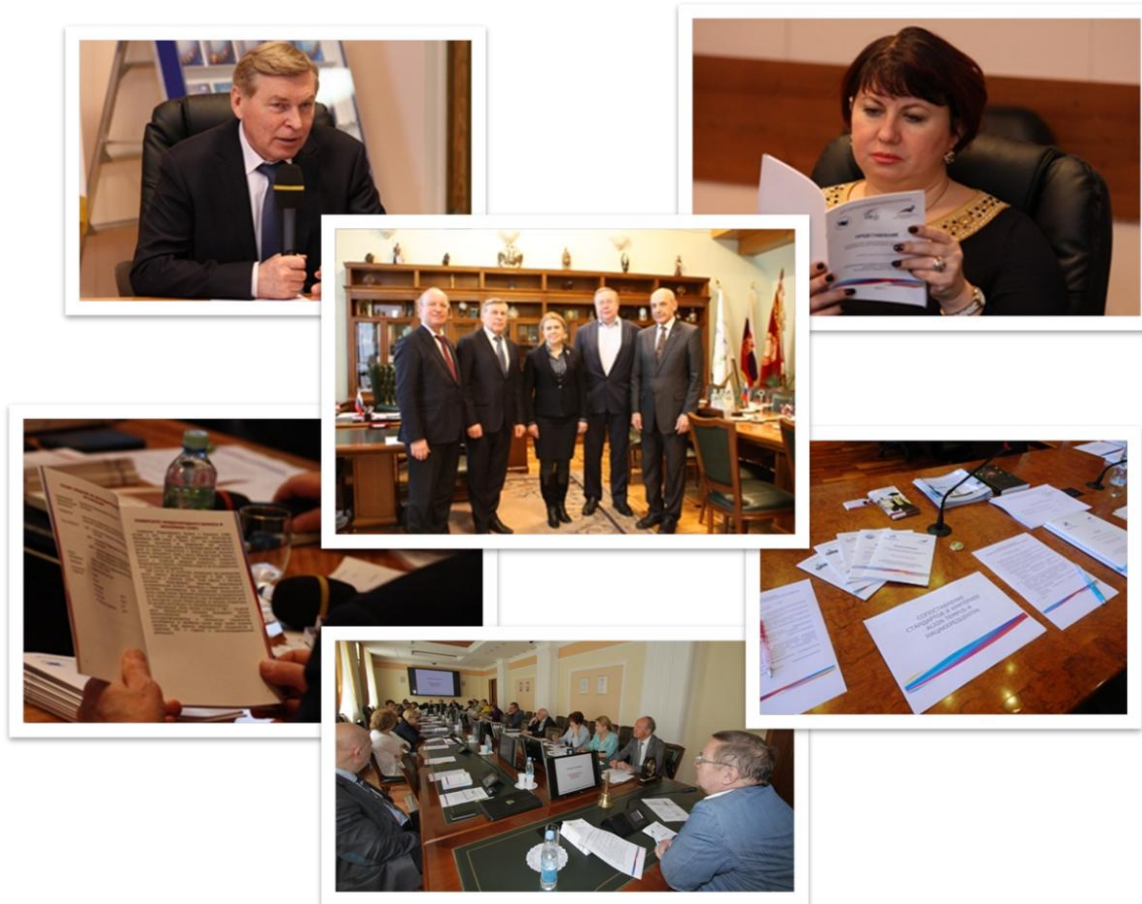
The number of accredited programmes in 2014-2018:

Year	Number of accredited programmes in Russian higher education institutions	Number of accredited programmes in terms of joint procedures with foreign agencies	Number of programmes accredited in foreign countries (China)
2014	119	-	-
2015	54	-	-
2016	73	11	-
2017	129	13	2
2018	81	-	3

ANNEX 3. NCPA'S PLAN OF ACTION FOR 2018 -2019

Area 1. Accreditation of study programmes		
Activities	Time	Person in charge
1.1 Conducting public (international, joint) accreditation of study programmes: consulting, drafting contracts, organizational issues	2018-2019 according to the schedule	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director P. Korotkov, Head of the Accreditation Office O. Matveeva, Deputy Head of the Accreditation Office
1.2 Signing bilateral agreements with associations of employers (*subject to Law № 273-Ф3 «On Education in the Russian Federation» of December 29, 2012)*	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director
1.3 Forming External Review Panels	2018-2019, according to the schedule	G. Bakumenko, Head of the Experts Office D. Koltsova, Manager of the Accreditation Office
1.4 Preparing documents for the meetings of the National Accreditation Board for decision-making	bi-annually (January, June)	P. Korotkov, Head of the Accreditation Office
1.5 Organizing meetings of the National Accreditation Board for decision-making	January 2019 June, 2019	P. Korotkov, Head of the Accreditation Office L. Popova, expert of the Methodology Office
Area 2. Public information		
Activities	Time	Person in charge
2.1 Publications in the journal *"Accreditation in Education"*	2018-2019	G. Motova, Deputy Director
2.2 Preparation and distribution of the electronic edition *"Vestnik Akkreditatsii"*	2018-2019 (2-3 times a month)	V. Navodnov, Director I. Berdinskaia, Secretary
2.3 Website maintenance www.ncpa.ru: publishing news, legal acts, normative documents, articles on issues of quality evaluation of study programmes	2018-2019	G. Motova, Deputy Director M. Odintsova, Manager of the Accreditation Office
2.4 Participation in round tables, seminars, forums on quality assurance of higher education	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director
2.5 Publication of the results of the project *"Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia"*	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director O. Ryzhakova, Manager of the Experts Office

Area 2. Public information		
Activities	Time	Person in charge
2.6 Preparation for publication of the annual APQN conference proceedings	2018-2019	G. Motova, Deputy Director O. Ryzhakova, Manager of the Experts Office M. Kurdiumova, expert of the International Relations Office
Area 3. International activities		
Activities	Time	Person in charge
3.1 Preparation for ENQA external review of the Agency	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director P. Korotkov, Head of the Accreditation Office O. Matveeva, Deputy Head of the Accreditation Office V. Chepurnykh, Head of the International Relations Office M. Kurdiumova, expert of the International Relations Office E. Savinykh, Head of the Methodology Office G. Bakumenko, Head of the Experts Office
3.2 Signing bilateral agreements with foreign and national QA organizations	2018-2019	G. Motova, Deputy Director V. Chepurnykh, Head of the International Relations Office
3.3 Contributing to ENQA, CEENQA, INQAAHE, APQN newsletters	2018-2019	G. Motova, Deputy Director V. Chepurnykh, Head of the International Relations Office
3.4 Participation in conferences and events organized by QA international networks: - ENQA seminar for agencies preparing for an initial external review - APQN General Assembly - INQAAHE Forum - Forum of ENQA members - Annual EAOKO Conference - CEENQA Assembly - IREG Forum	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director V. Chepurnykh, Head of the International Relations Office M. Kurdiumova, expert of the International Relations Office

Area 3. International activities		
Activities	Activities	Activities
3.5 Strengthening relations with foreign accreditation agencies (nomination of Russian experts, requests for nomination of foreign experts)	2018-2019	G. Motova, Deputy Director P. Korotkov, Head of the Accreditation Office V. Chepurnykh, Head of the International Relations Office G. Bakumenko, Head of the Experts Office D. Koltsova, Manager of the Accreditation Office
Area 4. Organizational and consulting activities		
Activities	Time	Person in charge
4.1 Organizational, technological support of HEI's representatives responsible for accreditation	2018 - 2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director P. Korotkov, Head of the Accreditation Office O. Matveeva, Deputy Head of the Accreditation Office E. Savinykh, Head of the Methodology Office
4.2 Organizational, technological support of external review panels	2018-2019	G. Bakumenko, Head of the Experts Office D. Koltsova, Manager of the Accreditation Office
Area 5. Methodological activities		
Activities	Time	Person in charge
5.1 Continuous improvement of technologies and methods of quality review of study programmes	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director P. Korotkov, Head of the Accreditation Office E. Savinykh, Head of the Methodology Office
5.2 Revision and updating of regulatory documents	2018-2019	G. Motova, Deputy Director E. Savinykh, Head of the Methodology Office

Area 6. Project activities		
Activities	Time	Person in charge
6.1 Improving the Russian Internet project "Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia"	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director O. Ryzhakova, Manager of the Experts Office
6.2 Participation in the project "It is time to live and study in Russia"	2018-2019	G. Motova, Deputy Director P. Korotkov, Head of the Accreditation Office
Area 7. Research activities		
Activities	Time	Person in charge
7.1 Examination and analysis of the national and international experience of organization and conducting institutional accreditation procedures	2018-2019	G. Motova, Deputy Director
7.2 Research into evaluation of students' achievements (Internet testing, Internet Olympiads)	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director
7.3 Research into assessment tools	2018-2019	E. Savinykh, Head of the Methodology Office G. Motova, Deputy Director
7.4 Development of innovative technologies in evaluation of education quality	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director
Area 8. Use of information technologies		
Activities	Time	Person in charge
8.1 Development and application of software		
Development of IT technologies in accreditation	2018-2019	R. Vildanov, Head of the Computer Resource Office
Using the "Docker" technology for enhancing the work of the website	2018-2019	V. Simbiriakov, System Administrator
8.2 Intranet		
Improvement of the local network	2018-2019	V. Simbiriakov, System Administrator
8.3 Internet technologies		
Website maintenance	2018-2019	V. Simbiriakov, System Administrator
Introduction of the system for monitoring VPS and cloud hosting	2018-2019	V. Simbiriakov, System Administrator

Area 9. Development of human resources		
Activities	Time	Person in charge
9.1 Participation of the staff in internal and external seminars, conferences for professional development	2018-2019 (not less than once a month)	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director
9.2 Internships (at national and international levels)	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director
9.3 Support of research of the staff	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director
9.4 Corporate events	2018-2019	V. Navodnov, Director G. Motova, Deputy Director

ANNEX 4. SURVEY RESULTS

SECTION 1

Questionnaire for experts and representatives of higher educational institutions who participated in reviews by the National Centre for Public Accreditation

On completion of accreditation of study programmes, each expert is encouraged to take part in an online survey by answering questions on the quality of the review procedure.

163 respondents took part in this survey from January 2014 to July 2018.

The questionnaire is available in Russian and English for Russian and international experts.

The questionnaire consists of five sections:

1. Documentation provided by the higher educational institution and the National Centre for Public Accreditation.
2. Site visit of the External Review Panel to the HEI.
3. Standards and criteria.
4. Report on the findings and follow-up.
5. General comments.

Summarizing the results of the survey the following conclusions can be made:

1. DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED BY THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION AND THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PUBLIC ACCREDITATION

Most of the experts (78.5 %) pointed out that the institution provided full documentation (self-evaluation report and documentary evidence) for external review. 17.8% noted that initially the report of the institution did not contain all the necessary information, but all the required documents were supplied during the site visit. 3.7% of all the experts (including international ones) mentioned the excessively formal character of the self-evaluation report, lack of evidence, visual materials and statistics.
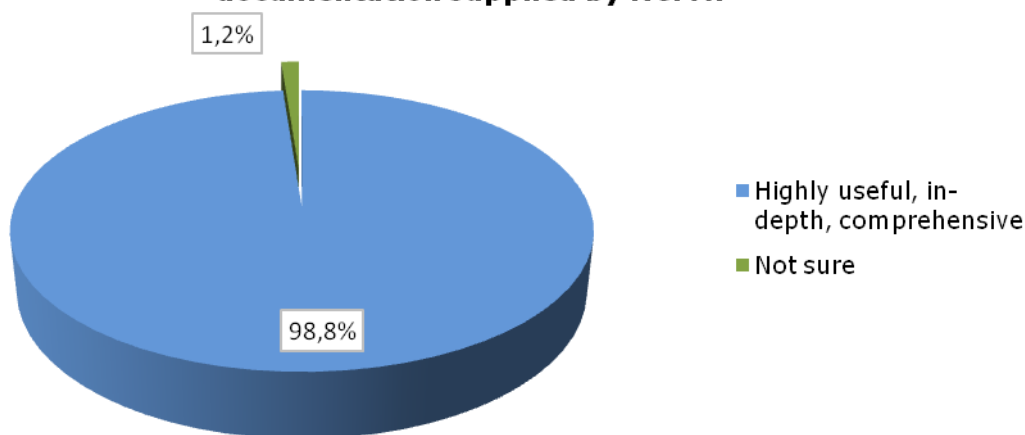
What concerns the documentation and support offered by the National Centre for Public Accreditation, 98.8% of the respondents found it as useful, necessary, in-depth, and comprehensive. It allowed the experts to adequately prepare themselves for the external review and identify the institution's strengths and weaknesses. Many experts emphasized the highest level of professional competence of the National Centre for Public Accreditation staff. They also noted the clarity and consistency of the Guidelines on External Review of Educational Programmes that helped to quickly understand the evaluation procedure.

Question 1.1. Did you find the self-evaluation documentation of the institution adequate? (This refers to the self-evaluation report and all the documents provided by the institution)

- Perfectly adequate
- Not adequate
- Formal character (lack of evidence, visual materials and statistics)

3,7%
17,8%
78,5%
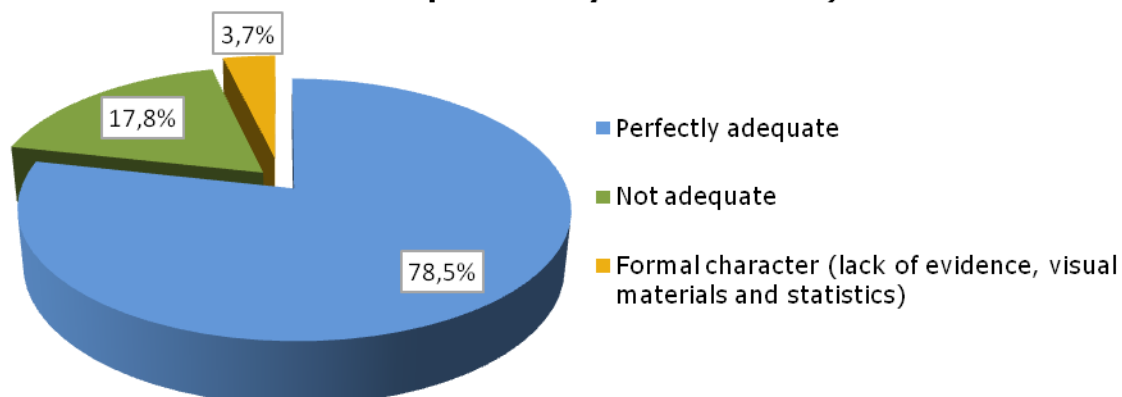
Question 1.2. How useful was the preparatory documentation supplied by NCPA?

1,2%

98,8%

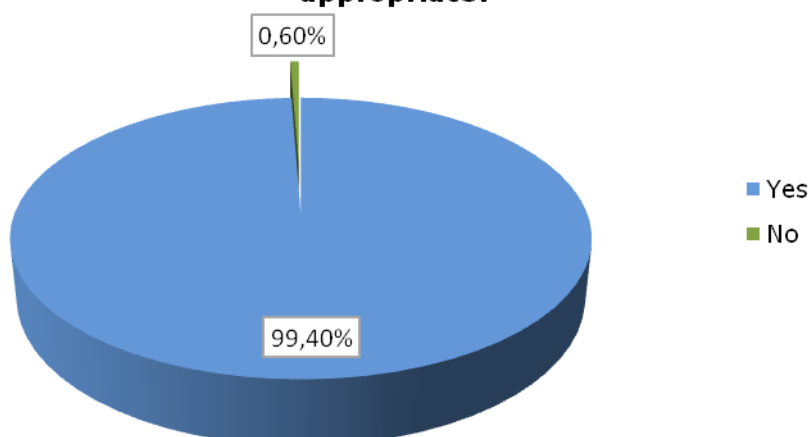- Highly useful, in-depth, comprehensive
- Not sure

2. SITE VISIT OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Most of the experts (99.4%) have a positive opinion about the work and the composition of the External Review Panels. According to all the experts' opinion (100%), the tasks and different roles in the Review Panel were divided appropriately. Some of the Review Panel members suggested extending the visit for an opportunity to attend classes and a more in-depth scrutiny of the documents and communication with teachers and students. However, this did not have an impact on the quality and the results of the report, since the conclusions were based on the specific data received during the review.
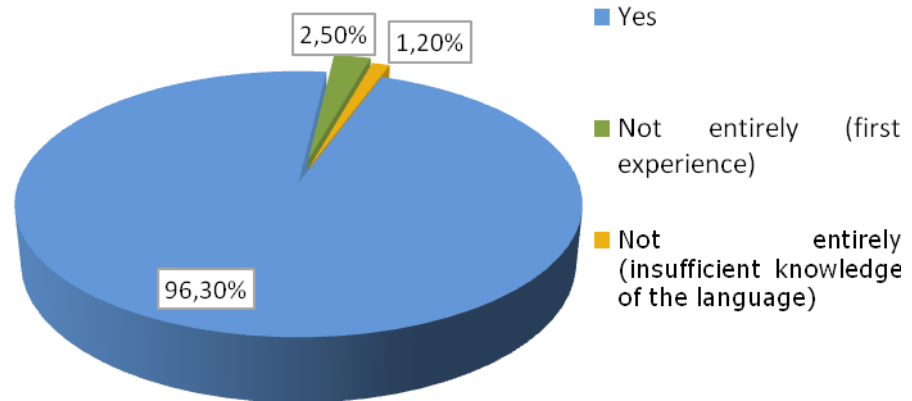
Some members of the Review Panel (2.5%) did not feel confident enough because it was their first experience as an expert, but the methodological support and guidance provided by the National Centre for Public Accreditation coordinators, as well as communication with other experts, helped them to fit in and feel more positive. A few experts (1.2%) were not satisfied with their level of English that slowed down their communication with the international members of the Review Panel (although competent interpreters helped to overcome this obstacle).

## Question 2.1. Was the composition of the Review Panel appropriate?

0,60%

99,40%

- Yes
- No

Question 2.2. Did you feel adequately briefed and prepared for a review of this scope?

2,50% 1,20%

■ Yes

■ Not entirely (first experience)

■ Not entirely (insufficient knowledge of the language)

96,30%

Question 2.3. What is your opinion on the distribution of roles and tasks in the Review Panel?
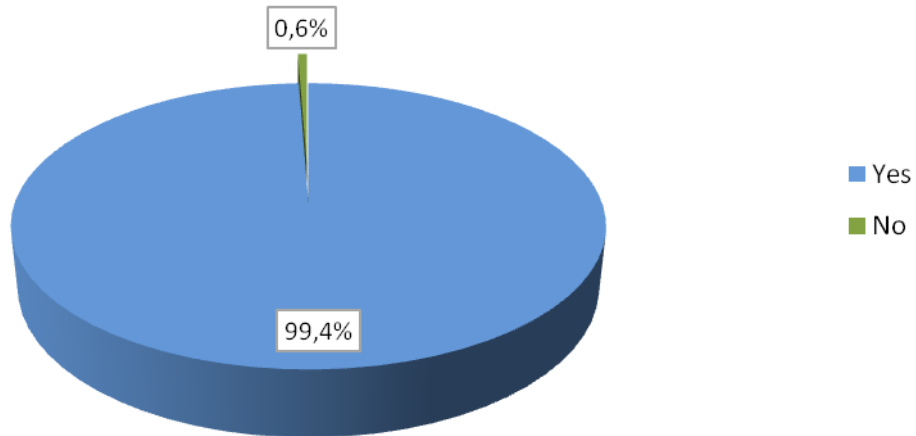
■ Very appropriate
■ Not appropriate

100%
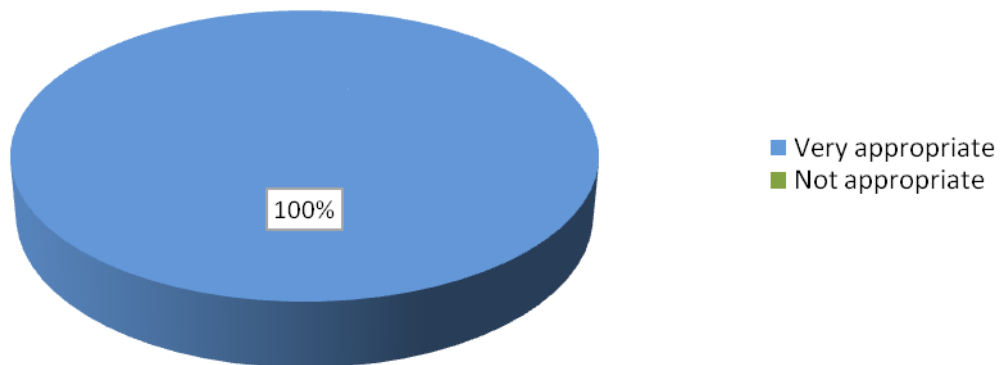
Question 2.4. Did NCPA review process enable a fair and rigorous consideration of the evidence supplied by the institution?

0,6%

■ Yes

■ No

99,4%
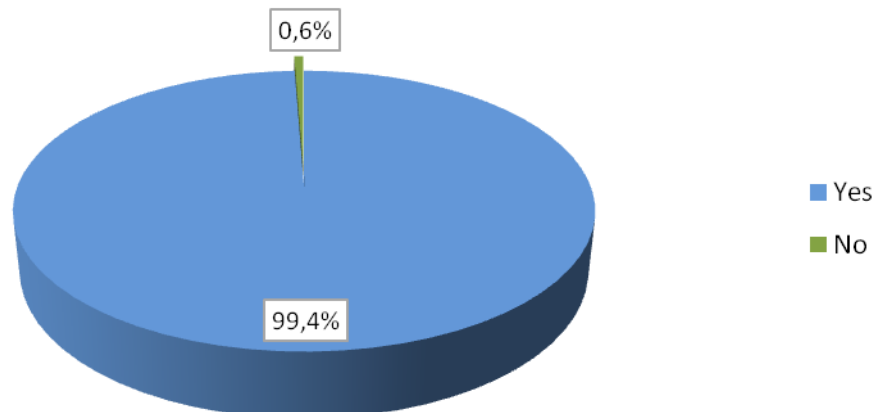
Question 2.5. Did you find the report following the external review adequate? Do you think that the conclusions in the report are based on the specific data?

0,6%

99,4%

- Yes
- No

3. STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

All the experts (100%) find the standards and criteria developed by NCPA fully adequate for the objectives of the review. However, some experts (3.7%) interpreted certain terminology in different ways, for example, standards 1, 2, 7, 9, and 10. 23.3% of the respondents suggested revising and improving the standards and criteria of the National Centre for Public Accreditation. One suggestion was to reduce the number of standards because some of them overlap; to add the following criteria "A system of professional certification of students", "Involving students in research".

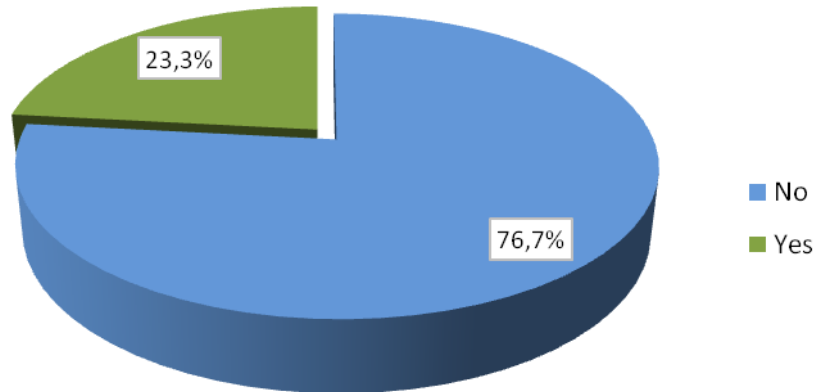**Question 3.1. Did you feel that the standards and criteria for review were adequate?**

100%

- Yes
- No
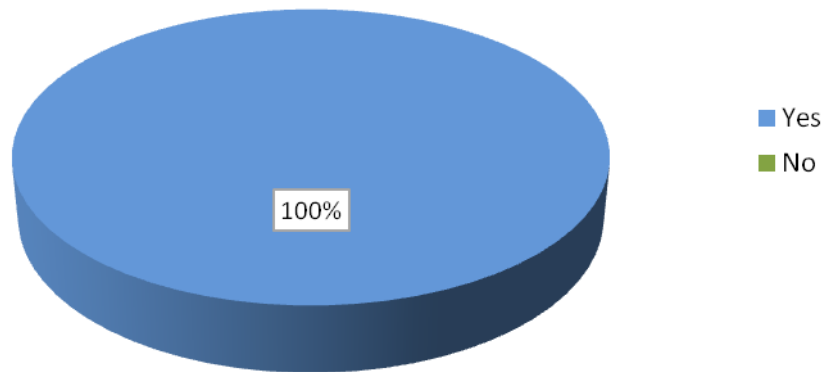
**Question 3.2. Are NCPA standards and criteria sufficiently clear?**

3,7

96,3

- Yes
- Not always
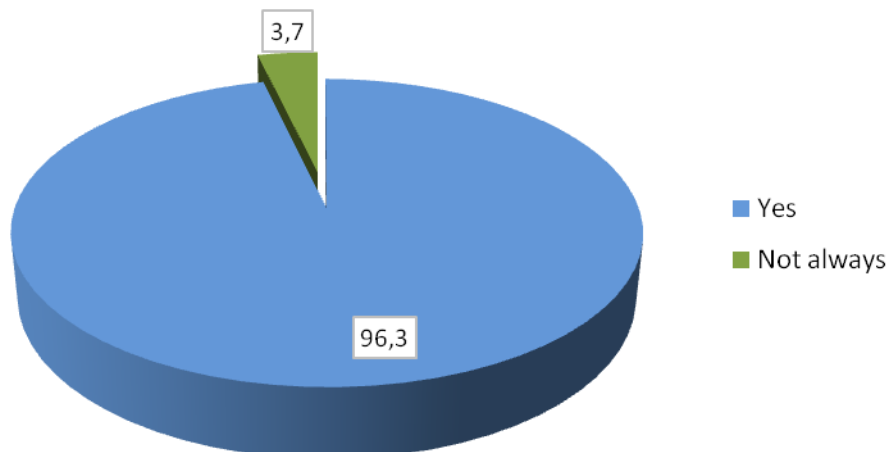
Question 3.3. Would you suggest any improvements to NCPA standards and criteria?

23,3%

76,7%

■ No
■ Yes

4. REPORT ON THE FINDINGS AND FOLLOW-UP

On the whole, all the experts (100%) are of high opinion on the external review procedure since it allows the institution to look at itself from a different angle, identify its strengths and weaknesses, and receive advice on improving its competitive performance. Clear and documented procedures, well-thought-out evaluation criteria developed by the National Centre for Public Accreditation give the opportunity of receiving, over a short period of time, as much information as possible for the external review of the educational institution. As the experts point out, there were no laymen on the Review Panel: all the members were representatives of the leading national universities, employers, and student community; all of them were competent enough for conducting the review. According to most experts' opinion (99.4%), the representatives of the higher educational institutions showed a sincere interest in exploring the problems, receiving fair evaluation and provided full assistance to the Review Panel. However, in some cases (0.6%) the communication with the top managers of the institution was not satisfying enough, but later the required information became available from other sources.

Question 4.1. How did you experience the whole review procedure?
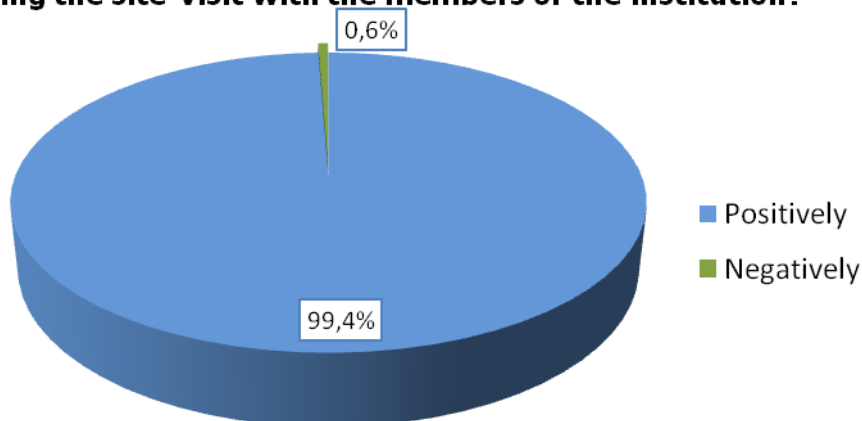
100%

■ Very positively
■ Negatively
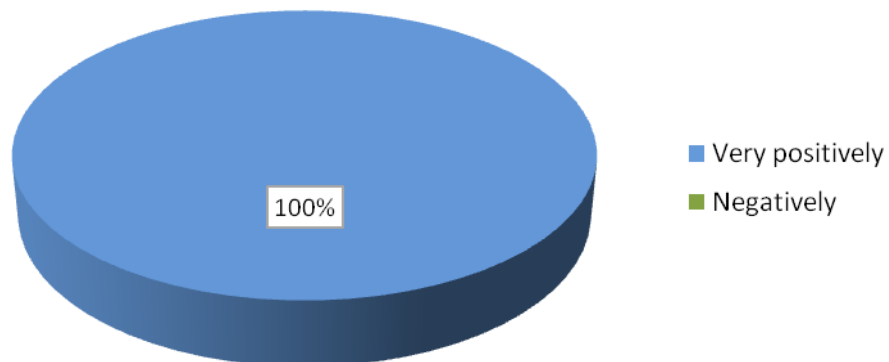
Question 4.2. How did you experience the communication during the site-visit with the other members of the Review Panel? whole review procedure?

100%

■ Very positively
■ Negatively
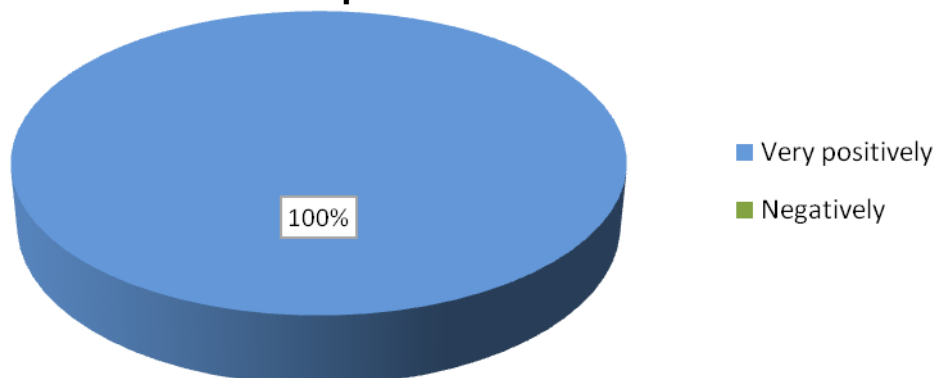
Question 4.3. How did you experience the communication during the site-visit with the members of the institution?
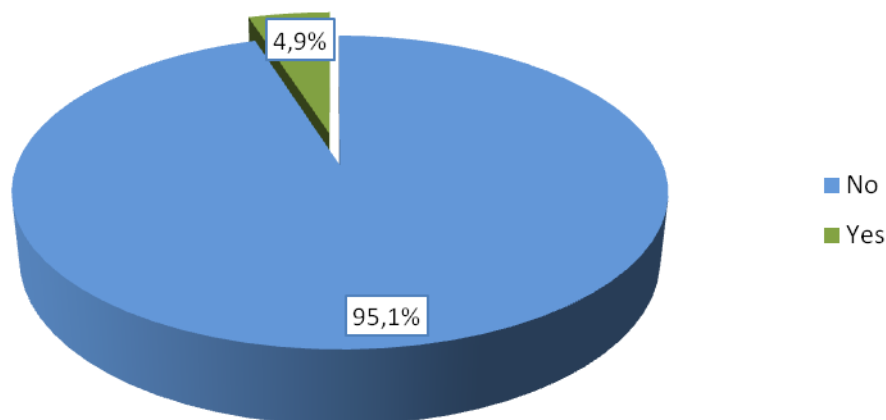

Question 4.4. Could you comment on the follow-up procedure?

No. There were no follow-up problems.

Too much workload at my primary job doesn't let me enjoy the follow-up.

Good logistics. All the procedures have been finished. From the point of view of modern management, the cycle is completed.

Question 4.5. Did you feel that language was in any way an obstacle?

5. GENERAL COMMENTS

Most experts agreed to participate in the external review of study programmes with the aim of professional development, taking part in the procedure of public accreditation, getting to know modern global standards of education quality and how to implement them in Russian universities. Some respondents think that the public review is much more beneficial and interesting than state accreditation and understanding of the public review process may be useful for Russian educational institutions. Many experts are representatives of higher educational institutions. This is why examining the activities of other institutions, their strong and weak points, gives an incentive to improve the education process in their own institutions.

All the experts (100%) note the highest level of the review organization. Some respondents recommend adding national evaluation criteria because foreign standards, when translated word for word, do not always allow them to adequately evaluate the institution's activities; specifying the professional community requirements as to implementing occupational standards in the education process. It seems appropriate to publish information on the advantages of international / public accreditation in mass media.

The experts having experience in the external reviews abroad pointed out that education abroad involves a greater use of computer-based technologies while Russian education follows the old tradition of communication that builds communicative competence, passes on experience and knowledge, and keeps values.

Most of the respondents emphasized a high level of the teaching staff competence in the educational programmes under review, a practice oriented approach, the fundamental character of training, and sufficient material and technical resources.

Question 5.1. Why did you agree to participate in the external review of Russian study programmes?

Professional interest, gaining life experience.

To me, this is a completely different activity, useful for my professional growth.

My goal is to get to know: 1) the quality of study programmes in a certain higher educational institution very famous in Russia; 2) the methods of organizing and conducting public accreditation carried out by the National Centre for Public Accreditation.

I'm interested in the ways the education process and research are organized in a different higher educational institution. The communication with other members of the Review Panel was stimulating and useful to me. On the whole, I find this procedure more beneficial and effective than state accreditation. In my opinion, this is how state accreditation of research institutes and federal universities should be conducted.

What I learned about the activities of other higher educational institutions, both strengths and weaknesses, expanded on my vision of organizing a similar process in my own university.

Every time I learn something new for me as well. It is also the possibility to compare similarities and differences in the countries in similar programmes.

Our country has just joined the Bologna process. This is why we value the experience of the neighboring country. I'm sure that understanding of the process of public accreditation will come in useful for our universities. I'm going to make a presentation about my work in the review procedure for the Educational and Methodological Commission of my institute and at the department meeting.

Education achievements and national approach to university education in Russia.

I wanted to experience the procedure of public accreditation, get to know modern global standards of education quality and ways of implementing them in Russian universities. I think it is an excellent opportunity to learn first-hand the best practices of the key universities in the country and then introduce them in my university. This is also helpful in terms of preparing my university for public accreditation.

Question 5.2. What was the most challenging in the review? the most beneficial? the most surprising?

The most challenging activity was reviewing documents. The most beneficial aspect was meeting colleagues, learning about their achievements and problems. What surprised me was the fact that some staff of the institution were not confident about their work.

Giving marks proved the most challenging thing, especially evaluating each criteria.

I found the busy schedule the most challenging: a lot of meetings, much information to analyze and work out fair independent assessment. Exchange of best practices and communicating with colleagues was the most beneficial experience. I could also note the staff and administration's lack of a common vision of further development of the institution.

To me, the most challenging and time-consuming was the preliminary analysis of the supplied materials (self-evaluation report). The interviews were the most beneficial.

One of the biggest challenges was communication with the institution administration and professors, their different opinions on the role of the institution and its development roadmap. The most beneficial activity was communication with students.

The beginning was the most difficult to me: the first hours of the first day. The most beneficial aspect was communication with all the representatives of the institution (administration, professors, students) and members of the Review Panel. I was surprised by the high level of organization of activities in the university.

Sometimes it was difficult for me to understand which standard this or that indicator refers to. It was also hard to produce the report in a very limited time. In my opinion, communication with international colleagues was a great benefit.

Question 5.3. Which improvements would you suggest regarding organization of external reviews and system of public accreditation in Russia in general?

As they say, there is always room for improvement, but in my opinion, the organization of the review was perfect: everything was carefully planned, there was everything needed for working with the documents and communicating with representatives of different communities.

I would suggest developing national evaluation criteria because sometimes international standards translated into Russian cannot be applied to adequately assess the institution's activities.

Impeccable organization. A lot of professional accreditation bodies appear today, but not all of them should. In my opinion, these new bodies must be certified, or they should follow some other procedure to identity their level of work. The Russian Accreditation Agency might do this. Or it may be helpful to create a community of the Russian accreditation organizations. Nowadays everyone works the way they can, and this doesn't always mean well.

My suggestion is to extend the time of the review process.

I would suggest creating and using national standards.

I think it is necessary to publish information on the advantages of international / public review in mass media.

Challenges: contrast between a) achievements in education (very high level!) and b) public communication of education advantages (achievements are not visible abroad at all) most useful: many suggestions for education development in Europe most surprising.

The most difficult thing was the language barrier. The most useful was finding very modern evaluation procedures and criteria in the NCPA practice. The most surprising were some good and innovative quality insurance practice in evaluated universities.

It was beneficial for me to compare different approaches to the quality of higher education implemented in the ENQA and ISO 9000 standards. I find it very useful to have an experience of working in the Review Panel.

Question 5.4. What are the major differences between the Russian study programmes and similar programmes in your country?

Students in other countries are more independent in their studies while Russian education is more practice-oriented.

Many study programmes abroad regard students as equal participants of the education process whereas this doesn't always exist in Russian universities.

The biggest difference is that education abroad involves computer-based technologies. Russian education, however, follows the DISTINGUISHED tradition of communication that builds communicative competence, passes on experience and knowledge, and keeps values

In Russia, the professors' workload is significantly lower, but involvement of the academic staff and students in research is much greater. Professors' salary is very low.

Better humanitarian education, low level of independence and experience of students in daily questions of study organization, less abilities and skills in communication and presentation of individual and national advantages, very low motivation to learn foreign languages and to collect professional experience abroad, high level of knowledge in natural sciences.

The evaluation practice in Russia is quite similar to the evaluation in Lithuania, for the evaluation of the study programs. In Romania, the evaluation of the study programs is a little different, yet the institutional evaluation is quite similar to the study programs evaluation in Russia.

Question 5.5. Further comments

The external review was prepared and conducted by the National Centre for Public Accreditation at a very high level in accordance with the Bologna principles and ESG standards.

I'd like to sincerely thank the Review Panel supervisors of the National Centre for Public Accreditation. Although they never showed it, but I could see what hard work they were doing, how many obstacles they had to overcome and what unexpected challenges they had to urgently respond to. They dealt with all the difficulties remarkably.

I think not only educational institutions should be reviewed, but also other organizations in the field of medicine, housing and utilities services, and public officials at all levels.

Question 5.6. Could you point out positive characteristics of the reviewed study programmes?

Highly competent teaching staff.

During the implementation of general study and further professional development programmes, there is a close connection between the professors and the institution's administration with municipal and regional administrating authorities.

Students' strong motivation.

Cooperation with municipal and regional administrating authorities, business communities, production, relevance to consumers' needs, taking into account regional traditions.

High motivation of business communities to take part in different formats of students' learning paths.

Practice-oriented education, fundamental training, excellent facilities, active teaching staff.

A wide range of international exchange and internship programmes, persistent efforts in professional advancement.

The programmes are fully implemented in English; student and professor academic mobility.

SECTION 2.

Analysis of stakeholders' feedback

Representatives of educational institutions:

Dmitriy Arsenyev, Vice-Rector for International Affairs of Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University:

International accreditation helps to evaluate the quality of the study programmes in the higher educational institution, see if they are in line with the European quality standards, receive experts' advice on further improvement of the programmes. However, this only refers to advanced programmes. Over the last two years, our university has been developing the double-diploma programmes implemented together with leading global research centres. We expect graduates in these programmes in 2016-2017. When these programmes get more "mature", we will consider their international review because this will improve the competitive ability of our university.

The primary goal of the educational programmes in our university is to improve the teaching quality and train students with high employability. But above all, we would like to build a friendly international atmosphere in the university.

Andrey Shushin, Vice-President for Academic Affairs of the Far Eastern Federal University:

International accreditation is a valuable tool that conveys certain information about the study programmes to experts, employers, applicants and their parents. This is the evidence of the study programme quality, its compliance with the highest quality standards.

Felix Azhimov, Director for Expertise and Analytics, Director of School of Humanities of the Far Eastern Federal University:

While state accreditation is focused on reviewing documentation, international experts pay special attention to the close contact established between the School management and all the other interested parties, how significant is the employers' influence on the study programme contents, what students think about the educational services offered. International review of the History study programme proved to be a major breakthrough. We hope this will raise interest in this programme among international students and improve cooperation with international partners.

Irina Kuksa, Senior Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs of Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University:

International public accreditation of my university is, above all, an independent review. The second important aspect is that the procedure is not focused on analyzing documents, but mostly involves reviewing real processes. This is why the main activity of the Panel is communicating with the teaching staff, students and graduates of our university, our partners and employers. 60 experts and observers from Russia, China, and European countries visited

our university. The Panel also included students and employers. The experts were sincerely interested in identifying areas of growth rather than find drawbacks and flaws. The experts' conclusions became the basis for the optimization of our educational activities.

I think the primary goal of any review is to understand the level of our study programmes, teaching staff, student training with regard to international requirements and standards of education quality.

The goal we achieved during the accreditation process was to show our Chinese colleagues that Russian education is actually very good. It was very important for solving our inner problems: we had to understand where we were and how fast we developed in terms of international trends.

Accreditation became one of the mechanisms of improving all our activities, especially international. We enhanced academic mobility following the conclusions of the review.

One of the impressive results was the fact that over the last two years the number of research papers indexed in famous global databases has risen by ten folds. This is a great achievement stimulated by the international review.

In my opinion, we contributed to the cooperation between Russia and China because we were the first university where this procedure took place.

Nikolay Tarasevich, Vice-Rector for Academic Association of Chaikovsky Moscow State Conservatoire:

As far as I can see, public and especially international accreditation gives the institution under review an opportunity to look at itself from other specialists' point of view, and this is essential. Our institution, like many other universities, keeps up its image and wants to be the best institution in its field. If you look at yourself in the mirror, you will see what other people see. When it comes to international accreditation, there is no fear of losing anything. You clearly benefit from international experts' advice on further development.

Andrey Rudskoy, Rector of Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, Academician of the Russian Academy of Education:

International accreditation should become a routine procedure in the Polytechnic University since it assures the quality of study programmes and gives the university an opportunity to take a proper place on the global market.

North-Caucasus Federal University:

Compared to state accreditation, public review imposes more stringent requirements. This is why our university aims to bring its study programmes up-to-date with the global standards. Accredited educational programmes guarantee a high quality of education and improve our competitive ability on the market of educational services.

Samara State Medical University:

During the review procedure the experts pointed out a high level of student training. They also emphasized that the system of quality management already in place in the academy presents a great potential for further improvement of the study programmes, implementing innovative methods and technologies, and integration in the global educational environment.

Altai State University:

Undertaking the procedure of external international public review promotes the competitiveness of the study programmes in the Russian educational environment, improves the university rating, and student employability.

Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov:

It is the third time our university presented its study programmes for international public review. This was the requirement of the university development programme, but the benefits this accreditation gives (communication with Russian and international colleagues, employers and students, their suggestions and advice) motivates us to seek external independent evaluation of our educational programmes.

National Accreditation Board members:

Viktor Bolotov, Chair of the National Accreditation Board, Academician of the Russian Academy of Education:

The world treats higher educational institutions based on their ratings and different evaluation systems. We no longer can afford to say that we are too proud to be evaluated. As Y.P. Pokholkov said, "Of course, our universities are the best in the world; it's just that the world doesn't know about them". This is why we have to take part in these procedures if we really want to be involved in the global context.

What benefits does the international public accreditation offer? Apart from learning where we are and where we are going to, where we lag behind and where we are ahead of others, we also meet partners who help us grow and with whom we can cooperate. A university may also appeal for international review in case state accreditation experts pronounce negative judgement.

The Russian government has been insisting on exporting the national education, but how do international applicants learn about our best universities? There are two ways. The university may take part in the international rating, especially in the 5-100 Project. The second option is to hold international public review of the study programmes that will show international applicants which programmes are truly high-quality and which ones are not.

One major priority is cooperation with international colleagues. Russian and international students who participate in mobility programmes need educational quality assurance.

Galina Mayarovskaya, National Accreditation Board member, Rector of the Gnessins Russian Academy of Music, President of Association of Music Educational Institutions:

We must always keep in mind that we are in a common educational environment and European universities may share their best practices with us. We have been accredited twice so far. One of the successful outcomes is that following these two reviews our international colleagues are eager to communicate with us and adopt our best practices. For example, we closely cooperate with Stuttgart conservatoire, and they are sorry that Russia switched to bachelor and master degrees. They specifically want to communicate in the sphere of training for a specialist degree.

Art universities often experience problems in the process of international accreditation. International experts do not understand the basic aspect: we offer practice-oriented workshop-based education. This no longer exists abroad. Our applicants have 14 years of training. When experts ask students about mobility, they answer that they have no intention of going anywhere: "I've been trained by this teacher since I was six years old and I wouldn't like to have a different teacher". Experts see this as a weakness: "You prefer employing your graduates which means you are a closed organization that does not want to become part of the global educational environment". However, what we are trying to prove is that this is our strength, the basis for our professional education.

Vladimir Laptev, Vice-President of the Russian Academy of Education, Vice-Rector of the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia:

In my opinion, this is a benefit that the representatives of the Russian Academy of Education worked together with public review experts. Victor Bolotov, Academician of the Russian Academy of Education, is also Chair of the National Accreditation Board which ensures the use of the intellectual resources of the academy during accreditation procedures.

Valeriy Telichenko, Senior Vice-President of the Russian Academy of Architecture and Civil Engineering Sciences, Honorary President of the International Association of Higher Education Institutions for Civil Engineering, Vice-President of the Russian Union of Builders:

Institute for Civil Engineering and Architecture of Peter the Great Polytechnic University is a part of the association of higher educational institutions for civil engineering. Joint accreditation of construction study programmes is a major step in the development of education in the sphere of civil engineering. Not every Russian institution can take this step.

Mark Kalinin, Head of the Department of Cooperation in Education and Science, the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation:

Within the framework of the priority project on the development of the Russian education export, the number of international students is expected to double by 2025. This requires considerable effort with regard to identifying new approaches to marketing and promoting Russian education abroad.

It becomes important to show where the university is in the Russian and international ratings and what other benefits the university can offer to applicants. In this respect international accreditation significantly improves graduates' employability because, as a rule, public review is carried out by experts representing academic and professional communities. This is why we look at the university as a whole, try to single out its most powerful areas of strength, and we pay special attention to international promotion of the best study programmes of Russian universities.

I absolutely agree that there are two aspects playing a significant role for an international applicant who makes a decision which university to choose. The first aspect is the participation of Russian universities in the leading international ratings and the second one is international accreditation.

While state accreditation measures the minimal threshold quality level of a study programme or university, international review shows real quality of the study programme or university according to the quality scale. This often becomes the selection criterion for international students.

Russian institutes of public review have come a long way over the last 15 years. These procedures and quality indicators, as well as experts who carry out this work, have been internationally recognized. The approaches used by these organizations are developed in accordance with the best international practices and sometimes even exceed them. International public review (of both study programmes and institutions) provides benefits to the universities participating in the 5-100 projects, and those universities that are part of the Russian education export project, and to other universities having significant material resources to educate a big number of international students.

Sometimes, when selecting university, students don't only take into account their geographical location, but also the quality of a certain study programme. So their choice may be influenced by certificates on international recognition issued by a reputable expert community.

Representatives of international accrediting organizations:

Vu Yan, General Director of the Higher Education Evaluation Centre of the Ministry for Education of the People's Republic of China:

Joint accreditation of study programmes of the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE, People's Republic of China) is a strategic initiative in the sphere of quality assurance which was launched due to close cooperation in the process of aligning the quality assurance standards and procedures. We are grateful to our Russian colleagues for careful selection of highly qualified experts having wide experience in quality assurance. The participation of Russian experts in the review ensured the fair nature of the procedure and thorough evaluation of the study programmes.

The successful joint accreditation became a major step to long-term cooperation in the sphere of quality assurance between Russia and China.

SECTION 3

Results of surveying the stakeholders on strategic issues

This survey covered academic experts, both Russian and international, who have been involved in accreditation procedures on multiple occasions, and representatives of higher educational institutions who are responsible for accreditation and who have undergone accreditation procedures by the National Centre for Public Accreditation three times and more.

Following this survey we came to these conclusions.

All the Russian experts (100%) participating in the survey think positively about the work of the Review Panel part of which they were during accreditation procedures. These experts

emphasized the high level of the preparatory efforts taken by the Centre employees. Due to this the panel experienced no organizational difficulties on a site visit to the higher educational institution.

85.7% of the respondents took part in accreditation procedures before 2016 while the rest 14.3% - after 2016. Starting with 2016 the National Centre for Public Accreditation evaluates study programmes in compliance with the revised ESG standards (transition to ten standards). Most of the experts (71.4%) pointed out fundamental discrepancies between the accreditation procedures based on seven standards before and based on ten standards at the present moment. According to some experts' opinion, the ten standards correspond to the stages of the life cycle of the study programmes under review: development, implementation, analysis, adjustment, updating. 42.85% of the respondents found it more convenient to apply ten standards since the new *Guidelines for External Reviews of Study Programmes* establishes experts' actions in a more specific and clear way. 14.3% of the experts prefer using the seven more explicit standards. 42.85% noticed no crucial differences because the activities of the Review Panel did not significantly change.

All the respondents were pleased with their work as an expert. They found it interesting and beneficial for their further activities. 57.1% of the experts noted that the higher educational institutions they worked in had never undergone the public accreditation procedure.

All the international experts, the Review Panel members, thought positively about the work of the National Centre for Public Accreditation employees and indicated that the procedures of external review of study programmes were conducted in strict accordance with the European standards ESG / ENQA; all the activities during the site visit were carefully planned. They also mentioned the high level of professional competence of the Centre employees and a thorough understanding of the teaching quality issues.

In order to improve the activity of Review Panels and the National Centre for Public Accreditation, the experts have suggested the following.

With a view to enhance the efficiency of the Review Panel work it would be appropriate for the experts (headed by the Chair) to determine the key issues that rose following the reading of the self-evaluation report and use these issues to develop a strategy for the site visit. Some international experts recommend selecting the representatives of the higher educational institution and students with the best English speaking skills in order to minimize the language barrier and conduct the meetings crucial for evaluation without an interpreter.

Most of the international experts (66.7%) see no significant difference between the seven and ten-standard review procedures.

All the experts were satisfied with the review panel activity. They found their experience beneficial for them personally and for the organization they work in.

According to the international experts, the Centre employees work efficiently with the institutions to be reviewed on the self-evaluation report, the result of which is a well articulated and properly organized paper developed in compliance with the ESG requirements.

Among other organizations in the quality assurance sphere, the National Centre for Public Accreditation is remarkable for its highly competent, responsible, and outgoing staff, involvement of international experts, efficient organization of the review procedures.

All the representatives of the higher education institutions (100%) find the public accreditation procedures by the National Centre for Public Accreditation highly beneficial for their institutions. For example, 80% of the respondents indicate a growing interest of the regional professional community in the evaluated institution following the review procedure.

80% of the respondents think that the ten-standard evaluation is more convenient and fair since it gives the opportunity to provide more information on implementing study programmes. However, some standards overlap, for example, standards 3 and 4, 7 and 9.

Most of the representatives of the higher educational institutions (80%) intend to further participate in the review procedures conducted by the National Centre for Public Accreditation.

ANNEX 5. NCPA'S COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

Membership in international organizations

ENQA – European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

INQAAHE – International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

APQN – Asia-Pacific Quality Network

CEENQA – Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

IREG – International Ranking Expert Group

Cooperation agreements with foreign accreditation agencies

AACCUP – Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines

ANQA – National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation, Armenia

ARACIS – Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

ASHE – Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education

ACCR – Accreditation Commission Czech Republic

ACQUIN – Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute, Germany

EKKA – Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency

EVALAG – Accreditation agency EVALAG, Germany (evaluation agency Baden-Wurtemberg)

FIBAA – Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation, Germany

HCERES – Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education, France

HEA B&H – Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina

HEEACT – Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of Taiwan

HEEC – Higher Education Evaluation Center Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China

HEQEC – Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre, Latvia

NAAC – National Assessment and Accreditation Council, India

SEEI – Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute, China

SKVC – Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, Lithuania

SQAA – Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education)

YODAK – Higher Education, Planning, Evaluation, Accreditation and Coordination Council, Turkey

IAAR – Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating, Kazakhstan

NAC – National Accreditation Center of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan

ААОПО – Agency for accreditation of educational programs and organizations, the Kyrgyz Republic

MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement, Belgium

National cooperation agreements

– *subject-specific ministries and departments*: Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Bashkortostan, Department of Healthcare of Primorsk Territory;

– *national and regional professional associations and associations of employers*: Association of Music Educational Institutions, Guild of Experts in Higher Education, Association of Forest Education, Regional Association of Employers «Union of Industrials and Entrepreneurs of the Arkhangelsk Region», Union of Architects of Russia, Interregional Association of Chief Executive Officers;

– *international public associations*: "Russia Designers Association"

– *professional associations*: Siberian Agency for Qualification Development;

– *independent educational and research organizations*: National Fund for Support of Innovations in Education, Free Economic Society of Russia, Society "Knowledge" of Russia, Central Institute of Continious Education of the Society "Knowledge" of Russia (CICE), Research Institute of Education Quality Monitoring, Educational and Methodological Association for Education in Building, Educational and Methodological Association of Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics, and Informatics in certain areas («Applied Informatics», «Statistics», «Mathematical Methods in Economics», «Crisis Management»);

– *student associations and unions*: Russian Student Union, All-Russia Student Union;

– *mass media*: Publishing House «Accreditation in Education».

ANNEX 6. STRATEGIC PLAN OF NCPA'S DEVELOPMENT FOR 2017-2022

INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan of NCPA is developed on the basis of the mission and long-term objectives for 2017-2022. Following the implementation of the previous plan NCPA strengthened its position in the system of independent evaluation of education quality and successfully continues integration with the environment.

The main goal of the strategic plan is improving the effectiveness of NCPA's activities in exercising functions on quality assurance of educational institutions and promoting development of the system of education quality evaluation in the Russian Federation. NCPA aims at becoming the leading reputable accreditation agency with a high level of credibility in the country and abroad.

The NCPA's plan was developed with the account of current changes in the environment (changes in the regulatory framework on evaluation of education quality) and internal capacities of the organization on improving the effectiveness of activities and rectifying defects indentified during the self-evaluation procedure.

The following aspects were analyzed when developing the strategic plan:

- Statutes and internal documents of NCPA;

- Legislation in the sphere of education;

- ESG;

- Results of NCPA's work for 2011-2017.

The draft strategic plan was discussed with external stakeholders. As a result, their proposals are presented in the plan and strategic areas of NCPA's work for the following 5 years have been developed.

MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF NCPA

NCPA's mission involves improving the quality of education, forming the culture of quality in educational institutions, promoting the image of Russian education nationally and abroad by way undertaking public accreditation of educational programmes in compliance with the European standards of quality assurance with due account of Russian legislation and traditions of Russian higher education.

The mission is carried out by achieving the intended goals and objectives described in the Statutes of the organization:

- independent evaluation of education quality and carrying out public accreditation of study programmes of higher, secondary and postgraduate professional education; further education programmes of institutions of further professional education; institutions of further professional education at national and international levels including joint accreditation.

- carrying out research activities into public accreditation of study programmes, evaluation and quality assurance of education;

- development of methods and technologies for evaluation of education quality including testing and survey technologies and the methodology of developing internal systems of quality assurance;

- maintaining contacts with international and national organizations working in the sphere of evaluation of education quality, cooperation with foreign agencies of quality assurance, participation in the work of international organizations, networks and associations;

- informational, methodological and technological support of experts in the sphere of evaluation of education quality involved in public accreditation of study programmes;

- promoting the best national and international practices on evaluation and quality assurance of education;

- organizing conferences, seminars, round tables.

VISION

NCPA is an ambitious, active and effective organization carrying out activities on quality assurance of education in Russia and abroad and using innovative methods and technologies in its work.

NCPA closely cooperates with all stakeholders and organizations to improve quality of education and create quality culture.

The organization has adequate human and material and technical resources to carry out and develop its activities.

NCPA is recognized in the sphere of quality assurance of higher education at national and international levels. It is a full member of international networks and associations (INQAAHE, ENQA, APQN, CEENQA, IREG) and is listed in the National Register of organizations carrying out accreditation (www.accredpoa.ru), European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and Asia-Pacific Quality Register (APQR).

NCPA identifies the following strategic areas of its development:

1. Maintaining the high quality of expert procedures as a key to improve competitiveness, demand and recognition at the national and international levels.

2. Becoming a centre of innovation in the sphere of quality assurance by way of participating in programmes and projects on quality evaluation; NCPA's employees should be seen as highly qualified experts in evaluation of education quality.

3. Extending the sphere of influence on education quality in the country through developing recommendations on the basis of outcomes of accreditation procedures, promoting positive changes and improving education quality.

4. Playing a significant role in the system of quality assurance in Russia, taking the leading positions in improvement of its transparency, objectiveness, independence and effectiveness.

These strategic areas are the basis for strategic objectives of NCPA's development.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF NCPA'S DEVELOPMENT

1.   Improving the procedure of public accreditation:

1.1. Promoting joint international accreditation of study programmes with foreign partners (MusiQuE, ACQUIN, evalag, HEEACT, HEEC, etc.);

1.2. Improving NCPA's standards and criteria for conducting joint accreditation of study programmes;

1.3. Improving NCPA's standards and criteria in compliance with the current demands of the labour market and international tendencies in evaluation of education quality with the focus on evaluation of student learning outcomes, recognition of documents, etc.;

1.4. Increasing the involvement of different stakeholders in external evaluation procedures;

1.5. Enhancing the engagement of international experts in NCPA's procedures.

2.   Raising awareness about NCPA in Russia and abroad:

2.1. Informing the public about NCPA's accreditation procedures including joint accreditations with European and Asia-Pacific organizations;

2.2. Promoting the image of NCPA as a credible QA agency listed in the National Register of Accreditation Organizations (www.accredpoa.ru), European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and Asia-Pacific Quality Register (APQR);

2.3. Raising awareness of HEIs about the inclusion into the Database of External Quality Assurance Reports (DEQAR) by way of undergoing accreditation of study programmes by NCPA;

2.4. Promoting NCPA's register (www.аккредитация.рф) to inform the public about the results of public accreditation of study programmes carried out by NCPA;

2.5. Enhancing participation of NCPA's staff in conferences, forums, round tables, meetings of expert and public councils at different levels (regional, national, international);

3. *Extending international cooperation in education:*

3.1. Signing agreements on cooperation with accreditation agencies;

3.2. Extending the database of foreign experts involved in evaluation procedures of NCPA;

3.3. Providing active participation of NCPA's management and staff in General Assemblies, international conferences, forums, seminars, etc.;

3.4. Participating in international project and research activities on evaluation and quality assurance of education including sociological studies and research;

3.5. Facilitating participation of NCPA's staff in exchange programmes;

3.6. Organizing mutual internships in partner agencies to share good practices and carry out joint research activities;

3.7. Facilitating the involvement of NCPA's staff in international peer review procedures;

3.8. Volunteering in organizing international events in quality assurance;

3.9. Inviting representatives of foreign agencies of quality assurance to meetings of the National Accreditation Board to share experience and good practices in QA procedures.

4. *Informing the public about quality assurance of education:*

4.1. Dissemination of information about the systems of quality assurance in education at the national and international levels:

– publication of articles,

– presenting at different conferences,

– participation in General Assemblies and international forums,

– participation in surveys, projects, etc.,

– using the platforms of public and governmental authorities to inform stakeholders about the key trends of the Bologna process,

– informing HEIs and other stakeholders about public and international accreditation.

4.2. Regular information updating on NCPA's website, in the journal "*Accreditation in Education*" and the newsletter "*Vestnik Akkreditatsii*";

4.3. Serving as a platform for discussing issues of evaluation of education quality and making results public;

4.4. Promoting the activities of international networks and associations (INQAAHE, ENQA, APQN, CEENQA, IREG), disseminating ideas and experience of organizations at conferences, forums, seminars and round tables dedicated to the issues of development of national education and quality assurance;

4.5. Promoting ideas and principles of ENQA and EQAR at national and international levels by way of familiarizing stakeholders with ESG;

4.6. Regular publication of articles about the activities of ENQA and EQAR in periodicals;

4.7. Participation in surveys, projects, preparation and publication of conference proceedings.

5. *Improving the effectiveness of organization's resources:*

5.1. Improving the technology of public accreditation of study programmes through the Automated Support System of public accreditation;

5.2. Extending services within the scope of ESG;

5.3. Providing regular professional development of NCPA's staff.

ANNEX 7. ANALYSIS OF THE INTERNAL SURVEY OF NCPA'S STAFF

In order to find out the level of satisfaction of the staff with the working conditions there is a regular survey of NCPA's personnel. According to the latest (2018) survey, the following conclusions were made:

In general, the staff is satisfied with the working conditions. 100% of respondents believe that material and technical resources of their workplaces allow them to execute their employment duties effectively.

78% of employees think that they need to develop their skills to improve effectiveness of work, for example, in the form of trainings, courses of the English language, internships, etc. 59% of the staff believe that NCPA's administration provides employees with necessary conditions for their professional and personal development and improvement of labour efficiency.
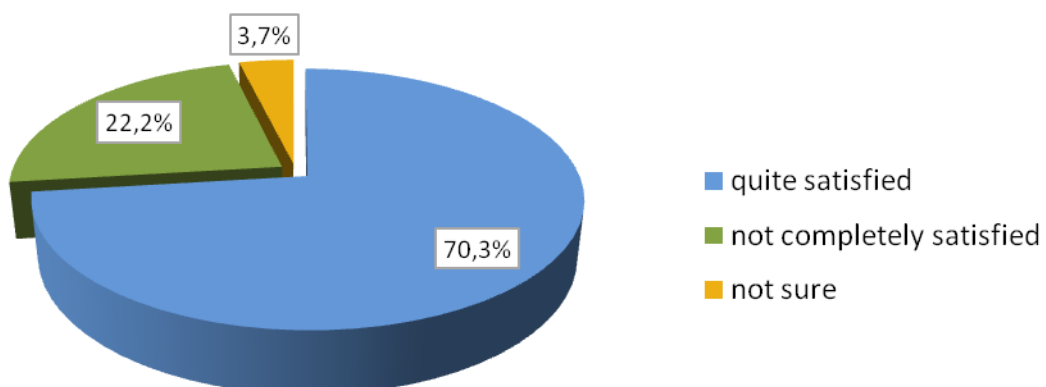
The majority of respondents (85%) have good relations with the colleagues that are marked by benevolence, mutual assistance and commitment to results. Most of the staff (70,3%) is satisfied with the organization of their work.

Due to the survey results, 81% of employees highly evaluate NCPA as an employer and can recommend it to their friends.

Question 1. Do material and technical resources of your workplace allow you to execute your employment duties effectively ?
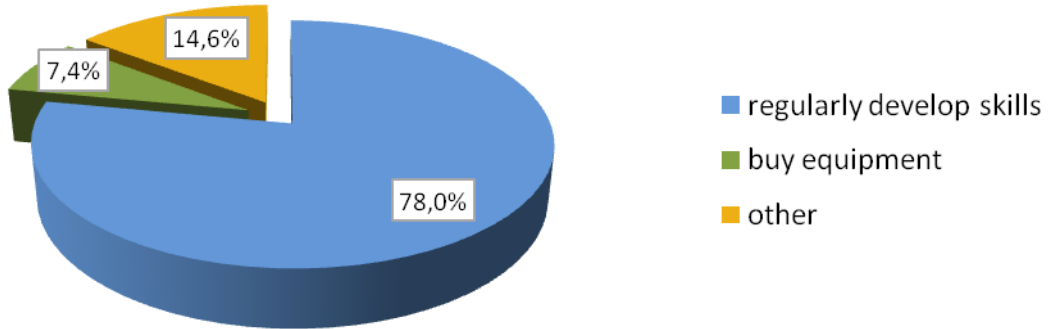

■ yes
■ not completely
■ not sure

100,0%
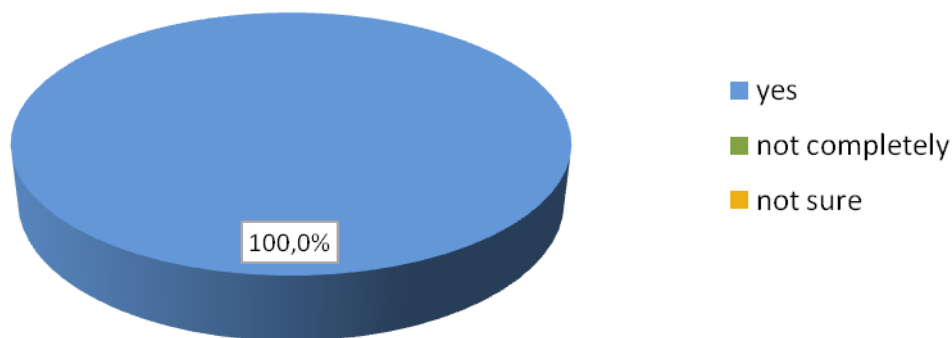
Question 2. How satisfied are you with the organization of your work?

3,7%
22,2%
70,3%

■ quite satisfied
■ not completely satisfied
■ not sure

Question 3. Please, point out what should be done to improve effectiveness of your work?

14,6%
7,4%
78,0%

- regularly develop skills
- buy equipment
- other

Question 4. Does your salary correspond to your qualification?

11,0%
7,0%
7,0%
33,0%
40,7%

- yes
- rather yes, than no
- rather no, than yes
- no
- not sure
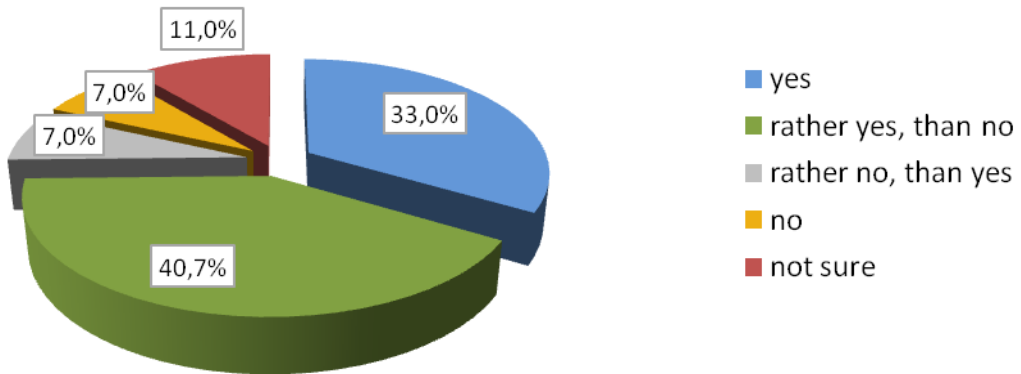
Question 5. How can you evaluate relations with your colleagues?

15,0%
85,0%

- good
- satisfactory
- bad
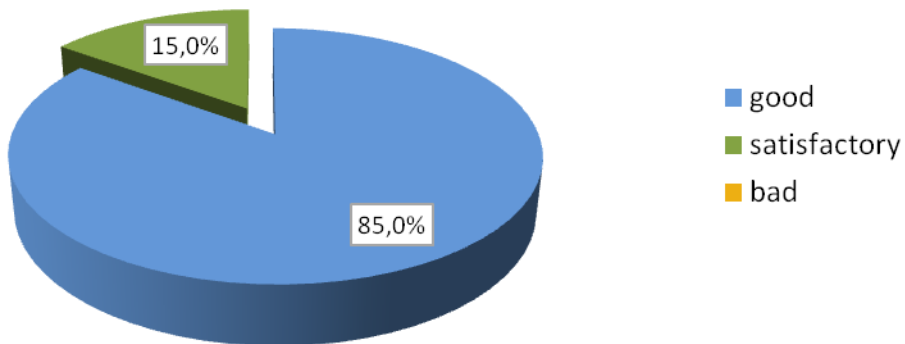
Question 6. How can you evaluate NCPA as an employer?

19,0%
81,0%

- excellent
- good
- bad
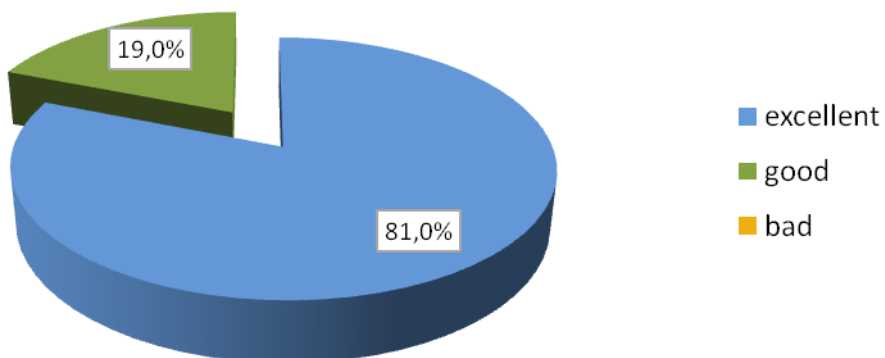
ANNEX 8. EXAMPLE OF JOINT ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Standard 1. Programme profile
Standard 2. Curriculum
Standard 3. Student assessment
Standard 4. Organisation of the study programme
Standard 5. Resources
Standard 6. Quality assurance

Standard 1. Programme profile

Table 1 – Criteria with regard to Standard 1

№	Criteria for assessment of a study programme
1.	Correspondence of the objectives of the study programme to the profile and strategic goals of the HEI
2.	Definition of the intended learning outcomes of the programme and their accessibility
3.	Correspondence of the intended learning outcomes to the level of awarded qualification
4.	Consideration of academic and occupational standards, public needs and the demands of the labour market in the intended learning outcomes
5.	Relation of the study programme to research (provision of scientific methods in theory and practice, research based teaching)
6.	Compliance of the programme's profile with internationally accepted standards
7.	The international dimension of the programme
8.	Correspondence (adequacy) of the teaching staff's qualifications to the profile and objectives of the programme

Standard 2. Curriculum

Table 2 – Criteria with regard to Standard 2

№	Criteria for assessment of a study programme
1.	Structuring of the programme and ways of achieving intended learning outcomes
2.	Mechanisms for providing knowledge in the corresponding discipline in the framework of the delivered programme. Application of scientific methods in the delivery of the programme
3.	Organization of learning experience with the account of the diversity of students and their needs and appropriate student-centered teaching. Encouraging students to take an active role in creating the learning process

Standard 3. Student assessment

Table 3 – Criteria with regard to Standard 3

№	Criteria for assessment of a study programme
1.	Organization of assessment of intended learning outcomes
2.	The adequacy of the amount and requirements of assessments with regard to the intended learning outcomes
3.	The correspondence of the requirements of the thesis to the level of the degree
4.	Transparency and consistency of assessment criteria
5.	Adequacy of the qualifications of the staff undertaking assessments
6.	Availability of examination regulations
7.	Availability of clear and objective regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances

Standard 4. Organisation of the study programme

Table 4 – Criteria with regard to Standard 4

№	Criteria for assessment of a study programme
1.	Appropriateness of entry qualifications
2.	Regulations for the recognition of qualifications (i.e. Lisbon Convention)
3.	Organisation of the study process and achievement of intended learning outcomes. Consideration of the diversity of students and their needs
4.	Management of the study programme (roles and responsibilities)
5.	Adequacy of the workload of the programme with respect to the necessity to reach the intended learning outcomes in the scheduled time frame
6.	Organization of the student life cycle (i. e. all (organisational) relationships between the student and the institution from enrolment to graduation)
7.	Student support system (care services and student advisory services)
8.	Cooperation with internal and external partners

Standard 5. Resources

Table 5 – Criteria with regard to Standard 5

№	Criteria for assessment of a study programme
1.	Sustainability of funding and financial management
2.	Adequacy of the number and qualification of academic staff (full-time and part-time) to ensure intended learning outcomes
3.	Availability of strategies and processes for the staff recruiting and staff development
4.	Availability, sufficiency and quality of facilities and equipment for the provision of the programme (library, laboratories, teaching rooms, IT equipment)
5.	Sufficiency and quality of the resources provided to reach the objectives of the programme

Standard 6. Quality assurance

Table 6 – Criteria with regard to Standard 6

№	Criteria for assessment of a study programme
1.	Design, approval and implementation of the programme; monitoring procedures
2.	Availability of a quality assurance concept of the programme and how it is connected to the quality assurance system of the institution
3.	Quality assurance processes and instruments of the programme
4.	Effectiveness, regularity and systematic character of the quality assurance system
5.	Availability of mechanisms for closing quality feedback loops
6.	Collecting, analysis and use of data by the persons responsible for implementing the programme
7.	Involvement of stakeholders (students, teachers, administration, external experts, alumni, employers) in quality assurance
8.	Availability of procedures and relevant information for informing current and prospective students about the programme