NATIONAL CENTRE
FOR PUBLIC ACCREDITATION

SELF - EVALUATION REPORT

2013
Yoshkar-Ola, RUSSIA

C O N T E N T S

FORWORD

The National Centre for Public Accreditation (NCPA) was established in 2009 as an autonomous non-for-profit organization with the purpose of conducting programme accreditation and providing an expert judgment on the quality of study programmes offered by Russian educational institutions.

The President's of the Russian Federation Decree of 26 May 2009 №599 on the necessity for developing and introducing into practice public and professional accreditation of higher educational programmes served as the reason and impetus for creating NCPA. Another reason was the external evaluation of the National Accreditation Agency (established in Yoshkar-Ola in 1995). The external evaluation was conducted in 2008 according to ESG-ENQA, and as a result NAA was granted a full member status in ENQA. However, the external evaluation panel made a few very important recommendations which were hard to realize for NAA as it was part of the state quality assurance system. On the initiative of the Guild of Experts in the sphere of professional education a new independent quality assurance agency – the National Centre for Public Accreditation (NCPA) was established, which set a goal of not only changing the accreditation technology but was also set to change the philosophy of quality assurance. This goal is being successfully implemented by the highly professional staff, which has broad experience in the sphere of quality assurance and extensive international contacts.

NCPA is a member of international networks of quality assurance agencies: a full member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE); an affiliate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA); a full member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA); a full member of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN); a full member of the Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence (IREG).

To maintain its credibility both in the national and European arena, NCPA will need to demonstrate its compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the requirements for ENQA full membership. The National Accreditation Board approved NCPA's decision on undergoing external evaluation and indorsed the Self-Evaluation Report.

The external evaluation of NCPA includes the following stages: self-evaluation and preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report, a site visit by the external evaluation panel; consideration of the Report and developing an action plan on implementing the recommendations of the panel; publication of the materials on the outcomes of the external evaluation.

In order to enhance its internal quality insurance system NCPA annually analyses its performance. However the self-evaluation exercise in preparation for the external evaluation has its own peculiarities. This procedure does not only aim at identifying the key areas of development in the immediate future but also intends to supply the ENQA external evaluation panel with information, which will enable the experts to make an informed decision about the degree of NCPA's compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

Thus, the external evaluation by ENQA will make it possible for NCPA to get an independent opinion and recommendations of professionals in the sphere of quality assurance and will serve as an impetus to further enhance its activities in the context of the European Higher Education Area.

Vladimir Navodnov

Director,

The National Centre for Public Accreditation

ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
AEER	The Russian Association for Engineering Education
AKKORK	Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development
APQN	The Asia-Pacific Quality Network
CEENQA	The Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
CTC	Center for Training and Consultancy
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Education
ESG	The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
FEI	Further Education Institution
FSES	Federal State Educational Standards
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IREG	Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence
INQAAHE	The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
NAA	The National Accreditation Agency
NCPA	The National Centre for Public Accreditation
QA	Quality Assurance
RALE	The Russian Association of Law Education
RF	The Russian Federation
RMC	Research and Methodological Centre
Rosobrnadzor	The Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science
Rosstat	The Federal Service of Statistics
SRIEQM	Scientific and Research Institute of the Education Quality Monitoring
sVET institution	Secondary Vocational Educational Institution

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the review were first discussed and adopted in September 2012 at the general staff meeting (Minutes, №27 of 10. 09. 2012). Through these terms of reference the self-evaluation by NCPA is organized around central themes relating to NCPA's work, which cover the main functions fulfilled by the Centre. NCPA is to review its organizational structure and processes in order to determine their effectiveness in meeting the increased demands of the developing system of higher education in Russia. The Agency is also to keep under review its human resources and management structure to be in line with the present day requirements.

The paramount importance of quality assurance to the effective implementation of all NCPA's functions and to its performance as an organization is central in this self-evaluation process. In this connection the quality review will also concentrate on the further development of NCPA's own internal quality assurance mechanisms.

As NCPA is particularly interested in demonstrating its compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA in order to be promoted to a full member status the quality review will take a close look at how the Agency in fulfilling its main functions meets the requirements of ENQA membership

The next stage of the process is a peer review visit by an external panel nominated by ENQA and the subsequent report.

The management and the staff of NCPA will consider the report and its conclusions and will develop a plan of actions to implement the recommendations suggested by the panel. The outcomes of this process will be incorporated into NCPA's Action plan for 2013-2014 (Annex 3) and the Strategic plan of the organization's development (Annex 2).

Indicative Time Schedule

DATE	EVENT
September, 2012	Decision by NCPA's staff general meeting on self-evaluation.
October – December, 2013	Approval of the Terms of Reference and Indicative timetable by the stuff of NCPA Collecting internal and external feedback
January – April, 2013	Collecting internal and external feedback Agreement on terms of reference and protocol of review with ENQA The self-evaluation process by the staff of NCPA. Preparation of the draft self-evaluation report. Completion of the Self-Svaluation report and its approval by the staff of NCPA Writing, translation and publication of the Self-Evaluation Report
September, 2013	Discussion and approval of the Self-Evaluation Report at the National Accreditation Board meeting
November – January, 2013	Preparation for the visit of the expert panel
February, 2014	Visit by the expert panel

Internal and external feedback

The analysis of the external and internal feedback is one of the most important components of self-evaluation. Almost all the Units and Offices of NCPA in accordance with their statutory functions were involved in gathering and analyzing the relevant evidence. The meta-analysis of the collected information and the writing of the self-evaluation report was the responsibility of the working group.

Internal and external feedback was gathered through the following means: SWOT analysis meetings, staff meetings, stakeholders' questionnaires and surveys, NCPA's staff questionnaires, round table meetings with rectors, experts, quality assurance specialists.

Legal and normative documents in the sphere of licensing, state and public accreditation, the materials developed by NCPA's research staff were used as the basis for collecting feedback. Analytic Reviews prepared by NCPA in 2009-2012 were used for the analysis of trends in the development of higher education system.

Parts of the Self- Evaluation report are based on the documents regulating the work of NCPA, its structure, financing, and human resource development: the Statutes of NCPA, the Personnel Arrangements, etc.

2. CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ACCREDITATION IN RUSSIA

2.1. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE RUSSIAN SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1.1. NORMATIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BASIS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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

The activity of state and municipal HEIs is subject to the Standard Regulations on an Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education (HEI) of the Russian Federation ratified by the Act of the government of the Russian Federation of 14.02.2008 N 71, with account of the amendments introduced in the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" № 273 and the Standard Regulations on Branches of Federal State Educational Institutions of Higher Professional Education (Higher Educational Institutions) adopted by the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation on 01.12.2011 № 2865), with account of the amendments introduced in the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" № 273. These Regulations are non-binding for private HEIs.

2.1.2. THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

According to ROSSTAT, as of January 1, 2012 in the Russian Federation there were 1046 educational institutions delivering programmes of higher professional education (609 – state HEIs, 437 – public HEIs), and about 2100 branches, which offer 36767 educational programmes to over 6 million students.

Before the beginning of democracy in Russia there were only state HEIs, which were governed by the central managing education body. Since 1993 there has been an avalanche growth of private HEIs (359 new HEIs in 19 years, Fig.1). At the same time since 1993 for the period of 19 years the state sector has grown by 61 HEIs, mainly through the establishing of new HEIs and the branches of the existing HEIs, which acquired the status of autonomous HEIs. Thus, the total number of HEIs has increased by half. The leading role in the process of establishing new branches of HEIs has been played by the state sector: in 1993 there were 200 branches of the state HEIs, in 2008 – 1393, in 2012 – 2100.

There was also a rapid increase in the number of study places: in 1993, total student enrolment was just over 2.5 million; by 2008, it had increased to 7.5 million, mainly as a result of the rapid growth in the number of fee-paying students enrolled in state HEIs. It should be mentioned that during this period the State did not limit the growth of the higher education sector, but rather promoted it by permitting the admittance of fee-paying students to state HEIs, the branching of institutions and the establishment of new ones. The supporting state policy ensured the availability of higher education opportunities in the difficult and unstable economic situation which limited the mobility of Russians and thus prevented them from gaining access to higher education in large cities. The number of students in 2012 decreased by 18% compared to 2009 and dropped to 6 million, which is explained by the demographic situation in the Russian Federation. Small HEIs dominate in the system of education (40% of HEIs have less than 1000 students, in particular, two thirds of HEIs in the private sector have less than 1000 students (32% of HEIs have less than 200 students).

From 2000 to 2012 the number of programmes offered by the Russian HEIs increased from 20 000 to 36 000 mostly due to the newly opened educational programmes in Economics, Law, and Humanities.
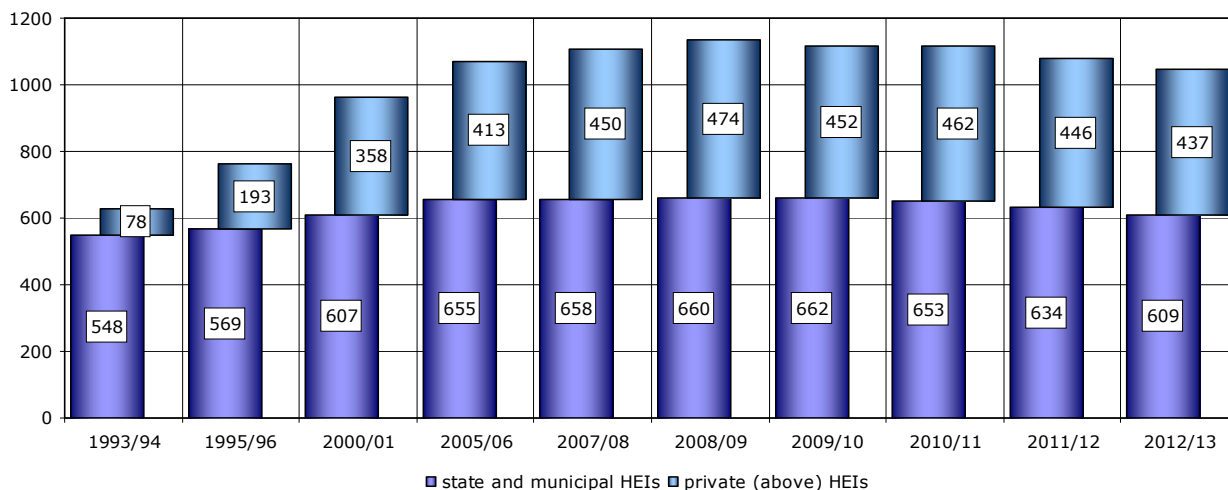
Fig. 1. Growth dynamics of the number of state (below) and private (above) HEIs
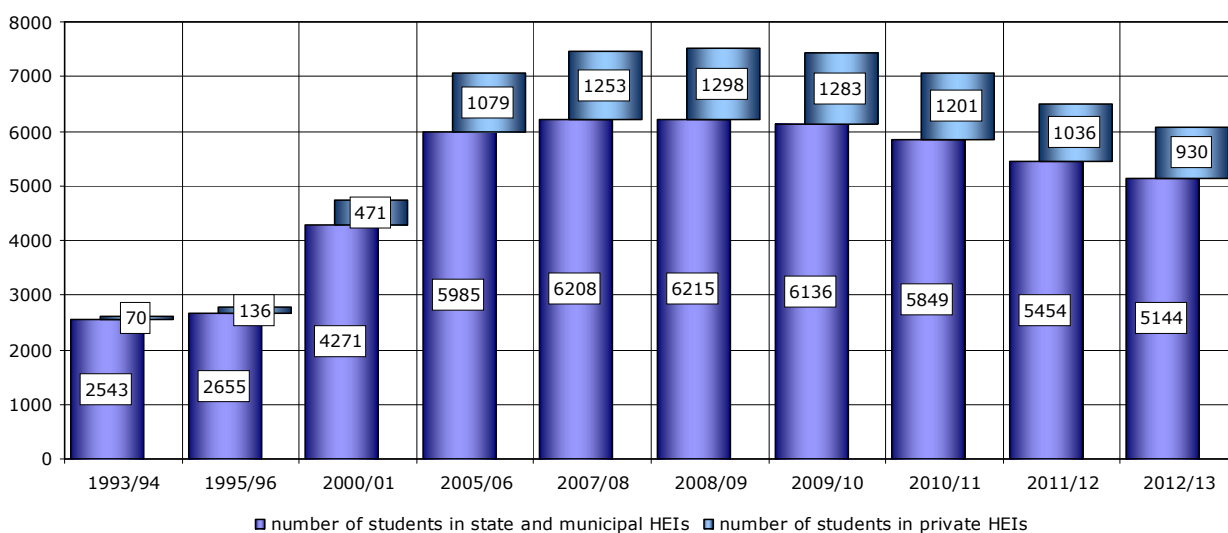
Fig. 2. Growth dynamics of the number of students in state (below) and private (above) HEIs
(in thou.)
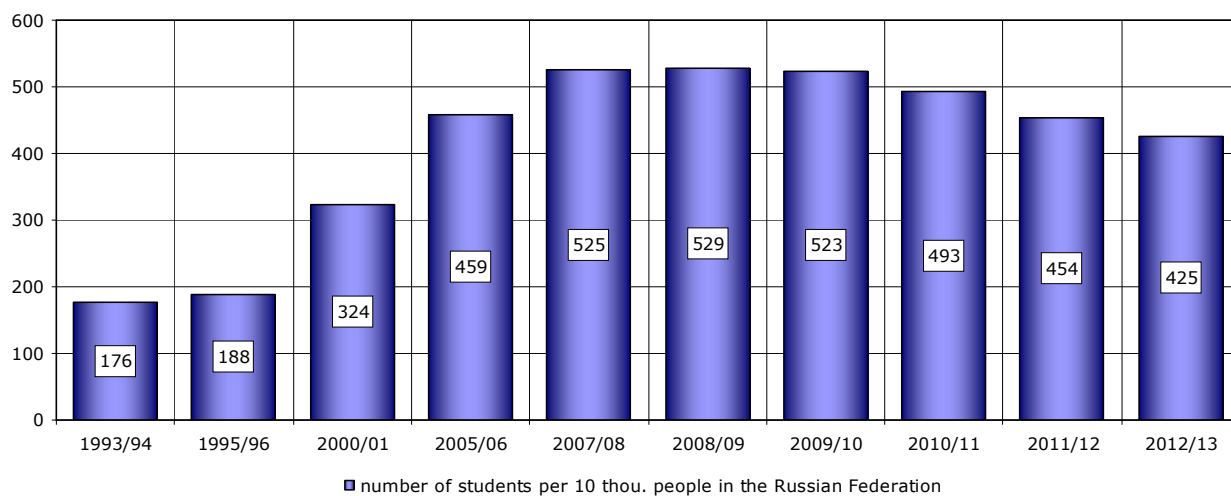
Fig. 3. The growth dynamics of the number of students per 10 thou. people in the Russian Federation

In recent years new categories of HEIs have been added to the structure of higher education: Federal Universities and National Research Universities which have been assigned a special mission of becoming a driving force of higher education development in modern Russia. They

are expected to develop best practices and models in the spheres of management, methodology and content of educational process and research, to search for most effective ways of integration into the global educational area.

Federal Universities (this status was granted to 9 Universities) train highly qualified professionals for priority fields of economy in the developing regions and federal districts of the Russian Federation as outlined in their long-term strategic plans of socio-economic development.

Research universities – twenty-nine Russian HEIs acquired this status – are to provide highly qualified professionals for priority fields of science, engineering and high technology.

Two Russian universities, Lomonosov Moscow State University and Saint Petersburg State University, were granted a special status within the Russian higher education system, as well as the right to issue their own diplomas.

2.1.3. THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

There are the following educational levels in the Russia Federation:

1. Pre-school education;
2. Basic (primary, general, and secondary) education;
3. Secondary vocational education and training;
4. Higher professional education: bachelor, specialist, master and post graduate qualifications.

According to [Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" 29.12.2012 № 273-FL](#) the following stages of higher education are identified:

- Bachelor — total study duration no less than 4 years;
- Master — total study duration 2 years (the program is available after the completion of the Bachelor degree);
- Specialist — total study duration no less than 5 years;
- Post-graduate studies.

Russian HEIs offer academic programmes at the Bachelor's, Specialist's and Master's levels.

Bachelor degree programmes focus on basic training and courses relevant to the degree programme and the fundamentals of the subject. Bachelor programmes are offered virtually in all fields of study with few exceptions, for example, medicine. Bachelor degree programmes are of general scientific and professional character. Bachelor programmes offered in Russia have a standard duration of four years. Bachelor's degrees are awarded to students upon successful completion of undergraduate studies. Graduates obtain the Certificate of Bachelor in a related field of study: for example, Bachelor of Economics, Bachelor of Law, etc. Bachelor's degree holders may enter the workforce immediately and take up jobs requiring applicants to have higher education. Bachelor programme graduates may also pursue a Master's degree in their major or related study field, or apply to a Master's degree programme in a different discipline from that of their Bachelor's degree.

Master degree follows the Bachelor degree level. The length of Master degree programmes delivered by Russian HEIs is two years. Master level programmes offer students a deeper and a wider perspective on related fields of study, and in-depth specialization in their majors.

Bachelor level programmes are more practice-oriented; Master programmes provide students with competencies they will need for their future research or teaching activities.

In spite of the fact that the transition to two-cycle system has been a subject of much controversy in Russia, it is now a fait accompli. A thorough, informal multifaceted preparation of HEIs for the transition is an essential precondition of its efficient implementation and positive outcomes. For example, the new flexible structure of Bachelor level programmes allows rather quick modulating and upgrading as adequate reaction to the rapidly changing production technologies and, consequently, employers' demands. Master degree programmes are characterized by an even higher degree of flexibility which is aimed at the development of students' research potential. Therefore, graduates of Bachelor and Master programmes are

expected to be well prepared for the changing contemporary labor market or research sector demands and have highly developed professional competencies and adaptive abilities. Of primary importance is the fact that the "Bachelor-Master" system of higher education is widely accepted throughout the world which promotes professional mobility of graduates on the international labor market.

It should be noted that the two-cycle system is not used with regard to approximately one hundred specialties which are listed on a special Register adopted by the Federal Government of Russia. Academic studies in the specified majors lead to the Specialist's Diploma.

A Specialist Diploma programme is a traditional form of Russian higher education, which comprises basic education with in-depth specialist training in the chosen area. Regular duration of a full-time programme is 5 years, of a distance programme – 6 years.

2.1.4. THE FEDERAL STATE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS OF HIGHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

In the Russian Federation the requirements for the quality of education and training are set at the state level by the Federal State Educational Standards (FSES) (Annex 10). The FSES is a set of coordinated state educational standards and requirements binding for all state accredited educational programmes of primary, basic general, secondary, secondary vocational education and higher professional education.

FSES shape the contents of education and establish the required quality of the content of education (curricula and syllabi); the teaching and support staff; the information provision of the teaching and research process (modern sources of information and different types of available support – printed and electronic – which correspond to the content of course programs as well as means of information transmission, storage and use); the actual knowledge and skills of graduates (minimum requirements in regard to the level of knowledge and skills of graduates).

The State Educational Standards are developed by leading higher education institutions, representatives of the academic community, and employers, whose work is coordinated by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation.

Higher educational institutions belonging to the categories "the Federal University" or "the National Research University", and also Federal State Educational Institutions of higher education approved by a special Order of the RF President have the right to develop their own educational standards at all levels of higher education. The requirements of such educational standards for the conditions and the learning outcomes of the delivered programmes cannot be below the corresponding requirements of the FSES.

Higher Professional Education
(tertiary education
University level)

AGE		DIPLOMA

Doctor of Science
3 years

DIPLOMA

26/27

Candidate of Science
3-4years

23/24

DIPLOMA

Magister
2 years

22/23

DIPLOMA

Bachelor
4 years

21/22

Specialist
5-6 years

Attestation*

USE

DIPLOMA
Advanced level 1 year
Basic level 2 years

DIPLOMA
Advanced level 1 year
Basic level
3-3, 5 years
S(C)GE*

Qualified worker
2-3 years
S(C)GE*

Qualified worker
1 year

Uniform State Exam (USE)

17/18

CERTIFICATE

Secondary General Education (2 years)

15/16

CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE

Basic General Education (5 years)

10/11

Primary Education (4 years)

6/7

Pre-school Education

- entrance exams

* - Secondary (complete) education, obtained in the programme

** - Credit transfer from 2 to 4 terms if education is continued in the same area of higher education
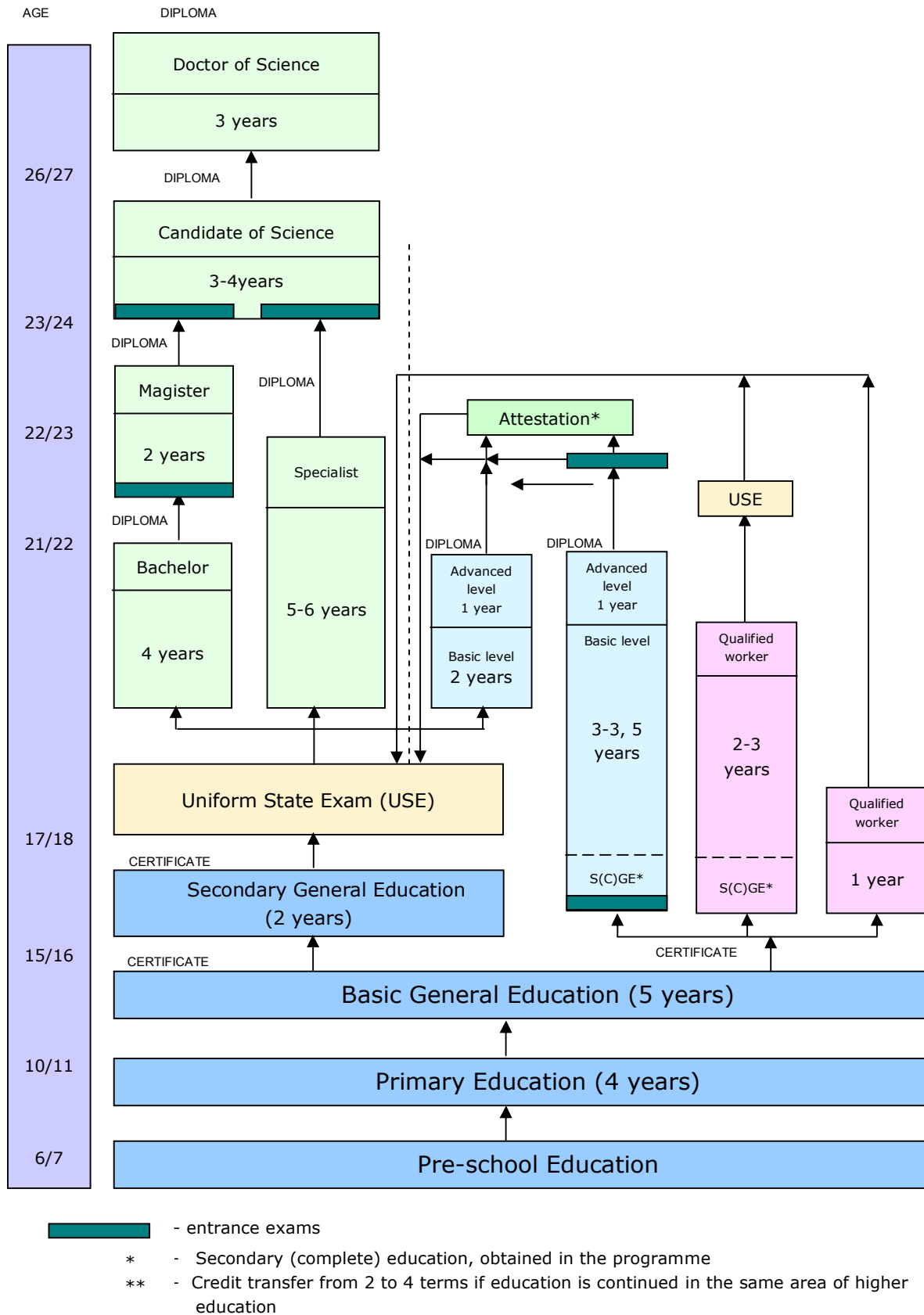
Fig. 4. The system of education in the Russian Federation

2.1.5. INTEGRATION OF RUSSIAN EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

In 2003 the Russian Federation joined the Bologna process. At present educational reforms in the sphere of higher education in the Russian Federation are determined by the statements of the Bologna Declaration and the follow-up normative and legislative acts and agreements of the countries-signatories of the Bologna process, by the processes of integration of Russia in the European Higher Education Area, and the adaptation of the higher education system to the needs of the market economy.

Important changes are taking place in all directions of the Bologna process, among the most prominent are: the transition of all Russian HEIs to the two-cycle system (Bachelor-Master); the introduction of a new generation of the State Federal Educational Standards encompassing the use of the academic credit system; quality assurance of education. Besides, during the last few years leading Russian HEIs have been issuing Diploma Supplements to promote mobility of their staff and students.

2.1.6. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, since 2000 very important changes have occurred in the Russian system of higher education:

1. On the one hand, as a result of the education reform that took place in Russia at the end of the 20th century, Russian higher education, until then elite, became mass and available, mainly, due to the growth in the number of students, HEIs (primarily, private HEIs) and branches of HEIs. On the other hand, at present, the scope of higher professional education is decreasing due to the demographic crisis and new educational policy.

2. The rapid development of market economy (the increase of fee-paid education)

3. Introduction of high information and communication technologies into the system of higher education;

4. The increase in the number of newly opened educational programmes in HEIs and their branches in Economics, Law, and Humanities;

5. The predominance of small HEIs and branches in the system of education;

The last 3-5 years have witnessed new processes connected with the development and introduction of public evaluation models of education quality, and also structural changes in higher education:

1. Demographic crisis;

2. Changes in the infrastructure of higher professional education and differentiation of HEIs (Lomonosov Moscow State University and Saint Petersburg State University were granted a special status; new types of Universities were established - Federal Universities and National Research Universities);

3. Changes in the state educational policy:

- new Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation, which was enforced on the 1 of September 2013 does not provide for establishing the status of a HEI;

- changes in the technology of licensing and state accreditation, adoption of new licensing and accreditation requirements;

- optimization of HEIs' network (the merger and consolidation of HEIs is connected with quality enhancement);

- strengthening of HE quality control;

- support of public accreditation procedures; development of professional standards, and establishment of centers for qualifications certification;

2.2. THE SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN RUSSIA

2.2.1. HISTORY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Russian education system is based on long-standing traditions and deep cultural and historical roots. It was formed as a centralized state system of professional personnel training to satisfy the requirements of the authorities, the economy and industry. The State acted simultaneously as an investor in and customer of higher education and as a supervising body for educational institutions. In Russia (particularly in Soviet times), non-state provision of education was virtually non-existent, nor were there any democratic forms of public management or educational quality assessment. Perestroika had an enormous influence on all spheres of Russian society, including education, although it can hardly be considered revolutionary: the national education system was stable enough to escape collapse, unlike the public spheres of production which plunged into a deep crisis. As Russian HEIs had been granted considerable independence and autonomy by the State, the education system was developing along the principles of decentralization and depoliticisation.

In 1992, the government enacted the Law "On Education" which became the legal base for the reorganization of the national education system in terms of both structure and content. It was the first Russian law to define the state policy in a particular sphere of social life. Recognizing the nation's increasing needs for higher education, the Act provided more opportunities. The needs of HEIs for greater academic autonomy having been considered, the Act substantially broadened their rights, providing them with opportunities that they had never enjoyed (e.g. the right to increase the number of study places by accepting more students on a tuition-fee basis; the right to launch new specialist opportunities, including postgraduate education). It also provided new opportunities for structural reorganization of the entire education system and the creation of institutions of non-federal subordination. Thus, the setting up of municipal and private HEIs as non-state non-profit organizations became possible. State education institutions gained the right to change their status from institute (an HEI that trained students for a specific sphere of professional activity) to academy or university (an HEI offering a wide range of options and specializations at the undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels and generally regarded as more prestigious).The principles that were recognized and proclaimed by the new legislation (democratization, publicity, openness) were further developed in the methodology of HEIs' performance assessment. The state inspection procedures aiming at total control of HEIs' activities were replaced by regulation procedures, licensing, attestation, and state and public accreditation that were totally new to the Russian education system.

Today the quality assurance system in Russia involves 3 procedures: licensing, state accreditation, public and professional and public accreditation.

Licensing is conducted to ensure that an HEI has sufficient facilities (premises, equipment, information and library resources, and teaching staff) to carry out educational activities and to launch educational activities along with certain privileges. Licensing provoked negative reactions from state HEIs, which considered the procedure pointless and unnecessary. Nevertheless, it was licensing that allowed the emergence of new non-state education institutions and special fields of higher education. The purpose of the attestation procedure was the external evaluation of an HEI's performance and assessment of the level, contents and quality of the students' knowledge with regard to the State Educational Standards (SES). The external reviewers' positive opinion of the HEI's performance and compliance with the accreditation criteria served as a basis for granting state accreditation to the HEI in question.

In Russia, state accreditation aims at the recognition of the quality of higher education as corresponding to the FSES. As noted earlier, an institute may obtain the status of academy or the status of university may be granted to an HEI that meets all the legal requirements for conducting educational and research activities. Thus, the state accreditation procedure legally established a mechanism for motivating HEIs to further develop their activities and thus raise their status. State-accredited HEIs are entitled to award diplomas in the state format and to use the official seal bearing the national symbols; for male students of accredited specialisms, conscription is postponed until the end of their studies. State accreditation status provides certain other rights and benefits that are of vital importance to the private sector, allowing

non-state institutions to operate on equal terms with state HEIs. A HEI has to reconfirm its state accreditation status every 6 years.

A serious drawback of the state accreditation is that it fulfils the functions of control, that is, it takes into consideration only minimum threshold standards, and all the procedures and decisions depend on the state body. The requirements to experts are minimal, students and employers are not involved in the system of quality assurance.

As a result of the reform at the end of the 20th century, higher education, until then elitist, became more widely available. At the same time, the reform process was not supported by an increase in educational resources, the most important being highly skilled teaching staff. The mass character and availability of higher education led to a deterioration in the quality of its provision. Thus, the Russian education system was faced with the challenging task of creating efficient mechanisms for quality assessment and motivating quality enhancement.

In the last few years public accreditation has been actively developing in Russia. Public accreditation procedures are voluntary for HEIs and presuppose external institutional and programme reviews by experts representing sectoral employers' associations, academic and student communities in relating study fields. Successful completion of public accreditation procedures is considered to be evidence to the fact that the quality of preparation in relating particular specialisms and study fields was assessed to be highly adequate and deserving recognition by the professional community.

Under the legislation of the Russian Federation public accreditation of study programmes can be provided by organizations established by public (non-governmental) or professional associations and unions. Public accreditation does not award higher educational institutions with the rights and privileges granted by state accreditation but take into account a higher level of expectations that public organizations and employers have regarding study programmes, which contributes to the prestige of accredited programmes, their attractiveness for prospective students, as well as to their relevance from the perspective of employers. Public accreditation is conducted by independent quality assurance agencies and, thus, is not influenced by the governmental educational authorities, though the outcomes of public accreditation may be considered in the state accreditation procedures.

Currently different stakeholder groups, from high-ranking state officials to employers, are showing considerable interest in the development of public accreditation in Russia. The need for introduction of this form of programme evaluation was largely associated with the tremendous expansion of the scope of higher education in Russia due to the major structural reforms initiated in the in the early 1990s: in the last twenty years the number of HEIs doubled, whereas the number of study programmes and student population has tripled. Since that time the access has increased and the demand for higher education has grown immensely, which has brought about negative effects, among those corrupt practices in national higher education and delivery of poor quality study programmes that failed to respond to the growing labour market demands.

Prospective students, employers and academic community, both within Russia and beyond, need impartial information on the quality of individual study programmes in addition to the data relating to HEIs as a whole. It is the multifaceted in-depth programme evaluation based on the use of expert opinion that constitutes the primary focus of public accreditation. Evaluations during the public accreditation procedures provide the general public with sufficient and relevant information about the effectiveness of reviewed programmes, which makes public accreditation highly relevant to present day Russia.

Public accreditation does not duplicate state accreditation procedures and standards. Professional and public associations are eligible to establish their own standards for evaluation of study programmes. Russian accreditation agencies develop their standards and criteria on the basis of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG – ENQA), as well as US standards (for example, the standards of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) for accreditation of engineering programmes). This tendency is determined by Russia's involvement in broad European and global integration processes, including the Bologna Process, with the aim to harmonize the Russian higher education system with those of the other European Higher Education Area (EHEA) member countries, to apply common principles relating to the content and structure of

the educational process in HEIs, and, as a result, to use common standards for quality assurance in higher education.

Thus, in the history of the development of quality assurance in Russia there are three distinct stages:

1994-2003 – innovation period of establishing accreditation, when on the basis of international good practice (mostly institutional accreditation in the USA) new technologies for collecting information, developing indicators and criteria for state accreditation procedure were developed;

2004-2009 – European period - orientation towards the European standards and guidelines, adjusting the performance of educational institutions in accordance with European principles of quality assurance, including the establishment of internal quality assurance systems in educational institutions, learning outcomes, openness and transparency of accreditation decisions (workshops, seminars, mass media), external reviews coordinated by ENQA;

2009-2013 – the division of the functions performed by the state accreditation (the function of control over Law compliance by HEIs) and the functions performed by public accreditation (trust and excellence).

2.2.2. BODIES INVOLVED IN THE PROCEDURES OF HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE

By 2005, in Russia the infrastructure and technology of state accreditation had been formed and regulations defining state accreditation had been adopted by the Government.

At present the task of conducting the state accreditation is assigned to the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor) and its subordinate organization the National Accreditation Agency (NAA). Rosobrnadzor carries out the function of control over the performance of educational institutions and regional education authorities in the Russian Federation.

The National Accreditation Agency (NAA) carries out informational and methodological support of the state accreditation procedure; prepares final reports on the quality of the institutions to be accredited for the members of the Accreditation Board; collects information and analysis on the activities of HEIs, nominates and selects experts for external expert panels, evaluates the quality of graduates' training and education.

Fig.5. Structure of quality assurance in Russia
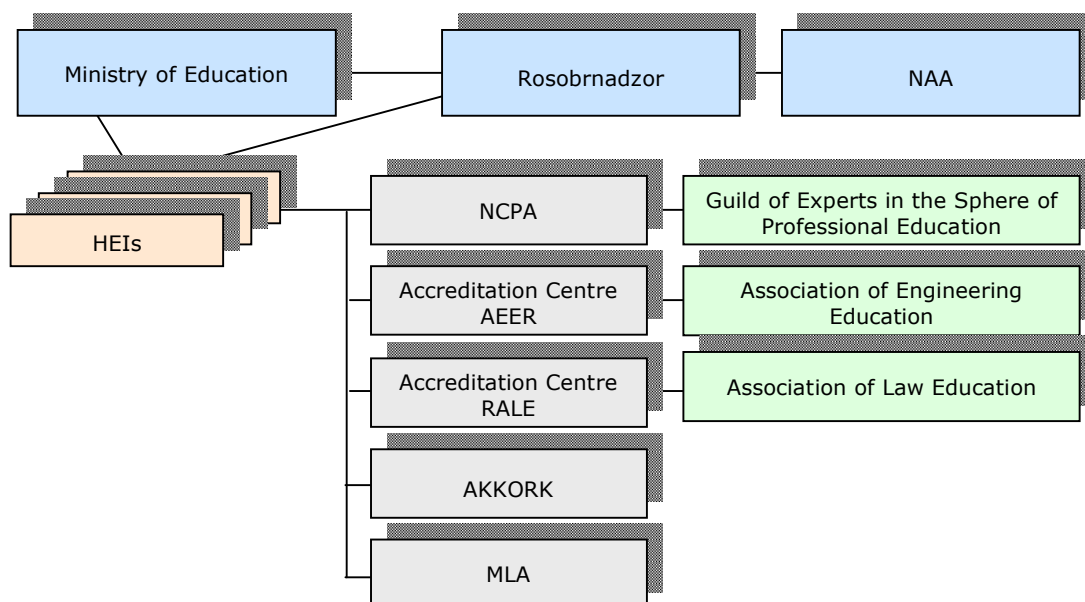
The necessity to separate the functions of control and enhancement in education served as a stimulus for the development of public accreditation technologies and for the emergence of several actors in the field of quality assurance. At present five accreditation agencies are working on the Russian territory, each in their own special field. The National Centre for Public

Accreditation (NCPA) accredits study programmes, which have been identified by the public as best educational programmes, in accordance with ESG. The Accreditation Centre of the Russian Association for Engineering Education cooperates with domestic, foreign and international organizations working in engineering education towards integration into the European system of quality assurance in engineering education. The Centre for Public Accreditation of Law Education was established together with the non-profit Association of Law Education. The mission of the Centre is to assess the quality of law programmes in HEIs. The Law Academy at the Moscow State University also offers accreditation of Law programmes. AKKORK (Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development) carries out accreditation of both institutions and programmes, participates in joint accreditation and certification of e-learning.

Since 2013 NCPA has been one of the founders and a member of the National Public Register of Accrediting Organizations in Education (NPRAO).

All bodies and organizations involved in the process of quality assurance of higher education have a legally established basis and work in accordance with the Russian legislation.

2.2.3. THE INFLUENCE OF THE EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES ON THE RUSSIAN QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) had a powerful impact on the enhancement of the Russian state accreditation system because, by 2005, the system needed an impetus for development, which was provided by the European initiatives for setting up quality assurance systems. However, the tasks set out in the Bologna Declaration had a dual influence on the transformation of the Russian higher education system. Certain tasks (e.g. the implementation of the Lisbon Convention) did not require much effort, while others (such as the delivery of joint programmes resulting in diplomas) have not yet been understood and are not currently supported by any legal provisions. The initiatives of individual HEIs and researchers remain isolated projects.

The integration of a country into the European Higher Education Area presupposes not only great public awareness of the process, based on full information, but also active involvement at all levels and subsystems of the national education system, such as state authorities, governmental and public organizations supporting the education system (buffer organizations and HEIs). The reforms are perceived and implemented differently at each of these levels. Moreover, the different levels and structures sometimes interact or are directly opposed to each other in the solving of common problems.

The introduction of the ESG into the Russian education system was an evolutionary, but not a systemic and coherent process. By 2005, the document had been translated into Russian and its main ideas disseminated among the academic community at conferences, forums, seminars and the Accreditation Board sessions. The document was brought to the attention of all education institutions, published on the Internet and recommended for implementation.

Most active representatives of the Russian academic community and heads of HEIs are aware of the ESG and have integrated or are integrating them into their internal QA systems. However, this cannot be considered to have been completed, as the external evaluations of HEIs are conducted without taking into account the results of self-evaluations and are based on indicators that differ from the European ones (ESG, Standard 2.1.). This disparity allows HEIs to use different internal mechanisms for the management, monitoring, assessment and assurance of educational quality.

2.2.4. CONCLUSIONS

The quality assurance system in Russia has the following characteristic features:

- a relatively short term (19 years) of establishing the system of quality assurance in the conditions of reforms in the sphere of education in general (the number of HEIs has doubled, the number of students has tripled); at present the scope of HE is decreasing by 10% a year as a result of the demographic crisis and new educational policy;
- the clear-cut division between the procedures of obligatory state accreditation by a state accreditation body and voluntary public accreditation;

- the possibility to take into consideration the results of public accreditation when a HEI undergoes the procedure of state accreditation in accordance with the new legislation. The support of public accreditation by the government, assessment of student outcomes, and expert opinion about the quality of educational programmes;
- intensive use of information technologies, which provides the collection of information necessary for accreditation decision making.

The system of quality assurance of higher education in Russia had been formed before the beginning of the Bologna process and signing the Bologna Declaration by the Minister of Education, and before the introduction of ESG.

2.3. THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PUBLIC ACCREDITATION

2.3.1. A HISTORY OF NCPA

Since 2009, a trend to strengthen control and inspection in Russian education has become evident. This is because there have been recurrent cases of selling higher education diplomas, falsification of the educational process and corruption. At the same time, taking into consideration control and inspection in education as the main goal of Rosobrnadzor, the function of state accreditation is being transformed in terms of content and procedure into a function of state control. State accreditation as a motivation mechanism has exhausted its potential: almost all Russian HEIs are now state accredited and granting an HEI a higher status is beyond the scope of state accreditation.

Understanding this situation the National Guild of Experts in Higher Education took an initiative to establish a new accreditation agency. This initiative was supported by the Centre for Training and Consultancy, the journal "Accreditation in Education" and the Scientific and Research Institute of the Education Quality Monitoring, who acted as the founders of the National Centre for Public Accreditation. All the above mentioned organizations in 2009 joined the association "Rosakkreditatsia"

The Centre had as its main objectives:

1. The harmonization of the QA methodology with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG-ENQA) and their implementation into the practice of QA in Russia.
2. The HE quality enhancement and promotion of a culture of quality of higher educational programmes on the basis of motivation mechanisms and best national and international practices.

Initially there were three main tasks:

1. Developing all necessary documentation for initiating accreditation procedure (Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation, Guidelines for External Review of Educational Programmes, Code of Ethics for Members of External Review Panels, etc.).
2. Implementing the project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia" in order to obtain expert evaluation of study programmes of higher education. By now there have been four rounds of the project.
3. Active cooperation with international networks and associations for nominating experts for external panels. Since 2011 public accreditation procedure has been conducted on a regular basis.

The main events in the life of NCPA are placed on the NCPA's website.

NCPA has a legally established basis and carries out its activities in accordance with the Russian legislation.

2.3.2. THE AREAS OF NCPA'S ACTIVITY

NCPA is an autonomous nonprofit organization. NCPA performs its functions in compliance with its Statutes and strategic plan of its development. These documents determine the directions of NCPA's activities. NCPA:

- carries out public accreditation of educational institutions, educational programs and courses;

- provides information on achievements in the sphere of quality assurance of education on the web-sires www.ncpa.ru, http://www.best-edu.ru/en/, and also through the electronic news letter "Vestnik akkreditatsii", the journal "Accreditation in Education", and an annual Analytic Review;

- provides services on information and methodological support to Russian higher education institutions on the issues of educational quality in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education Area;

- provides information, methodological and technological support of experts in the sphere of education quality assurance involved in review procedures and accreditation of educational programs and education institutions;

- undertakes research and project activities in areas relevant to public accreditation, assessment and quality assurance of education in educational institutions;

- organizes conferences, seminars, workshops and round-table discussions;

- interacts and cooperates with the state legislative and executive bodies and quality assurance organizations on the issues of quality assurance of education;

- maintains contacts with international and national organizations operating in the field of 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 assessment; establishes and develops relations with similar organizations from other countries; participates in the work of international organizations;

- disseminates good practices of Russian and international experience in the area of assessment and quality assurance of education.

2.3.3. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Centre is headed by the Director; the management of NCPA also includes a deputy director, and the chief accountant. The Centre comprises 3 divisions (8 structural units), Information Technologies and Telecommunications Office, Personnel and General Services Office – in accordance with the functions fulfilled by NCPA (Fig. 6).

Development and Project Department

Accreditation Office is responsible for the support of accreditation procedures; preparation of information and analytical materials necessary for accreditation decision making at the meetings of the National Accreditation Board; for the normative and methodological provision of the accreditation procedure, for the preparation of reports and implementing project activity.

Computer Resource Office develops and maintains computer software, designs and maintains websites, develops NCPA's CRM (Customer Relationship Management System); develops and maintains the local intranet system and information and telecommunication systems of NCPA.

Data Base Managing Office collects, updates and edits the data base of NCPA, processes and stores information.

Organization and Methodology Department

Methodology Office develops instructional guidance documents on the methodology of public accreditation, advises on issues of public accreditation procedures.

International Relations Office promotes international cooperation and represents NCPA in international networks, selects and supports the work of international members of external expert panels, provides translation and interpreting.

Experts Office provides training and certification of experts, selects experts for external evaluation panels*.*

Information and Innovation Technologies Office develops innovation and information education technologies for assessing student outcomes (an incubator for new technologies and ideas)

General Resources Department

Personnel and General Services Office deals with contracts and agreements, employment, salary and dismissal of personnel, and deals with logistics issues.

Accounting Office is responsible for accounting and records keeping in accordance with the legislation on accounting.

NCPA has 41 personnel, 30 – full time employees, 5 – part time employees, 6 students.

Personnel briefings are conducted every week. Issues connected with the work of NCPA capacity building, development and motivation of the staff are discussed there.

Twice a month research workshops are held, the purpose of these workshops is the discussion of issues connected with research into quality assurance.
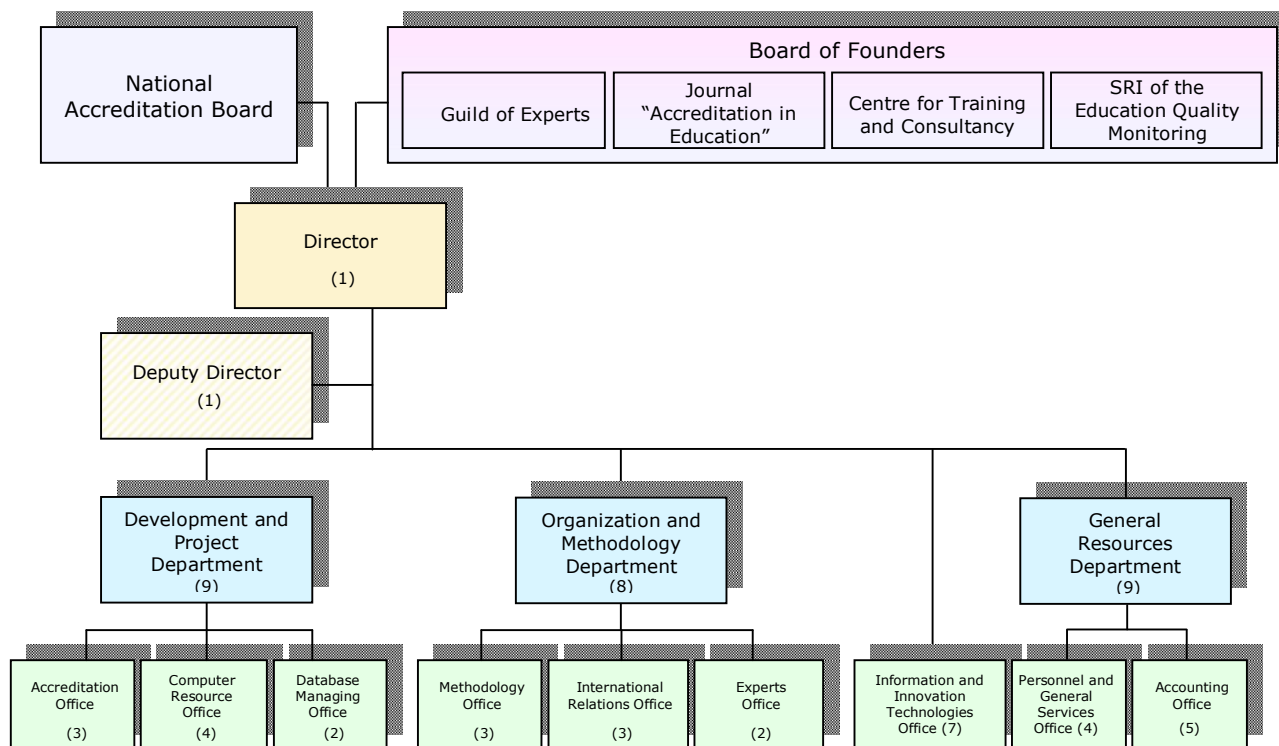
Fig. 6. NCPA's organizational chart

2.3.4. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Internationalization and raising awareness of European and global developments in quality assurance is the area of NCPA's special attention in view of the integration of Russian higher education in the EHEA. Participation in international QA events and collaborative projects is considered to be an important factor for maintaining NCPA's activities in compliance with European and global developments and trends in the field of higher education and quality assurance.

The members of NCPA's staff have broad experience in the sphere of quality assurance; they are among the founders and full members of international quality assurance networks. The first website of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education, (INQAAHE) was developed under the guidance of Dr. Navodnov.

To attain its goals and mission, NCPA is actively involved in the global dialogue on quality assurance in Higher Education through participation in the work of the leading international quality assurance networks within and outside Europe: Representatives of NCPA take part in conferences and workshops conducted by international organizations. NCPA is formally recognized as an organization with responsibilities for external quality assurance by several international quality assurance networks:

- the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education – INQAAHE (full member; personal participation of the members of NCPA's staff since 2000);

- the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ENQA (affiliate status; personal participation of the members of NCPA's staff since 2004);

- the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education – CEENQA Network (full member; personal participation of the members of NCPA's staff since 2000);

- the Asia-Pacific Quality Network – APQN (full member; personal participation of the members of NCPA's staff since 2003);

- Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence – IREG (full member since 2013).

NCPA is actively engaged in bilateral cooperation with quality assurance and accreditation agencies of Europe and Asia. One of the aspects of this joint work is the inclusion of international experts in NCPA's external review panels. This collaboration has given a powerful impetus to the internationalization of every area of NCPA's activity: programme evaluation, joint accreditation projects, joint workshops and seminars, international conferences. NCPA has bilateral agreements with a number of quality assurance agencies, among them:

- Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education – AERES, France

- National Accreditation Center, Kazakhstan

- Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute – ACQUIN, Germany

- Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance – HEA, Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Agency for Science and Higher Education – ASHE, Croatia

- Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education – SKVC, Lithuania

- Higher Education Quality Evaluation Center – HEQEC, Latvia

- Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency – EKKA, Estonia

- Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute – SEEI, China

- Accreditation Commission Czech Republic – ACCR, Czech Republic

Members of NCPA's staff participate in conferences, seminars and workshops conducted by international organizations in the sphere of quality assurance of Higher Education (writing articles, making presentations, participating in focus groups).

Annually NCPA together with the National Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education holds the research and practice conference "Implementing European Standards and Guidelines in the Russian Quality Assurance Systems". Eminent international quality assurance specialists are invited as plenary speakers.

In 2012-2013 NCPA's Deputy Director, the Head of the International Relation Office and the Deputy Head of Accreditation Office attended the ENQA Training of Agency Reviewers (Belgium, Hungary, France). NCPA's staff members took part in research and staff exchange visits (Austria, Greece, China, Romania).

The representatives of the Centre participate in the Bologna working group on excellence. Galina Motova was elected to the Counting Committee in the APQN Board election.

The participants from NCPA presented at the APQN plenary meeting in Bangalore, 2011 and at the European Quality Assurance Forum in Tallinn, 2012.

In line with ENQA's policy NCPA informs the public about the events and achievements in quality assurance through its websites http://аккредитация.рф), http://www.best-edu.ru, the on-line news letter "Vestnik Akkreditatsii", the journal "Accreditation in Education", and an annual Analytic Review.

The Centre carries out project and research activities into the sphere of evaluation and quality assurance of education. NCPA is a regular member of international working groups on quality assurance, takes part in the discussion of quality assurance documents, and contributes to ENQA and CEENQA electronic Newsletters.

NCPA carries out project and research activities into the sphere of quality assurance. Since 2011 NCPA has participated in the following projects: Tempus IV (EACEA 35/2012) ALIGN (Structural Measures – ALIGN_QF: Achieving and checking the alignment between academic programmes and national qualifications frameworks; TEMPUS-JPHES-№ 516796 Qualification Framework for Sustainable forestry and lifelong learning - SUFAREL»; Partnership title: Aurora – Towards Modern and Innovative Higher Education II (Aurora II)

NCPA is an active participant of working groups on quality assurance and international projects; it is a regular contributor to the electronic newsletters published by ENQA and CEENQA. NCPA takes part in the discussions of the drafts of quality assurance documents.

In 2014 NCPA will host the IV ENQA Members' Forum in St. Petersburg.

With a view of promoting principles and ideas of ENQA NCPA:

1. Disseminates information in the Russian academic community:

- the European Standards and Guidelines - ENQA were translated into Russian (2005) www.enqa.org. The document is regularly reprinted and circulated at the workshops and seminars;

- NCPA conducts seminars (6-10 times a year) on the issues connected with the Bologna process and the European transparency and quality tools;

- articles about ENQA and its activities are published in the journal "Accreditation in Education" and in the on-line news letter "Vestnik Akkreditatsii";

- international quality assurance specialists are regularly invited to present at the conferences of experts: 2009 - Heinz Ulrich Schmidt (FIBAA, Germany), 2010 - Peter Williams (ENQA, QAA-UK), 2011 - Iring Wasser (CEENQA, ASIIN, Germany) and representatives of Eastern European Quality Assurance agencies, 2012- Achim Hopbach (ENQA, AQA, Austria), and Josep Grifoll (ENQA, Spain).

- implementing ESG-ENQA in the procedures of public accreditation.

2. Disseminates information about ENQA and ESG-ENQA abroad:

- presentations at the APQN conferences (2010, 2011);

- participation at the General Assemblies and International Forums (ENQA, CEENQA, INQAAHE) 2011, 2012, 2013.

- participation in projects, surveys, news letters of ENQA и CEENQA.

3. Participates in external evaluations of accreditation agencies (Polish Accreditation Committee – November 2013, National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (Bulgaria) – January 2014)

2.3.5. TRAINING OF EXPERTS IN THE SPHERE OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

NCPA together with the Centre for Training and Consultancy carry out the training of experts who take part in the procedure of public accreditation. As part of the agreement between NCPA and the Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education the Centre selects experts for external reviews.

The introduction of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area made it necessary to set up a system of selection, training and certification of experts involved in the procedures of external evaluation both for the state and public accreditation. The Guild of Experts is an independent public organization, which was established in 2006. At present there are 970 experts in professional education from all over Russia including 690 rectors, vice-rectors of HEIs, directors, and deputy directors of the branches of HEIs.

Every year about 150 people receive special training and certification by the Guild of Experts.

There are two training sessions. Prospective experts have to meet certain criteria as to their qualification – at least seven year work experience in a HEI, an academic degree and title, experience of work in a leadership position (minimum 3 years), experience in external evaluation. The final stage of the training includes writing a qualification essay on the issues of quality assurance and participation in an external evaluation procedure. After a successful completion of the training program a graduate is awarded a certificate and is included in the Register of experts.

In order to provide experts with the up-to-date information necessary for their professional activities NCPA has opened a web-site http://expert-edu.ru. Each certified expert has a personal password and login for accessing the site. The site contains information on the procedures connected with the expert evaluation of HEIs, legal and normative documents in the sphere of education, useful references.

Annually NCPA together with the National Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education holds the research and practice conference "Implementing European Standards and Guidelines in the Russian Quality Assurance Systems". Eminent international quality assurance specialists are invited as plenary speakers. The members of the Guild of Experts, leading specialists in higher education, representatives of international accreditation agencies, representatives of the Federal Service of Supervision (Rosobnrnadzor), the Expert Council of the RF State Duma, Research and Methodological Councils (RMC) of HEIs, the National Training Foundation, the Russian TEMPUS Office, the National Centre for Public Accreditation, The Accreditation Centre of the Russian Association for Engineering Education, AKKORK, and other organizations.

The participants of the conferences discuss issues relating to the implementation of the Bologna principles in the Russian HE system, learn about best practices in the development of internal QA systems. Special attention is paid to the quality assurance of student learning outcomes in the context of the introduction of the new State Educational Standards. Besides, the members of the Guild of Experts have a good opportunity to find out more about the inner QA systems from the participants of the international QA agencies, which are represented by Croatia, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Austria, Germany, and Spain.

As part of the bilateral agreement between the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (Lithuania) and NCPA the Guild of Experts assists in nominating and selecting experts for external review panels in Lithuania.

The members of the Guild of Experts took part in the survey conducted by ENQA in the framework of the project "Quality procedures in European higher education: Visions for the future". The survey was focused on good practice in external quality assurance, and was financed by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.

2.3.6. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

One of the main directions of NCPA's activity is dissemination of information on the quality assurance procedures through conducting workshops, seminars and webinars for heads of HEIs, experts, representatives of academic community, and through web-sites, publishing books, guidelines, and directories.

Since 2003 the leading organization which has carried out this work has been the Centre for Training and Consultancy (CTC) (www.ukc-nica.ru) licensed in the sphere of further education. CTC is NCPA's partner in implementing the following tasks:

1   to promote the development of public accreditation by way of organizing and conducting training courses, seminars and webinars on the issues of public accreditation, quality assurance of HEIs, and educational policy;

2   provide information support of HE management and specialists in QA on the issues of public accreditation and internal quality assurance systems through their education and training;

3. develop and publish instruction and methodological materials, guidance and coach books on the issues of state and public accreditation of study programmes, QA of higher education.

4. carry out education and training of experts for state and public accreditation;

5. disseminate information on good practice with a view of promoting openness, transparency and mutual trust in the sphere of quality assurance.

During the period of 2003-2013 CTC conducted about 100 information and consultancy workshops for over 8000 leaders and specialists of HEIs. 840 experts have been trained and certified. The members of NCPA's staff have taught at those courses and seminars.

The journal [1]"Accreditation in Education" is published with an active participation of NCPA. The journal is a Russian information and analytical periodical covering a wide range of subjects relating to the quality of education in Russia and internationally. The journal provides a platform for opinion exchange and discussion of urgent issues by leaders and representatives of federal and regional state authorities, education institutions of all types, manufacturing companies and public organizations. The journal comes out 8 times a year, and its circulation is 3000 copies. The electronic version is published at www.akvobr.ru. The journal's supplement contains up-to-date legislative and normative documentation relating to education.

The Journal is freely circulated to all HEIs, sVET EIs and FEIs in Russia, to all federal and regional education authorities and accreditation agencies in Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union.

The electronic newsletter "Vestnik Akkreditatsii" is an important information source, which publishes news on all significant events in the sphere of higher education and accreditation: publication of new documents and materials, conferences and other events in Russia and abroad. "Vestnik Akkreditatsii" has been issued 2-3 times a month since 2010 and is circulated by e-mail to 10000 unique e-mail addresses.

The Analytic Review is NCPA's annual publication. It covers recent changes in the system of quality assurance of HE in Russia, analyses topical issues of accreditation and its legislative, normative and technological support, as well as trends and prospects of its sustainability in the context of strategic innovative development of the country and international tendencies.

NCPA's project – "The Best Educational Programs of Innovative Russia", launched in 2010, is an important step in the development of quality assurance in Russia. The project was set up by NCPA, the Guild of Experts in the sphere of higher professional education and the journal "Accreditation in Education".

The project is in its 4th stage now. Its main goal is to identify HE programmes distinguished by the exemplary level of professional education quality on the basis of expert assessments provided by public and professional communities. It is search for best practices through expert evaluation on the basis of a number of a set of predetermined indicators and selection criteria. The results of the project are widely available due to user-friendly formats (http://www.best-edu.ru/en/ и www.moeobrazovanie.ru). One of the project outcomes is publication (in Russian and in English) of the reference-book "The Best Educational Programs of Innovative Russia" which is circulated in schools, HEIs, sVET institutions, and federal and local education authorities.

[1] NCPA's Deputy Director Dr. Galina Motova serves as Editor-in-Chief of the journal

3. COMPLIANCE WITH THE EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

3.1. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES USED BY NCPA

3.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES USED BY THE CENTRE

The procedure of public accreditation of HEIs in Russia consists of several stages. At each stage of the procedure NCPA is responsible for carrying out predefined functions:

Table 1 – Stages of the external evaluation procedure used by NCPA

№	Name of stage	Executive	NCPA's function
1	Project "The Best Educational Programmes of Russia"	NCPA The Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education The journal "Accreditation in Education"	1. Developing software (www.best-edu.ru) 2. Integrating the obtained data into the Central Database of educational programmes delivered in the RF 3. Developing the data base of experts from academic and research communities and professional associations 4. Conducting the internet survey 5. Processing the survey data 6. Compiling the draft list of best educational programmes, its publication and approval by the National Accreditation Board
2	Application for public accreditation	HEI	1. Agreement on the date of the external review 2. Concluding a contract with a HEI for carrying out the procedure of public accreditation
3	Self-evaluation by the programme	HEI	1. Provision of normative and methodological documentation for conducting self-evaluation and preparing a self-evaluation report by the programme (clusters of programmes) 2. Consulting on the issues connected with the preparation of the self-evaluation report. On the request of a HEI a special training might be held
4	Preparation for the external evaluation	NCPA	1. Selecting external experts for the expert panels 2. Provision of the expert panel members with the self-evaluation report, normative documents and methodological guidelines for conducting the procedure and writing a report about the external review 3. Training for experts on the issues of public accreditation of educational programmes 4. Coordinating the programme of the external panel visit with the HEI and the members of the review team 5. The transfer of the members of the panel to and from the HEI 6. Organizational support and logistics of the site visit (transfer, accommodation, meals, etc.)
5	The external evaluation of an educational programme	The external expert panel	1. Coordinating the work of the external expert panel in the HEI during the site visit and the preparation of the report

№	Name of stage	Executive	NCPA's function
6	The report on the findings of the external review of the programmes	The external expert panel	1. Sending the review report to the HEI for factual errors
7	Preparing materials on the reviewed educational programme for the meeting of the National Accreditation Board	NCPA	1. Analysis and visualization of the review materials for the meeting of the National Accreditation Board 2. Preparation and publication of the Summary Report of the evaluation of the educational programs on NCPA's site (in Russian and in English) 3. Information support of the National Accreditation Board
8	Public accreditation decision making	the National Accreditation Board	1. Publication of the information on the work of the National Accreditation Board on NCPA's website and in the mass media
9	Issuing the Certificate of Public Accreditation	NCPA	1. The presentation of the Certificate of Public Accreditation of educational programmes to the HEI
10	Feedback and publication of results	NCPA	1. The oral report of NCPA's coordinator of the external review about the conducted procedure of external evaluation of an educational program (cluster of programs) 2. The survey of the external review panel members and the persons responsible for public accreditation in HEI about the procedure of public accreditation 3. Publication of the Register of accredited educational programmes on NCPA's site 4. Providing information to the public on the outcomes of public accreditation 5. Monitoring the follow up procedures on the outcomes of public accreditation
11	Follow up	NCPA Educational Institution National Accreditation Board	1. NCPA's recommendations to the EI on the preparation of the report on the results of corrective actions 2. Receipt of the report on the results of corrective actions from the EI; preparation of the summary report on the educational programme (cluster of programmes) for the National Accreditation Board meeting on the basis of the report on the results of corrective actions.

1. Project 'The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia'

In accordance with "The Regulations on Public Accreditation" the priority right for public accreditation by NCPA belongs to the educational programmes which have been recognized by professional associations, academic and research communities and listed in the Reference book "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia".

Since 2010 NCPA in cooperation with the National Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education, and the publishing house 'Accreditation in Education' have been carrying out the project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia".

One of the main purposes of the project is to evaluate the quality of the educational programmes offered by the Russian HEIs through internet surveys of educationalists, members of the academic community, employers and other stakeholders.

The programmes which receive the majority of the stakeholders' votes become winners of the project. Only 6-7% of the higher educational programmes delivered in Russia get to be listed in the reference book.

2. Application for public accreditation

When applying for public accreditation a HEI should observe the following conditions:

1) Educational programmes undergoing accreditation should have state accreditation (compliance with the FSES);

2) Educational programme(s) should be listed among the best educational programmes.

When a HEI makes a decision to have an external review of a programme (or a cluster of programmes) coordinated by NCPA the first step is to send a written application signed by the head of the educational institution to the Director of NCPA. After the application is filed a coordinator of the review is appointed from among the members of NCPA staff.

The functions of NCPA at this stage include:

1) Agreement on the date of the site visit by the external evaluation panel

2) Preparing a draft contract and agreeing on the terms with the HEI undergoing the procedure of public accreditation. The contract specifies the fees payable and the procedures for payment.

The Contract is signed by the Director of NCPA and the head of the educational institution.

3. Self-evaluation by the educational programme

Self-evaluation is an essential part of the external review procedure of an educational programme (a cluster of programmes), it is conducted as a self reflection and self evaluation exercise in order to get ready for public accreditation.

The goal of self-evaluation is to establish the compliance of the quality of the graduates' education and training to the standards and criteria of public accreditation by NCPA. NCPA's coordinator provides the educational institution with normative and methodological materials developed by NCPA and regulating the procedure of self-evaluation and the preparation of the self-evaluation report by the educational programme (a cluster of programmes).

− [Regulations on Public Accreditation of Educational Programmes](#) (a cluster of programmes) of Higher, Vocational and Further Professional Education

− [Standards and Criteria of Public Accreditation](#)

− Guidelines for Self-evaluation of Educational Programmes

− Guidelines for Preparing a Self-Evaluation Report

Thoroughness and self-criticism (reflection on the practices) of the self-evaluation are essential for the effectiveness of the procedure for an educational institution; they also form the basis for trust to the quality of the educational programme on the part of the academic community and professional associations.

The self-evaluation procedure opens up ample opportunities for enhancing the quality of all aspects of the educational programme (a cluster of programmes) under review:

− receiving objective information about the educational process;

− establishing the degree of compliance of the contents and quality of graduates' education and training to the standards and criteria of public accreditation by NCPA;

− identification of positive and negative tendencies in the performance of the educational institution offering the programme;

− identifying the reasons for problems and finding the ways of solution.

In order to effectively conduct the self-evaluation procedure a special internal committee is set up in the educational institution. The committee is comprised of representatives from the management of an educational institution, the teaching staff, and the students' self-governing bodies.

The self-evaluation procedure is an open and transparent process with the participation of all stakeholders: administration, teachers, students, and employers.

During the self-evaluation period NCPA provides advice to the Institution under review on the issues of conducting the self-evaluation and writing the self-evaluation report. If necessary, training sessions and webinars are organized.

As a result of self-evaluation the educational institution writes a self-evaluation report with a detailed analysis of the implementation of the programme (a cluster of programmes).

The report on the self-evaluation of the programme (a cluster of programmes) is one of the documents which is submitted by the programme (a cluster of programmes) for public accreditation. The structure of the self-evaluation report can be found in the Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes.

The completed self-evaluation report (a hard copy and an electronic copy) is sent to NCPA no later than 35 days prior to the site visit of the external review panel.

4. Preparation for the external evaluation

The external review of a programme (a cluster of programmes) is conducted by an external review panel.

External reviewers are selected by NCPA and agreed with the educational institution under review in order to avoid a possible conflict of interests. Any person is eligible to serve as a panel member if he/she has a sufficient level of knowledge, experience and expertise in the fields of teaching and quality assurance, has received special training resulting in certification, and has no financial or other personal or professional relations with the education institution to be reviewed.

In order to ensure European (international) approach to the review international experts may be included into the review panel. International panel members are nominated by international accreditation agencies in the sphere of quality assurance.

An external expert panel consists of 5 members approved by NCPA's Director.

A Review Panel includes:

- Review Chair, responsible for coordination of the panel work, preparation and delivery of the presentation of the preliminary findings of the review, as well as for the preparation of the final report on the external review of the Educational programme (programmes).
- Deputy Chair acting as a review secretary and responsible for drafting of the report on the outcomes of the external review programme (a cluster of programmes).
- External reviewers – representatives of the academic community drawn from Federal experts in the sphere of education and international experts nominated by international QA agencies.
- Stakeholder member – an employer who is to assess whether the study programme(s) under review and professional competencies of its graduates comply with the labour market requirements.
- Student member – representative of a student organization, who is responsible for assessment of the compliance of the study programmes under review with the students' needs and expectations.

The composition of the review panel takes into account the gender balance.

The following methodological and normative documentation should be distributed to the members of the External Review Panel. The Panel should carefully study the documents before the site visit: Guidelines for external reviews of educational programmes; NCPA's legal documents relating to external reviews of study programme(s); the self-evaluation report provided by the study programme(s) under review; information about the composition of the Review Panel; the schedule of the site visit.

The analysis and assessment of the self-evaluation report is made by the expert panel members before the site visit. At this stage the panel members can request from the educational institution under review any additional documentation relating to the evaluation of the programme.

A coordinating person from NCPA is appointed to liaise between the members of the expert panel, the institution under review and NCPA. NCPA is responsible for the transfer of the expert panel members to the educational institution, visa support, travel and accommodation arrangements. All the related expenses are paid by NCPA.

The coordinator keeps in touch with the educational institution under review in order to have up to date information on the state of readiness of the educational institution for the external panel visit.

An important stage in the work of an expert panel is a short term training either in the format of a webinar or a briefing.

5. External evaluation of an educational programme

The goal of the work of the external review panel is to verify the information presented in the self-evaluation report and to collect sufficient data on the site for obtaining full and credible information about the educational programme (a cluster of programmes) under review.

The expert panel aims at an overall assessment of the reviewed educational programme (a cluster of programmes) and development of a coordinated and consistent report on the outcomes of the external evaluation.

In its work the external evaluation panel follows the Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes.

The day before the site visit a preliminary meeting of the external review panel members is held. Only the members of the panel, NCPA's coordinator and the person responsible for the procedure of external evaluation from the educational institution are present at the meeting. During the meeting the Chair of the review panel advises the panel members on the procedure of the site visit to the educational institution.

The panel members discuss the self- evaluation report of the educational programme (a cluster of programmes) and identify the lines of inquiry to be pursued during the site visit. They also decide what additional information should be asked for; they analyze the visit schedule, and make amendments, if necessary.

The visit schedule should be carefully planned for effective time management. The planned meetings provide an opportunity for cross checking the facts described in the self-evaluation report of the educational programme (a cluster of programmes). The panel members should have enough time for their internal meetings to discuss preliminary findings and prepare for the following meetings. Some free time should be allowed to give an opportunity for the members of the teaching staff and students to meet with the external panel members.

At the final meeting the Chair presents the panel's recommendations on the outcomes of the external evaluation of the educational programme (a cluster of programmes).

The panel's conclusions about the evaluation of the programme are not made public.

The educational institution under review cooperates with NCPA on all the issues relating to the external expert panel visit.

6. Final report on the results of the external review

After the analysis of the self-evaluation report, documents and information, and interviews with representatives of professional associations, graduates, students, post-graduate students, members of the teaching staff, and the EI management the expert panel prepares the Final Report on the outcomes of the external evaluation on the grounds of their coordinated decision.

The Final Report structure is outlined in the Guidelines for Reviews of Educational of Educational Programmes. The Report should contain complex assessment of the study programme(s) under review supplied with corresponding recommendations.

A study programme should be assessed on the basis of testing the programme compliance with NCPA's standards and criteria for public accreditation.

If the panel members find the study programme under review as non-compliant with NCPA Standards, they should provide the reasoning behind such conclusions with regard to every aspect that they consider as non-compliant, as well as give clear measures necessary to improve the quality of the programme(s) under review.

After the Chair submits the Final Report to NCPA the Coordinator mails the Report to the educational institution under review for rectifying any factual errors.

The Final Report of the external evaluation panel on the outcomes of the external evaluation of the educational programme (a cluster of programmes) is one of the documents submitted by NCPA to the National Accreditation Board for making a decision on public accreditation of the educational programme (a cluster of programmes).

7. Preparation of the documents of the educational programme for the meeting of the National Accreditation Board

In order to integrate all the information on the external evaluation of an educational programme(s) (the self-evaluation report of the educational programme (a cluster of programmes), the Final Report on the outcomes of the external evaluation of an educational programme (a cluster of programmes) NCPA prepares a special document - the Summary Report of the External Evaluation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) for the meeting of the National Accreditation Board. The document helps to familiarize with outcomes of external evaluation of the programme(s) and make an informed decision on public accreditation. The Summary Report is published on NCPA's website.

The document is a result of the internal assessment, the external evaluation by an external evaluation panel and the external independent evaluation by the public (the project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia").

NCPA provides information support of the work of the National Accreditation Board through its site: it publishes the agenda of the Accreditation Board meetings, prepares analytical materials for all programmes under review and publishes on the website full reports (in Russian) and summary reports (in English).

8. Public accreditation decision making

The decision on public accreditation of an educational programme (a cluster of programmes) is made at a meeting of the National Accreditation Board.

The National Accreditation Board is a collegiate public and professional body. The members are representatives of education authorities, educational institutions, and professional and students associations (Annex 8).

The meetings of the National Accreditation Board are held not less than twice a year. The list of the National Accreditation Board members is published on the website.

The educational institution is made familiar with the Summary Report of the External Evaluation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) ten days prior to the meeting of the National Accreditation Board and may make commentaries on the contents.

The educational institution has the right to recall its application for public accreditation at any stage of the procedure before the decision is made

In case of violation of the public accreditation procedure the educational institution may submit an appeal to the Appeals Committee, which is a constituent part of the National Accreditation Board.

In accordance with the Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education the educational institution has the opportunity to undergo a second public accreditation procedure not less than a year after the denial of accreditation.

9. Awarding the Public Accreditation Certificate

The Decision on public accreditation is made at a meeting of the National Accreditation Board, it is signed by the Board Chair and published on NCPA's website (Minutes of the National Accreditation Board meetings).

On the grounds of the Minutes of the National Accreditation Board meetings the members of NCPA's staff prepare layout sheets of Public Accreditation Certificates awarded to the accredited programmes.

The information about the issued certificates is entered in the Register. NCPA is responsible for the keeping and publication of the Register.

10. Feedback and publication of results

On completion of the public accreditation procedure the external panel members and persons responsible for accreditation in the educational institution are offered a survey on the quality of the procedure of public accreditation. The electronic questionnaire is published on the NCPA's website.

All educational programmes which have been granted public accreditation are entered in the NCPA's Register of accredited programmes.

The annual reference book "Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia" contains the section "List of educational programmes accredited by NCPA". The reference book is circulated in secondary schools, HEIs, sVET institutions, federal and regional education authorities. The electronic version of the reference book is available on the website of the project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia".

11. Follow-up procedures

In case an educational programme cluster of programmes) is accredited for an incomplete term (less than 6 years), after this period an educational institution has the right to present to the NCPA a report on the results of corrective actions in accordance with the recommendations of the external review panel, on the basis of which at the regular meeting of the National Accreditation Board a decision can be made on the prolongation of the accreditation period.

The follow-up procedure is voluntary and includes the development of corrective actions, taking into account the recommendations and comments of the external review panel, the implementation of these recommendations and the evaluation of the outcomes with the preparation of a report on the results of corrective actions (Annex 9).

See Annexes 7, 9

EVIDENCE

6 — Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation of Educational Programmes, Code of Ethics for Members of External Review
7 — Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes
8 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes
13 — Regulations on the Appeals Procedure, Regulations on the Appeals Committee
15 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes (for joint accreditation of musical education)
28 — Reports on the results of external reviews of educational programmes
31 — Reference Book "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia" (2011-2013)
NCPA's website

3.1.2. NCPA'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

External quality assurance procedures used by NCPA comply with the standards for external quality assurance of HEIs described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

3.1.2.1. USE OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

STANDARD

> The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

Procedures used by NCPA

NCPA in its work uses procedures for external quality assurance of education, which are based on the HEI's self-evaluation and external evaluation by an expert panel. The procedures of external evaluation and writing of the self-evaluation report are described in *Regulations on*

Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education.

NCPA considers the effectiveness of the certified quality management systems used by HEIs: ISO standards, EFQM excellence model, the RF Government Quality Award, and others. Any of these models increase credibility and trust in the HEI and in the quality of offered programmes.

NCPA takes into account the presence and effectiveness of inner quality assurance mechanisms used to evaluate the competency of the teaching staff, the efficiency of the institutional governance, assessment of student learning outcomes, resource management, and other aspects of a HEI performance. However, when developing its own standards and criteria NCPA was guided by the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, in the first place, which is clearly manifested in the *Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes.*

Three-four times a year training seminars are held for the HEI management, staff members responsible for quality management, representatives of Education and Methodology Associations on the issues of development and implementation of HEI inner quality assurance systems.

In 2005 *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* were translated into Russian and recommended for implementation into the inner quality assurance systems of HEIs. NCPA informs the public about the European Standards and Guidelines through its website, publications in the journal "*Accreditation in Education*", and also at its conferences and workshops where international quality assurance experts are invited.

NCPA together with the Scientific and Research Institute of the Education Quality Monitoring provides technological support of the on-line testing tool "the Federal Internet Exam in the Sphere of Professional Education". This project has been implemented since 2005 and is aimed at the external assessment of students' outcomes in order to evaluate their compliance with the Federal State Educational Standards (www.i-exam.ru). Annually more than 700 educational institutions take part in the project. Over 1 million test sessions are conducted during the academic semester.

Since 2008 Open International Internet Olympiads for higher education students have been held. During 5 years about 85 000 students from 19 countries have participated in them. The results of the Olympiads are taken into account during the procedure of public accreditation (www.i-olymp.com).

See Annexes 4, 7

EVIDENCE

6 — [Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation](), [Code of Ethics for Members of External Evaluation Panels]()
7 — Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes
8 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes

3.1.2.2. DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

STANDARD

> The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

<div align="center">Procedures used by NCPA</div>

Standards and criteria for public accreditation are developed on the basis of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG–ENQA). Besides ENQA recommendations NCPA's standards comprise sets of criteria, which allow to adjust the standards to the context of Russian HE, and to make the procedure of public accreditation

more transparent and clear for Russian experts. The public accreditation procedure has been developed with regard to the national system of education, is fit for purpose, does not interfere with the education process, and meets the goals and objectives of educational institutions.

The procedure of public accreditation of educational programmes has been developed by NCPA since 2009 in a few stages.

1. Initially, the developed documents were discussed by quality assurance experts from among rectors and vice-rectors of HEIs, directors and deputy directors of the branches of HEIs on the electronic discussion platform on the website of the Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education (www.expert-nica.ru). The documents were revised in view of given recommendations and comments.

2. In 2011 the documents were discussed at The Sixth Annual Conference of Experts in Higher Education "Implementing European Standards and Guidelines in the Russian Quality Assurance Systems". In order to improve the documents they are periodically revised with the involvement of representatives of academic community and professional associations through the forum www.expert-nica.ru among other ways.

3. In 2012 at the meeting of the National Accreditation Board the following documents were revised and adopted: Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes, Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes, Regulations on the Appeals Procedure, Regulations on the Appeals Committee, and Guidelines for External Reviews of Further Education Programmes.

A detailed commentary and clarification on the public accreditation procedure is published on NCPA' website and in the journal "*Accreditation in Education*"

See Annex 4

EVIDENCE

6 — Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation, Code of Ethics for Members of External Evaluation Panels
7 — Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes
8 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes
10 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes of Further Professional Education
11 — Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation of Educational Programmes of Further Professional Education
12 — Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes of Further Professional Education
15 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes (for joint accreditation of musical education)

3.1.2.3. CRITERIA FOR DECISIONS

STANDARD

> Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

Procedures used by NCPA

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 (a cluster of programmers) 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.

The NCPA staff prepares Summary Report of the External Evaluation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) 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 and also some further information obtained from the educational institution.

Based on the consideration of the Summary Report of the External Evaluation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) the National Accreditation Board makes a collegiate positive or negative decision. A programme may be accredited for the full term of 6 years or for a part term (less than 6 years).

In case of positive public accreditation decision NCPA awards the educational institution a Certificate of Public Accreditation of an educational programme (a cluster of programmers), 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 *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG–ENQA) with consideration of the specific features of the Russian education system. Besides ENQA recommendations NCPA's standards comprise sets of criteria, which allow systematizing the public accreditation procedure and ensuring consistency of decision making even if the decision is made by different groups of people.

All the regulatory and normative documents used in the procedure of public accreditation have been discussed and approved by the representatives of academic community, professional and student associations at the conferences of the Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education, and at the meetings of the National Accreditation Board.

EVIDENCE

6 — Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation, Code of Ethics for Members of External Evaluation Panels
7 — Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes
8 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes
13 — Regulations on the Appeals Procedure, Regulations on the Appeals Committee
28 — Reports on the results of external reviews of educational programmes
NCPA's website

3.1.2.4. PROCESSES FIT FOR PURPOSE

STANDARD

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

Procedures used by NCPA

Public accreditation by NCPA is aimed at enhancing the quality of education and creating a quality culture in educational institutions, identifying best practices in quality assurance and informing the public about the educational institutions offering quality educational programmes.

The documents regulating the procedure of public accreditation were developed with the participation of stakeholders. Members of the Guild of Experts in the sphere of professional education, representatives of professional associations, representatives of state executive bodies as well as members of the National Accreditation Board took part in the discussions and consultations

One of the preconditions for public accreditation eligibility of an educational programme is its recognition by professional and academic communities as the best programme on the basis of a large scale national project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia".

All stages of the public accreditation procedure: self-evaluation report, selection of external experts, a site-visit, preparation of the report by the external expert panel, follow-up on the

recommendations given in the final report – have as their goal an objective independent assessment of the compliance of an educational programme to established criteria.

NCPA provides the educational institution under review with all the documentation necessary for self-evaluation and preparation of the self-evaluation report (*Guidelines for Preparation of the Self-evaluation Report*).

When preparing the self-evaluation report an educational institution provides information on the programme(s) under evaluation analyzing the development dynamics, strengths and weaknesses of its activity and the activity of the structural units (office, faculty, center, Institute), which deliver this programme. The results of this reflection make it possible to see if the programme meets the European criteria for organization and contents of the programme and to look for new ways of enhancing the quality of education.

At this stage NCPA organizes training sessions and webinars for the coordinators from the educational institutions under review in order to consult them on the issues relating to the contents and organization of the accreditation procedure.

Special attention is paid to the selection and appointment of experts for the external evaluation panel. Experts are drawn from the members of academic community, professional and student associations. In the selection process the following factors are considered: the experience of work in the sphere of higher education, academic credentials (research degree, title, etc.), area of expertise. As a rule, these are certified experts, members of the Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education. Besides, an important condition is the expert's experience of work in managerial positions (rector, vice-rector, dean, head of the education and methodology department), that means the knowledge of internal quality assurance systems.

Stakeholder member – an employer, is invited to assess whether the study programme(s) under review and professional competencies of its graduates comply with the labour market requirements.

Student member – representative of a student organization, is responsible for assessment of the compliance between the study programmes under review and students' needs and expectations.

NCPA cooperates with international accreditation agencies, which nominate their experts for external evaluation of Russian educational programmes. Thus, since 2011 experts from 17 countries: Russia, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Finland, Spain, China, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, and Kazakhstan have participated in external evaluation panels.

Those foreign experts, who don't speak Russian, are provided with all the documentation on the reviewed programme and the information about the present day Russian system of education in English.

Before the site-visit all members of the external evaluation panel have a briefing session to discuss the procedure, and their rights and responsibilities.

EVIDENCE

6 — [Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation](), [Code of Ethics for Members of External Evaluation Panels]()
8 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes

3.1.2.5. REPORTING

STANDARD

> Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

Procedures used by NCPA

The outcomes of the procedures are published in self-evaluation reports, reports of expert panels, analytical materials, registers and reference books.

Self-evaluation reports are publicly available on the websites of HEIs. The reports contain information about the achievements of the programme under review, and areas which need improvement. The outcomes of public accreditation are published on NCPA's website: www.nica.ru.

The expert panels' reports in the form of summary reports are published on NCPA's website in Russian and English. The full report is published in Russian.

The structure of the self-evaluation report is described in the Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes and Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes. The structure of the self-evaluation report follows a defined format, though it allows for variations.

On its website NCPA publishes the list of accredited programmes, which includes general information about the programme and the names of external review panel members.

EVIDENCE

7 — Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes
8 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes
28 — Reports on the results of external reviews of educational programmes
NCPA's website

3.1.2.6. FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

STANDARD

> Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

Procedures used by NCPA

NCPA emphasizes voluntary and optional character of the public accreditation procedure. The denial of accreditation is not followed by the termination of an educational programme (a cluster of programmes). However, during the accreditation procedure the external evaluation panel makes recommendations for improvement of the educational programme(s). NCPA believes that the responsibility for implementing recommendations lies with the educational institution. At the same time the public accreditation procedure developed by NCPA involves follow-up actions:

− If during the accreditation procedure some inconsistency is found between the content and quality of education and the standards and criteria of public accreditation the HEI receives recommendations. These recommendations are fixed in the final document as prescriptions. One or two years are allowed to implement the recommendations. At the end of the term allocated for improvement the HEI is asked to write a substantiated report on the implementation of the recommendations made by the external evaluation panel.

− The recommendations are entered into a special data base for monitoring deadlines by which the HEI is supposed to produce the evidence of improvement.

− NCPA publishes on its website questionnaires about the quality of the accreditation procedure. The questionnaire is filled in by the members of the external evaluation panel and HEI's coordinators. Thus, NCPA monitors the satisfaction of the parties involved with the procedure of public accreditation. The survey outcomes can be found in Appendix 6.

− Besides, NCPA developed an appeals procedure, which describes the mechanism of appeal in case of breaches of accreditation procedure. The appeals procedure is regulated by two documents: *Regulations on the Appeals Procedure* and *Regulations on the Appeals Committee*

− In case of short-term accreditation (less than six years) of an educational programme (cluster of programmes), or when the term expires the educational institution has the right to submit a report on corrective measures in accordance with the recommendations of the external evaluation panel, based on which the National Accreditation Board during its next session may make a decision on prolonging the term of accreditation (Regulations on Public Accreditation, section 5, para 5.4).

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

It is necessary to further develop and introduce the survey mechanism, which will improve the monitoring of the follow- up procedure.

See Annex 9

EVIDENCE

6 — Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation, Code of Ethics for Members of External Evaluation Panels
7 — Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes
8 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes
13 — Regulations on the Appeals Procedure, Regulations on the Appeals Committee
NCPA's website

3.1.2.7. PERIODIC REVIEWS

STANDARD

> External quality assurance of institutions and/or programs should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

Procedures used by NCPA

According to the *Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education* external evaluation of an educational programme (a cluster of programmes) is conducted on a regular basis. An accredited programme (a cluster of programmes) can undergo a second accreditation after 6 years.

On the decision of the National Accreditation Board the programme can be accredited for a lesser period in case of partial compliance with the standards.

NCPA monitors the effectiveness of the outcomes of public accreditation through the surveys of members of the academic community and professional associations within the framework of the project «The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia») and the interim surveys (in 3 years' time) of the managerial personnel of the accredited programmes.

EVIDENCE

6 — Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation, Code of Ethics for Members of External Evaluation Panels
8 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes

3.1.2.8. SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSIS

STANDARD

> Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analyzing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

Procedures used by NCPA

NCPA produces and publishes an annual analytical review, which provides the results of NCPA' work during the past year: information about the conducted accreditation and their outcomes, training courses for experts, and managerial personnel of HEIs and regional education authorities, about international cooperation and public relations. The Review analyses the current situation in the HE system in the Russian Federation and the activity of higher education and secondary education institutions, the tendencies in the development of state and public accreditation, and good practice in the international quality assurance. All this makes it possible to determine the ways of improvement of accreditation procedures, evaluation tools and methods.

In the journal "Accreditation in Education" and in the proceedings of the annual conference of experts   NCPA publishes materials on best practices in the internal and external quality assurance systems.

NCPA carries out a lot of research into quality assurance of education. The results are published in articles and monographs. Research facilitates the enhancement of our procedures and processes. The leading specialists of NCPA supervise post graduate students who are conducting research into procedures of quality assurance used by the Agency.

The Director of NCPA heads the research school in the quality assurance of education. Under his supervision 4 doctorate and 6 candidate of science dissertations have been defended.

See Annex 8

EVIDENCE

21 — List of projects implemented by NCPA in 2011-2013
27 — List of Published works by NCPA's staff
Analytical Reviews (2009-2010, 2011, 2012)
The Journal "Accreditation in Education" (www.akvobr.ru)

3.2. NCPA'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

3.2.1. USE OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

STANDARD

> The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

Procedures used by NCPA

NCPA in its work uses procedures for external quality assurance of education, which are based on the HEI's self-evaluation, external evaluation by an expert panel, and the analysis of its performance according to the public accreditation standards and criteria, a final report on the results of the external evaluation, an accreditation decision by the National Accreditation Board, and a follow-up procedure including publication of results and information about the accreditation of educational programmes in the Register of Accredited Programmes on NCPA's site (www.ncpa.ru) and in mass media.

Part 3.1 of this Report describes external evaluation procedures used by NCPA. These procedures meet the standards for the external quality assurance procedures described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

NCPA carries out accreditation at the national level; however, the procedure itself is not yet conducted on a large scale. It is necessary to promote the public accreditation procedure and disseminate good practice and information on its results.

3.2.2 OFFICIAL STATUS

STANDARD

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

Procedures used by NCPA

NCPA is an autonomous non-profit organization which has an official status in the Russian Federation. NCPA was established by the general meeting of the founders on the 7th of

December 2009 and registered by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation on 26.01.2010. The Statutes of NCPA is approved at the general meeting of the founders on the 7th of December 2009.

The legal status of NCPA , the rights and responsibilities of the founders are determined by the Statutes, and to the extent not regulated by it, the Center is governed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, by the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, the Federal Law "On the non-for profit organizations", the Russian Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" , the Federal Law "On higher and post-graduate education", and other legal and normative acts, international agreements in the sphere of education, where Russia is a participant.

The Centre is a legal entity and has an independent balance sheet.

NCPA has cooperation agreements with relevant ministries and departments (the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Bashkortostan); with professional associations, employers associations (the Association of Music Educational Institutions, the Association of Forestry Education, the Regional Association of Employers "the Union of Industrials and Entrepreneurs of the Arkhangelsk region"); with Federal Universities (The Far Eastern Federal University, Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov, North-Caucasus Federal University); with independent educational and research organizations (the National Training Foundation, Free Economic Society of Russia, Society "Knowledge" of Russia (CICE), Educational and methodological association in the field of construction, Educational and methodological associations of the Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics in: "Applied Informatics", "Statistics", "Mathematical Methods in Economics", "Anti-crisis Management"), which authorized NCPA to conduct accreditation and they nominate experts for evaluation panels (Annex 11).

Since 2013 NCPA has been one of the founders and a member of the National Public Register of Accrediting Organizations in Education (NPRAO).

See Annexes 1, 11

EVIDENCE

1 — The Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation"
5 — Minutes of general meetings of the employees and the meetings of the working group responsible for the self-evaluation of NCPA
34 — Agreement on creating the association the "National Public Register of Accrediting Organizations in Education" (NPRAO)

3.2.3. ACTIVITIES

STANDARD

> Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or program level) on a regular basis.

NCPA's activity

NCPA carries out external quality assurance activities in the sphere of higher professional education on a regular basis. The main area of its work is public accreditation of educational programmes in accordance with the Russian legislation, the Statutes, the Action Plan for 2013 and strategic plan of NCPA's development.

As of 1 October 2013 NCPA has carried out the external evaluation of 95 educational programmes - 80 programmes of higher education, 13 programmes of further education, 2 post-graduate programmes, offered by 13 educational institutions of the Russian Federation. 143 experts (including 51 international experts from 16 countries) have participated in the evaluations.

1. For every meeting of the National Accreditation Board NCPA prepares the following analytical materials: Summaries of the External Evaluation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes), which contains the results of self-evaluation reports analysis, and the outcomes of the external evaluation; presentations, and other materials necessary

for accreditation decision making. Similar work is conducted for the accreditation of educational programmes (clusters of programmes) offered in the educational organizations of further education.

2. Every year the NCPA carries out an independent public evaluation of the quality of higher educational programmes in the framework of the national project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia". So far three rounds of the project have been held. The results are published on the websites (www.best-edu.ru, www.moeobrazovanie.ru). In 2013 the 4th round of the project has been launched.

3. Project activities commissioned by HEIs   (see Evidence).

NCPA maintains informational openness and transparency of the public accreditation system through the publication of the reports on the outcomes of the external evaluation procedures of educational programmes; analytical materials prepared for the National Accreditation Board; the Register of the accredited programmes on NCPA's website.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

In order to enhance NCPA's activities it is planned:

− to provide consultancy services to educational institutions by preparing analytical materials on the basis of a detailed analysis of the quality of educational programmes on a nationwide scale (on the outcomes of the project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia");

− to ensure broad publicity of NCPA's activities in the sphere of quality assurance in mass media;

− to develop the technology of public accreditation of the educational programmes of sVET-institutions and institutions of further education.

See Annexes 1, 2, 3, 8

EVIDENCE

6 — Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation
8 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes
15 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes (for joint accreditation of musical education)
21 — List of projects implemented by NCPA in 2011-2013
29 — Analytical materials for the National Accreditation Board Meeting
Website of the project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia"
NCPA's website

3.2.4. RESOURCES

STANDARD

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

Procedures used by NCPA

Premises

NCPA is situated at one location: 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. The facilities include a rest zone, two kitchens, and a conference hall.

Staff

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

NCPA's staff (41 people) includes full time (30) and part time (11 including 6 students) personnel. The number of employees is growing proportionally to the growth of the scope and amount of work fulfilled by NCPA. The table below shows the main groups of personnel.

Thus, in 2010 NCPA had 9 ft personnel. In 2011 – 15 people. Since 2012 there have been 17ft and 5pt employees.

The age composition of the staff: 51,2% (21 people) – employees at the age of 20 to 30 years old, 14,6% (6 people) – from 30 to 40 years old, 12,2% (5 people) – from 40 to 50 years old, employees over 50 years old - 22% (9 people).

The gender balance - 29, 3% male; 70, 7% female.

All employees have a necessary level of education and experience of work in the sphere of higher education. 22% of the staff have doctorate (2) and candidate of science (7) degrees.

NCPA's staff Qualifications

Table 2 – Education of the staff

Category of Employees	Personnel ratio
Employees – holders of candidate of science and doctorate degrees	22%
Employees – holders of higher professional education degrees	66%
Employees having incomplete higher education (students)	12%

The management of NCPA pays much attention to human resource development. NCPA views its staff as the most important factor in the Centre's success.

In order to find out the level of satisfaction of the staff with the working conditions there is an annual survey of NCPA's personnel.

The NCPA's management has put in place a robust system for ensuring that members of the staff have access to development opportunities through the provision of education and training support (according to the latest (2013) survey 72% of NCPA's staff expressed their commitment to further education and training).

NCPA's staff members participate in workshops, seminars, and conferences on different aspects of education and quality assurance, both in Russia and abroad. They also attend professional advancement training courses and go on research visits (China, Austria, Italy, Greece, France, and Romania).

There is a post graduate program (jointly with the Department of Applied Mathematics and Information Technologies at the Mari State Technical University) where post graduate students do research into the field of quality assurance. Two members of the staff are currently working on their candidate of science dissertations.

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, 93% of the stuff believe that they have good working relationship with their colleagues, 86% consider their relationship with the Director to be good. 79% of the employees are satisfied with their salary.

Technical support of NCPA's activities

NCPA provides equipment that is sufficient and appropriate for the organization's working requirements. There is a balance between needs and the technical specifications of the computer equipment. NCPA has the following equipment:

– desktop computers — 26,
– printers — 9,
– PC laptops — 2,
– faxes — 2,
– photocopiers, scanners — 2,
– servers —1,
– projectors (TV panel) —1,
– router —1,

– telephones —8, 12 inner digital lines with the external access to analog and digital lines,
– automobile with a trailer – 1.

Every working place in the Centre is equipped with a personal computer. All working places have access to Internet.

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

According to the internal survey the majority of NCPA's staff (91%) are highly satisfied with the technical equipment of their working places.

Financial resources

NCPA is financed through different sources. The major source is accreditation fees paid by HEIs undergoing public accreditation and project and grants activities. NCPA's budget in 2012 came up to 29.924.200 rubles, in 2013 (as of October) - 22.748.000 rubles.
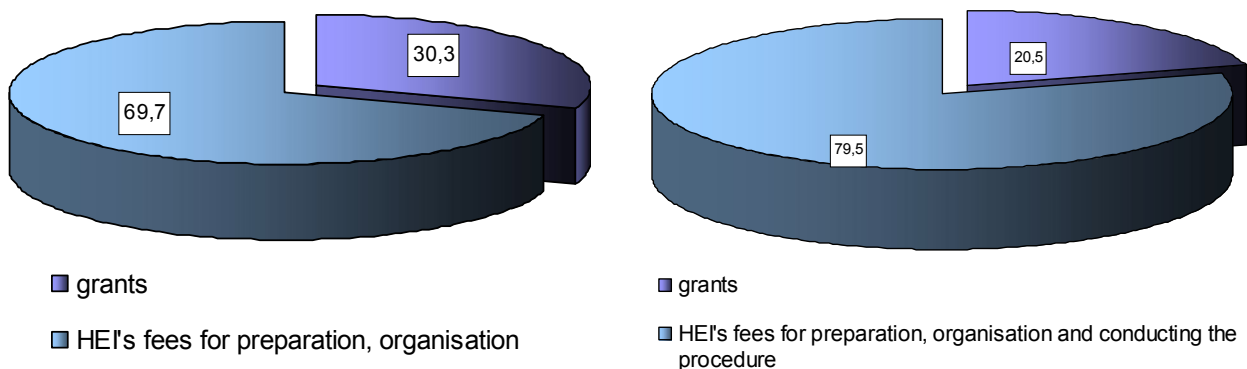

Fig.7. The structure of NCPA's income
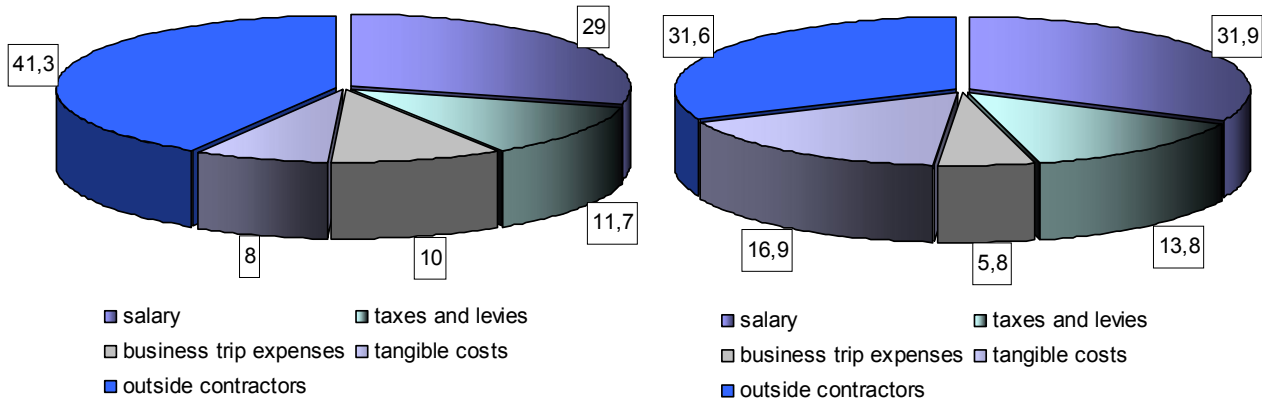
Fig.8. The structure of NCPA's expenses

Areas for improvement

Automatization of the information support of the accreditation procedure

See Annex 1

EVIDENCE

21 — List of projects implemented by NCPA in 2011-2013

22 — List of international events which were attended by the members of NCPA's staff (conferences, seminars, workshops, exchange visits, etc.) ("Events" www.ncpa.ru)

25 — Questionnaire for NCPA's Staff

27 — List of Published works by NCPA's staff

3.2.5. MISSION STATEMENT

STANDARD

> Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

Procedures used by NCPA

The mission, goals and objectives of NCPA are laid down in the Statutes and are published on the website: www.ncpa.ru.

NCPA's mission in the Russian system of quality assurance is to form and promote quality culture in higher education through identification, evaluation, and accreditation of the best educational programs in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation and the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG-ENQA).

The goals and objectives of NCPA are described in the Strategic Plan of development, and also in annual action plans of the organization and its structural units.

In order to fulfill the goals and objectives NCPA has a clearly defined organizational structure, approved staffing schedule and human resource administration plan.

All members of the staff take part in the annual job satisfaction survey as part of the inner quality assurance mechanism. Based on the feedback from the employees necessary steps are taken to improve the activities of the organization.

NCPA together with the Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education selects members of the external evaluation panels for public accreditation procedures.

The feedback from all stakeholders is very important for NCPA. In order to receive the feedback the surveys of external evaluation panel members and coordinators from educational institutions under review are held immediately after the accreditation procedures.

The information about the achievements in quality assurance is made public through the websites www.ncpa.ru, http://www.best-edu.ru/en/, on-line news letter "*Vestnik Akkreditatsii*", the annual Analytic Review and the journal "*Accreditation in Education*".

NCPA members take an active part in grant projects and research into evaluation and quality assurance of education. The outcomes and findings of these activities are used for improving the quality assurance procedures used by NCPA.

NCPA takes into account the needs and requirements of educational institutions and education authorities and provides necessary methodological consultative and information support on the issues related to the evaluation of educational programmes.

NCPA together with the Center for Training and Consultancy and the Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education organizes seminars, conferences and workshops on the quality assurance issues, and carries out certification and training of experts.

NCPA cooperates with international quality assurance agencies and participates in the activities of international quality assurance networks.

See Annexes 1, 2

EVIDENCE

1 — The Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation"
6 — Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation
NCPA's website

3.2.6. INDEPENDENCE

STANDARD

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

NCPA's activity

NCPA is an independent body and bears autonomous responsibility for its actions.

NCPA's independence is demonstrated through the following measures:

Operational independence from higher education institutions and governments:

The operational independence of NCPA is guaranteed by the procedure of public accreditation of study programmes of educational institutions in Russia.

The accreditation decision is made by the National Accreditation Board on the basis of analytical materials, the self-evaluation report, and the report of an expert panel.

The definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance procedures are undertaken autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence.

The selection of experts is undertaken by NCPA independently from HEIs, ministries and other bodies in accordance with Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Educational Institutions.

While nominating experts NCPA uses the information from the database of certified experts; also experts can be nominated by Russian or foreign accreditation agencies, professional association of employers, Rectors Councils, regional education authorities, students' unions and associations. The composition of the expert panel is agreed with the educational institution under accreditation in order to avoid any possible conflict of interests.

The outcomes of the quality evaluation processes, presented in the form of analytical materials (the Summary Report), are prepared by NCPA independently without any outside influence and are considered by the National Accreditation Board.

While relative stakeholders in higher education are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

NCPA bears full responsibility for the credibility of the accreditation procedure and its final outcomes. The decision on public accreditation is made by a collegiate body – the National Accreditation Board and is recorded in the Minutes.

See Annex 1

EVIDENCE

1 — The Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation"
6 — Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation
28 — Reports on the results of external reviews of educational programmes

3.2.7. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA AND PROCESSES USED BY THE AGENCIES

STANDARD

> The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include: a self-assessment or equivalent procedures by the subject of the quality assurance process; an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency; publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes; follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

NCPA's activity

External evaluation procedures used by NCPA conform to the current legislation of the Russian Federation in the sphere of education (the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation", the Federal law "On Higher and Post-graduate Education", the Regulations "On the state accreditation of a higher education institution" of 21 March 2011 №184 , Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation, the Bologna Principles, and in particular, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG-ENQA).

NCPA' s Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation of Programmes of Higher Professional Education are developed on the basis of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG-ENQA). However, they take into consideration specific features of the Russian education system. Besides ENQA's recommendations NCPA's Standards include sets of criteria, which make it possible to integrate the procedure of public accreditation and to ensure consistency and coherence of decision making.

NCPA has the experience of developing special standards and criteria jointly with the European Association of Conservatoires within the project of joint public accreditation of Russian musical higher educational institutions.

While developing these standards the experience of European and Russian systems of higher musical education was taken into consideration, which made it possible to analyze the quality of the musical programmes undergoing accreditation according to both European and Russian criteria for quality assurance in musical education.

The procedure of HEI accreditation includes self-evaluation, external evaluation and a site visit (each evaluation panel includes experts from academic, professional and student communities), preparing the final report (a summary), accreditation decision by the National Accreditation Board and follow-up procedures, which include the publication of information about public accreditation of educational programmes on NCPA's website (www.ncpa.ru) and in mass media.

NCPA has in place an Appeals Procedure, which is regulated by the following documents developed by the Center: The Regulations on the Appeals Procedure and the Regulations on the Appeals Committee. The documents have been approved by the National Accreditation Board.

The Appeals Committee was established in accordance with the Regulations on the Appeals Committee and in order to provide greater objectivity and feasibility of the decisions on public accreditation. The Appeals Committee is formed from among the members of the National Accreditation Board. The Appeals Committee considers appeals from educational institutions and makes a decision on appeals in accordance with the Regulations on the Appeals Procedure.

The Appeals process ensures control over the procedures of public accreditation and its effectiveness, supports transparency and responsibility. It is part of the strategy aimed at the quality improvement of NCPA's activity and the work of external evaluation panels.

Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation of Programmes of Higher Professional Education, Regulations on Public Accreditation of Educational Programmes (Clusters of Programmes), The Regulations on the Appeals Procedure and the Regulations on the Appeals Committee have been discussed by the representatives of academic, professional and students communities at the conferences organized by the Guild of Experts in the Sphere of Professional Education, and at the meetings of the National Accreditation Board.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

It is necessary to continue the development of field specific standards and criteria for specialized professional educational institutions aligned with NCPA's Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation of Educational Programmes.

EVIDENCE

1 — The Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation"

6 — Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation

11 — Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation of Educational Programmes of Further Professional Education

13 — Regulations on the Appeals Procedure, Regulations on the Appeals Committee

15 — Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes (for joint accreditation of musical education)

NCPA's website

3.2.8. ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES

STANDARD

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

NCPA's activity

NCPA has in place a policy for internal quality assurance. The internal quality assurance procedures are formally described and successfully used.

NCPA's mission and goals and objectives serve as the basis for the agency's strategic and action plan. The outcomes of NCPA's work are published in the annual Analytic Review, which covers the processes and procedures used by NCPA, and their correspondence to the mission and goals of the organization.

NCPA has a clearly defined structure of its departments and management, which meets its goals and objectives. The responsibilities of each department are defined by the Regulations on the Department structure, and the functions of the employees of each department are described in the job description. The Head of the Department is responsible for the work carried out by the department. The Deputy Director supervises the work of the departments. The Director bears responsibility for the work of NCPA. Every week the Director conducts a briefing, where each department accounts for its work, different issues are discussed and new tasks are set for the following week. Every month there is a general staff meeting to discuss current and forthcoming issues.

In order to increase the quality and credibility of experts' work on external quality assurance of HEIs, NCPA developed a training and certification program for experts. The information on certified experts is included in the data bank of experts, which is used when nominating expert panel members.

The Code of Ethics for members of external review panels comprises a non-conflict of interests mechanism. Prior to the beginning of public accreditation procedure panel members and NCPA sign a non-conflict of interest agreement.

The work of the external review panel is coordinated by a representative of the NCPA, whose responsibility is to liaise with the institution under review and the external panel members and to provide information and organization support of the procedure. The coordinator is appointed by the Director from among the most highly qualified staff members.

The draft report of the external review panel is sent to the educational institution to check for factual errors.

After the site visit the members of the panel give their feedback on the conducted procedure. The experts and coordinators from the educational institution fill in a questionnaire, whose results are discussed at the meetings on the review's outcomes.

For getting feedback on NCPA's work the employees, experts and representatives of HEIs are circulated with questionnaires.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of NCPA's work the following inner documents have been developed: the Inner Quality Assurance System, and the Algorithm of the Public Accreditation Procedure.

Thus, the following mechanisms of internal reflection are also used by the NCPA:

– regular staff meetings;

– briefings of the management and administration;

– workshops organized by NCPA, where the issues of enhancing the procedures of quality assurance are discussed;

– annual conferences of experts for sharing experience and good practice and discussing relevant issues concerning the work of expert panels;

– satisfaction surveys of all stakeholders.

NCPA submits reports on its activities at:

– meetings of the National Accreditation Board;

– conferences of the Guild of Experts;

– meetings of the Board of the Founders.

In accordance with the law NCPA prepares an annual report on the results of its performance to the state fiscal organs.

In 2014 NCPA is planning to undergo an ENQA coordinated review of its activity.

See Annexes 2, 4

EVIDENCE

6 — Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation, Code of Ethics for Members of External Evaluation Panels

13 — Regulations on the Appeals Procedure, Regulations on the Appeals Committee

23 — Survey for external review panel members, Survey for the staff members responsible for accreditation

The Journal "Accreditation in Education" (www.akvobr.ru)

3.3 SWOT ANALYSIS OF NCPA'S ACTIVITIES

The SWOT-analysis is aimed at identifying strengths and weaknesses in the organization's performance, potential external threats and favorable opportunities, which help to determine the way of further development for the organization.

This SWOT-analysis was made by the NCPA's staff and summarized by the working group.

STRENGTHS:

1. The diversity of NCPA's activities:

− public accreditation of educational programmes according to NCPA's standards, which are compatible with the European standards. The accreditation procedures are based on the European technologies of evaluating programmes and clusters of programmes;

− international accreditation of educational programmes (jointly with foreign accreditation agencies and quality assurance associations);

− external evaluation of new educational programmes of educational institutions;

− expert evaluation of the quality of educational programmes of an educational institution (in the framework of the national project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia";

− participation in grant projects.

2. NCPA is a member of many international networks of quality assurance agencies: a full member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE); an affiliate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA); a full member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA); a full member of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), a full member of the Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence (IREG).

3. Highly qualified personnel of quality assurance specialists with the longest in Russia experience in the sphere of educational quality evaluation in the Russian Federation and Eastern European countries (2 staff members – over 15 years, 4 – over 10 years, 4 over – 5). 22%of employees have post graduate degrees (7 "Candidate of Science" degree holders, 2 "Doctor of Science" degree holders). NCPA's staff have high intellectual potential and are involved in research into quality assurance. By now the employees of the Center have got 5 Certificates of state registration for developed software and have a number of publications in the national and international journals.

   Some of the staff members were the first to develop the procedure of state accreditation in the Russian Federation, they took part in the establishing the system of accreditation in Kazakhstan, and are among the founders and full members of international quality assurance networks. The first website of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) was developed under the guidance of Dr. Navodnov.

4. The procedure of public accreditation is highly technological and research based (Data Base of HEIs and experts, specialized software, defended dissertations, published articles and books).

5. Modern, regularly updated working equipment (adequate and sufficient number of personal computers and copying and printing machines).

6. Training and certification of experts (in cooperation with the specialized Centre for Training and Consultancy) is conducted at a very high level. By now 840 experts have been trained and certified (www.expert-edu.ru).

7. In order to raise the prestige of the Russian education and provide information transparency in the sphere of higher professional education NCPA initiated in 2010 the project "The Best Educational Programmes in Higher Education". The project is an independent expert based evaluation of new educational programmes (http://www.best-edu.ru/en/).

8. The journal "Accreditation in Education", a Russian information and analytical periodical is published with the participation of NCPA 8 times a year. The journal covers a wide range of subjects relating to the quality of education in Russia. The circulation is 3000 copies. The

electronic version of the journal is available at www.akvobr.ru. By now there have been 60 issues of the journal.

9. NCPA was the first among accreditation agencies to issue on a regular basis (2-3 times a month) the electronic newsletter "Vestnik Akkreditatsii". It covers all significant events in the sphere of higher education and accreditation and is circulated by e-mail to over 10 000 addresses. There have been over 60 issues. Analytical review published by NCPA contains the analysis of the changes taking place in the system of quality evaluation and assurance in higher professional education.

10. Under the supervision of Drs. V. Navodnov and G. Motova the scientific school of research into quality assurance has been established. V. Navodnov and G. Motova co-authored The National reports of the Russian Federation on the Bologna process in 2007 and 2009. (http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/links/National-reports-2009/National_Report_Russia_2009.pdf). The Director and the Deputy Director of the NCPA regularly present at the plenary meeting of international quality assurance networks (The CEENet General Assembly in 2010, the APQN General Assembly in 2011). The NCPA staff members take part in conferences and workshops organized by international organizations a in the field of quality assurance.

11. NCPA has bilateral cooperation agreements with a number of quality assurance agencies, which helps to conduct joint accreditation procedures and nominate experts in NCPA external review panels.

12. Agreements with academic and professional associations, ministries of the federal subjects of the Russian Federation.

WEAKNESSES:

1. Insufficient automatization of the software support of the accreditation procedure. The existing information and methodological support of the expert panels' work needs further improvement.

2. The pool of NCPA's experts lacks specialists in subject specific fields.

3. There is a need to diversify the forms of training of students and employers for the work in external evaluation panels. At present only one form of preparation is used - briefing.

4. The follow-up procedures need to be more fully developed.

OPPORTUNITIES:

1. New legislation: the new Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation", the Orders of the RF President, federal programmes for development of education, which offer new opportunities for expanding public accreditation.

2. Noticeable changes in the public opinion of HEIs in favor of public accreditation of educational programmes.

3. Recognition of NCPA in the international quality assurance networks and academic community, the signing of direct bilateral agreements with accreditation agencies.

4. Direct bilateral agreements with newly emerging professional associations and with employers' associations.

5. A possibility for NCPA to participate in the international project activities and initiatives in the sphere of quality assurance.

THREATS:

1. Unstable and unpredictable state educational policy, constant rotation of functionaries in the sphere of education.

2. Restructuring of the higher education system (introduction of the state educational standards of the new generation, change over to a three-cycle system in higher education, merger of educational institutions, liquidation of branches of HEIs).

3. Increasing competition in the sphere of accreditation (appearance of new accreditation agencies).

4. A possibility of emerging of accreditation mills, which grant certificates of public accreditation, and as a consequence, the weakening of trust in the accreditation conducted by non-governmental agencies.

5. There is still low demand for public accreditation in the Russian Federation.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this self-evaluation the National Centre for Public Accreditation has drawn the following overall conclusions: NCPA is operating in substantial conformity with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Educational Area. The activities of NCPA have received recognition in the professional community on the territory of the Russian Federation and some European countries. The Crentre's goals and objectives are clearly defined, collectively supported and identify the directions of NCPA's activity in the sphere of quality assurance.

NCPA assists educational institutions in establishing internal quality assurance systems and carries out accreditation procedures in accordance with the current RF legislation and the European Standards and Guidelines. NCPA promotes accredited programmes in the Russian and European educational areas. Thus, NCPA performs a wide range of functions in the sphere of quality assurance. A constant search for innovations, improvement of the procedures and processes, development of new methods of evaluation make it possible to effectively deal with the issues of quality enhancement in professional education.

Technological independence of the procedures, transparency of the methods and results ensure the objectiveness of the procedure of accreditation carried out by NCPA.

NCPA has very efficient and dedicated staff experienced in the field of quality assurance that enables the Centre to fulfill its functions efficiently and effectively. The leading specialists of NCPA enjoy high professional reputation both in Russia and abroad.

At the same time NCPA has a great potential for enhancing its activity in the sphere of quality assurance under the conditions of constantly changing socio-economic environment and expanding international cooperation.

The self-valuation exercise revealed certain areas of attention and new opportunities for improvement of NCPA's activities:

- the work of the external international experts needs to be more adjusted to the conditions of the Russian educational system;
- the training of student members of external review panels should be conducted on a regular basis;
- it is necessary to expand the pool of NCPA's experts, especially in the subject specific areas;
- the inner quality assurance mechanism should be further developed;
- It is necessary to continue the work in the sphere of human resource development, further education of the staff, especially related to the English language proficiency.

LIST OF EVIDENCE

LEGAL AND NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS:

1. The Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" 29.12.2012 № 273
2. The Standard Regulations on an Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education (HEI) of the Russian Federation ratified by the Act of the government of the Russian Federation of 14.02.2008 N 71
3. The Standard Regulations on Branches of Federal State Educational Institutions of Higher Professional Education (Higher Educational Institutions) adopted by the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation on 01.12.2011 № 2865)
4. Statutes of the autonomous non-profit organization "The National Centre for Public accreditation" (Annex 1)
5. Minutes of the National Accreditation Board meetings

PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS:

6. Regulations on Public Accreditation of an Educational Programme (a Cluster of Programmes) of Higher, Secondary Vocational and Further Education, Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation of Educational Programmes , Code of Ethics for Members of External Review
7. Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes
8. Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes
9. Guidelines for Preparation of a Report on the Results of Corrective Actions
10. Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes of Further Professional Education
11. Standards and Criteria for Public Accreditation of Educational Programmes of Further Professional Education
12. Guidelines for Self-Evaluation of Educational Programmes of Further Professional Education
13. Regulations on the Appeals Procedure, Regulations on the Appeals Committee
14. System "Corrector – NCPA" (Annex 7)
15. Guidelines for External Reviews of Educational Programmes (for joint accreditation of music education)

INTERNAL DOCUMENTS:

16. NCPA's Action Plan for 2013-2014 (Annex 3)
17. NCPA's Strategic Plan (Annex 2)
18. System of Internal Quality Assurance of NCPA (Annex 4)
19. Statistical Report of the NCPA on Accreditation Procedures for the period of 2010-2013
20. Compliance of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG-ENQA) with the current legislation on education of the Russian Federation
21. List of projects implemented by NCPA in 2011-2013
22. List of international events which were attended by the members of NCPA's staff (conferences, seminars, workshops, exchange visits, etc.) ("Events" www.ncpa.ru)
23. Survey for external review panel members, Survey for the staff members responsible for accreditation
24. Survey analysis of the experts, who participated in the external evaluation (mechanism of external feedback) (Annex 5)

25. Questionnaire for NCPA's Staff
26. Federal State Educational Standards in the Russian Federation (Annex 10)
27. List of Published works by NCPA's staff
28. Reports on the results of external reviews of educational programmes
29. Analytical materials for the National Accreditation Board Meeting
30. Project "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia" (2011-2013) (Annex 6)
31. Reference Book "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia" (2011-2013)
32. Bilateral Agreements between NCPA and foreign accreditation agencies
33. NCPA's Cooperation Agreements (Annex 11)
34. Agreement on creating the association the "National Public Register of Accrediting Organizations in Education" (NPRAO)

WEB-SITES:

www.ncpa.ru (www.аккредитация.рф)   http://www.i-exam.ru/
www.akvobr.ru   www.i-olymp.ru
www.ukc-nica.ru   www.expert-nica.ru
www.best-edu.ru   www.moeobrazovanie.ru