

# External Review of the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Career Development (AKKORK)

## Self-Assessment Report

2019

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## 1. Introduction

This report constitutes self-evaluation of Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AKKORK) against the ESG criteria since the last successful review by ENQA in 2014-2015 to re-affirm AKKORK's full membership with ENQA. In 2015, AKKORK became the member of ENQA, after being an associate ENQA member since 2007 (in 2011, ENQA renamed this status into "an affiliate"). Since the last review AKKORK has made progress in terms of the aligning its criteria with ESG 2015, creating thematic analysis reports and addressing deficiencies highlighted by team of reviewers.

The report is structured according to the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews.

For AKKORK it is very important to be in the family of European quality assurance agencies which work on the basis of criteria developed by E4 Group, as they are the standards in quality assurance in all EHEA countries.

Russia is a vast country with more than 1000 universities. Many of these universities have links and cooperation with foreign universities of Western and Eastern Europe and beyond. For instance, they exchange students and visiting professors. For facilitation of students and professors' mobility and recognition of this mobility results it is important for Russian Higher Education Institutions to pass external evaluation which takes into consideration not only Federal State Standards of Education, but also ESG 2015. Such external evaluation can be provided to Russian Higher Education Institutions by AKKORK as its standards are based on both Russian Education Standards requirements and the ESGs. For enhancement of AKKORK operations and functions that would benefit the HE system in Russia and for full recognition of the results of the AKKORK quality assurance procedures in EHEA it is crucial for AKKORK to maintain the ENQA membership.

One more reason for AKKORK to be the member of ENQA is to help Russian universities engage in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). For this the member agencies of ENQA need regular assessments based on ESG. But since state regulation of Russian Higher Education system has certain specific features, only Russian based QA organization can form assessment standards taking into consideration both Russian and ESG standards. After such assessment, the Russian HEIs would improve their internal QA systems and programmes and will be able to embed into the EHEA. For this the leadership of AKKORK finds necessary to be member of ENQA and registered in EQAR.

It is crucial for AKKORK to be the ENQA member as the agency considers promotion of ESG and ENQA values in Russia as one of its main goals. For attainment of this goal the Agency, for instance participates in various governmental working groups. Moreover, AKKORK makes publications of the representatives of Russian State educational authorities, key representatives of the Russian Higher Education Area, such as Rectors of the Universities, Russian and European experts, ENQA Board members in the magazine "Education Quality" issued by the agency as well as uses other dissemination channels.

During the last years Russian Federation (RF) education legislation has undergone a series of changes. AKKORK tries to do its best to take part in different public events in order to promote the idea that the new changes should correspond to the approaches of HE QA adopted in EHEA. For this purpose AKKORK Director – General is a member of different expert bodies and working groups formed by Russian Government, is active participant in work of different public bodies related to QA and makes reports in key conferences focused on QA in HE.

As seen from above ENQA membership adds a great value to the agency activities.

## 2. Development of the self-assessment report (SAR)

The external evaluation of AKKORK activity is prescribed in its internal regulations (Annex 4). It is said that AKKORK has to undergo external assessment every 5 years. Following this notion, AKKORK started the process of composing the self-assessment report (SAR) in October 2018. The team was composed at the same time and consisted of AKKORK staff, representatives of academic and students communities and employer's associations. In particular AKKORK staff was represented by Director-General, 2 deputy directors; academic community by representative of the Plekhanov Russian University, employer's associations by Association of Russian Managers (for further information see Table 1 below). At the same time, AKKORK also notified EQAR of its willingness of re-registration. The team was serving like a consultative body to AKKORK participating in discussions about the content of the SAR. The first draft was presented in December 2018 to the Advisory Council. Then it was modified based on the feedback from Advisory Council to better reflect Russian higher education area. In the end of January 2019 was submitted the second draft that was approved by the Advisory Council of AKKORK. Then the SAR was sent to the International Accreditation council of AKKORK and Supervisory Board. Beginning of March 2019 SAR and its annexes were submitted to ENQA secretariat for subsequent review

**Table 1 Composition of the SAR team**

<b>Name/ scientific title</b>	<b>Position, organization</b>	<b>Responsibilities in SAR WG</b>
Erika Soboleva, Ph.D. (econ)	General-Director, AKKORK, INQAAHE Board Member	Overall coordination of the activities of the WG,
Anna Soloveva	Deputy Director, AKKORK	Draft of the preliminary version of the report
Liudmila Stepanchenko	Deputy Director, AKKORK	Analysis of the feedback proposals
Vadim Kovalev	Deputy Director of Association of Russian Managers, Member of Moscow City Public Chamber, Head of AKKORK Supervisory Board	Feedback from the employers
Larisa Danchenok, D.Sc. (econ)	Dean of the Business and Additional Education Faculty, Plekhanov Russian University, member of Russian Marketing Association, Russian Association for Entrepreneurship Education, AKKORK Advisory Council member	Feedback from the academic community
Vladimir Shadrikov, Academic of Russian Academy of Education, D.Sc. (Psychology)	Head of the Psychological lab in Higher School of Economics (University), member of Russian Psychological Society,	

	Head of AKKORK Advisory Council	
Artem Tarkhanov	All-Russian Public Organization “ For Qualitative Education”, Member of AKKORK Advisory Council	Feedback from the students community
Dr. Susanna Karakhanyan and Dr. Patricia Georgieva, Dr. Karl Donert	INQAAHE President member of AKKORK Supervisory Board, University Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, President of EUROGEO members of AKKORK International Accreditation Councils	Feedback from the international community

The main purpose of the self-assessment from the point of view of the team was to evaluate AKKORK’s education QA standards compliance with the ESG 2015, European practices of carrying out quality assurance procedures, and ENQA membership criteria /EQAR registration criteria, identify its strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the team paid attention to verification of fulfillment of the recommendations given by ENQA Review team during the last review in 2014-2015.

One more important task for the team was to confirm that the implementation of ESG in Russian Higher Education System is possible in terms of new Russian Education legislation framework.

The Russian Education legislation changes very often lately. The last essential changes were made in March 2018. According to them the RF Ministry of Education and Science was divided into two: Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russian Federation and Ministry of Education of Russian Federation. Simultaneously the RF Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor) which earlier was direct jurisdiction of the RF Ministry of Education and Science, was put under the direct control of Government of Russian Federation (the functions of the Rosobrnadzor remained the same).

Because of these major changes at the legal framework level of the country, the necessity of confirmation that ESG can be correctly applied in Russia and that in its practical activity the Agency’s standards comply with them has become a necessity.

The SWOT analysis of AKKORK was developed by the same team.

### **3. Higher Education and QA of Higher Education in the context of the agency**

At the beginning of the 1990s a legal framework of a modern Russian education system was established, succeeding the Soviet education system. Two Federal laws were adopted and enforced: the Law “On Education” and the Law “On Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education” - that governed this area ever since. Due to the overlaps in the terms they set, thus, creating confusion and additional difficulties in their application on September 1, 2013 the two laws ceased and Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation” of 29.12.2012 N 273-FL came into force.

According to the recently amended Law (2018) the RF Ministry of Education and Science was split into two ministries: Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia and RF Ministry of Education. In accordance with the current legislation, Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia is governing the higher education system and science. Ministry of Education is governing the secondary education and vocational education.

The Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia is a federal executive body that elaborates state policy, and legal and regulatory framework in education, science, science and technology, innovations, nanotechnology, intellectual property as well as in student discipline, social assistance and social protection of students and educational institutions. All in all there are about 818 HEIs both public and private and about 4 399 500 students.

Before March 2018 within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia, there was the RF Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor) that functioned as a state education quality assurance body and supervised the legislative regulations. After the presidential elections in 2018 it was decided that RF Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor) would be under direct jurisdiction of the Government of Russian Federation. The functions of the Rosobrnadzor remained the same.

According to Federal Law 273 - FL “On Education in Russian Federation”, the following levels of education are established in the Russian Federation:

- 1) secondary vocational education;
- 2) higher education – bachelor’s degree;
- 3) higher education – specialist’s degree, master’s degree;
- 4) higher education – Ph.D. and Doctor of Science degree.

A bachelor’s degree programme is intended to meet the mass demand for higher education, and a master’s degree programme is intended to facilitate shaping of professional elite and postgraduate students. In the Federal Law 273-FL “On Education in the Russian Federation” the postgraduate studies have been classified as the third level of higher education. This means that after doing postgraduate studies the students defend a work (similar to masters thesis) and receive a diploma. The Ph.D. defence is coming later if the student wants to defend a Ph.D.

At the same time, with regard to some specialties (mainly engineering and medicine), in accordance with classical traditions of Russian (Soviet) high school, multi-level education for a specialist’s degree has been preserved. In such specialties there is not 2 level education (Bachelor (4 years) and Master (2 years)), but 5 year education cycle. At the graduation a specialist diploma is given out.

Following to the Russian legislation the Russian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is under development. The levels of the NQF are already defined. As per it bachelor programme corresponds to level 6 of Russian NQF, masters and specialist to level 7, Ph.D. to level 8 and Doctor of Science to level 9.

A bachelor-master higher education system was introduced within the framework

of the reform aimed at bringing the national education system into compliance with the Bologna Process requirements. The Process has been implemented since 2003 and is essential for Russian higher education institutions that aspire to enter the international education arena.

The education reform also foresees the formation of independent education quality assurance system where independent agencies that carry out activity in education quality assurance and education quality control are to become the main element. The foundation for elaboration of such approach to the education quality assurance was laid in the Law “On Education” of 1992 that included provision of possibility for education institutions receive public accreditation in “Russian, foreign and international public educational, scientific and industrial bodies” (Law of the Russian Federation of July 10, 1992 N 3266-1 “On Education”, Point 25 of Article 33). In comparison with the Soviet legislation that excluded any possibility of non-state education quality evaluation, the provision on public accreditation in the Law “On Education” of 1992 became an important innovation.

In the 2011 entered into force the amendments to the Law “On Education” of 1992. The amendments mention the procedures of public and professional-public accreditation and a mechanism for considering its results in the framework of accreditation review for state accreditation (Federal Law of November 8, 2010 N 293 “On Making Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of Russian Federation in Relation to Perfection of Functions of Control and Supervision, and Improvement of Rendering State Services in Education”, Point 10 of Article 1).

The Federal Law of 29.12.2012 N 273-FL “On Education in Russian Federation” provides definition of three types of procedures of education quality assurance:

- state accreditation of education institutions;
- public and professional-public accreditation of education institutions;
- independent education quality assessment.

*(Russian Federation Federal Law of December 2012 N 273-FL “On Education in the Russian Federation”, Chapter 12, Articles 95 - 96)*

The main differences between the three mentioned are in the ownership of the processes: state accreditation procedures is conducted by National Accreditation Agency (NAA), public accreditation can be conducted only on institutional level by any organization, professional – public can be conducted by the employer’s associations or employer’s themselves, independent education quality assessment can be conducted by any organization.

Thus, the Federal Law 273-FL “On Education in the Russian Federation” ensures participation of various interested parties in assessment of higher education quality and contributes to development of the independent assessment system and public accreditation of education institutions in Russia.

The formation of Russian education legislative framework continues. On December 25, 2018, the Government of the Russian Federation adopted the Law No. 497-FL “On Amending Article 92 of the Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation”. The amendment states that results of independent assessment of students learning outcomes quality must be taken into consideration in the framework of state accreditation procedure. The mechanism of this consideration must be described in the Regulations on State Accreditation. AKKORK expects that more universities would turn to its services since the mechanism will be in place for recognition and that would ease the accreditation procedure and lessen accreditation burden.

In Russia unfortunately there is no register of Agencies that can conduct accreditation based on ESG, although it would be good to have such since in 2003 Russia signed the Bologna Declaration and one of the obligations there is to foster development of independent QA agencies and that those agencies act in compliance with common standards meaning ESG.

AKKORK takes active part in discussions on changes in legislation in the sphere of higher education and higher education quality assurance. In the magazine “Education Quality” issued by AKKORK since 2009 are regularly published materials on the above aforementioned ) topics, for instance:

**Table 2 List of Articles:**

<i>Authors Name/ research title</i>	<i>Name of Article</i>	<i>No. issue and year</i>
Yuriy Rubin	Regulation of quality assurance agencies' activities	№05/2015
	Association of managers of Russia: a stepping stone to quality and competitiveness improvement of Russian education	№05/2015
Yuriy Rubin, Alexander Kovalenko, Tatiana Semkina	Model of an All-Russia register of expert organisations	№01-02/2016
Evgeniya Ivanova	Accreditation agencies and state authority: dependence or partnership?	№01-02/2016
	Interview with Yuliya Smirnova, First Deputy Director General of National Agency of qualifications development (NARK) “Trust of the employers and the state in the system of professional-public accreditation is crucial”	№02/2017
	The future of higher education: viewed by Rectors, employers and state authority	№01/2017
	Interview with Antoniy Shvindt, founder of All-Russia Student public organization “For quality in education”	№02/2018
	Parliament hearings	№04/2018



	“Legal support of state regulation of educational activities: problems and solutions”	
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Erika Soboleva, AKKORK Director–General is a member of an expert body in the States Duma Education Committee. As a member of this body she participated in November 2018 in discussions on modernization of the state regulations procedures of education sphere. Erika cooperated closely with Pavel Kondrashov, head of the Executive office of States Duma Education Committee. Her proposals on contents of the resolution of those discussions initiated great interest and were taken into account in drafting the final text.

### **3.1. Procedures for RF State and Independent Education Quality Assessment Envisaged by Legislation**

The RF education system management includes (see Russian Federation Federal Law of December 2012 N 273-FL “On Education in the Russian Federation”, Chapter 12, Article 89 ):

- 1) shaping of the system of co-operation between federal executive bodies, executive bodies of the Russian Federation regions, and local self-government bodies that exercise administration in education;
- 2) realisation of strategic planning for development of the education system;
- 3) adoption and realisation of the Russian Federation state programs, federal and regional programs aimed at development of the education system;
- 4) monitoring of the education system;
- 5) information and methodology support for work of federal state bodies, executive bodies of the Russian Federation regions that exercise state administration in education, and local self-government bodies that exercise administration in education;
- 6) state regulation of education activity;**
- 7) independent education quality assessment, public and professional-public accreditation;**
- 8) education and further training of staff of federal state government bodies, state government bodies of the Russian Federation regions that exercise state administration in education, local self-government bodies that exercise administration in education.

State regulation of education activity is carried out by the RF Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor), which currently is under direct jurisdiction of Government of Russian Federation. State regulation includes the following procedures:

- 1) licensing of education activity;
- 2) state accreditation of education activity;
- 3) state control and supervision in education.

In accordance with the Russian Federation legislation, licensing is a procedure obligatory for all educational institutions. The licensing requirements depend on type of education, level of education, profession, specialty, and education direction. A license is granted to an education institution provided that it meets the license conditions and requirements. Once received license is effective for an unlimited period of time. The license conditions and requirements have been laid down in the “Regulations for Licensing Education Activity” (adopted by RF Government on 29.10.2013). This document pre-suppose that the applicant has on the legal basis at their disposal premises equipped for carrying out educational activity, teaching and learning documentation, study materials,

and library and information resources with regard to the education programmes realised as well as teaching staff whose number and qualification meet the established standards.

State accreditation is a voluntary procedure for educational institutions. The aim of this procedure is education quality assessment through establishing conformity with Federal State Educational Standards. A state accreditation certificate is effective for 6 years. Existence of state accreditation gives HEIs the right to award to the graduates state recognized diplomas.

At the same time, there are for instance foreign HEIs in the Russian Federation that award their own diplomas to Russian graduates (for example, the British Higher School of Art and Design). Such HEIs are not interested in receiving state accreditation.

Decision on accreditation is made based on the results of the accreditation review (see Russian Federation Federal Law of December 2012 N 273-FL “On Education in the Russian Federation”, Chapter 12, Article 92, point 11). This accreditation review according to the Federal Law 273-FL “On Education in the Russian Federation” can be done by expert organization and reviewers included into the RF Federal Service on Supervision in Education and Science register.

RF Federal Service on Supervision in Education and Science also exercises functions of state supervision and control in education in three areas:

- state supervision in education intended to identify and correct breaches of requirements of the legislation on education;
- state education quality control involving assessment of conformity of education content and quality of student education with the requirements of Federal State Education Standards;
- state post-license control intended to examine compliance of education activity conditions with the license conditions and requirements.

Supervision and control of higher education quality are carried out by organizing reviews. If the violations are detected improvement notice is issued by the Rosobrnadzor. The notice states the deadline for taking measures for correction. The procedures for post-license control can be made by expert organizations and reviewers that have received accreditation by the RF Federal Service on Supervision in Education and Science.

Aside from the procedures listed, since 2012 in Russia annually is carried out Monitoring of Effectiveness. The assessment criteria within the framework of the monitoring reflect the quantitative characteristics of the HEIs’ work. On the basis of the monitoring results, decisions on improving the HEI network, re-organization of education institutions that have been recognized as inefficient are made. This monitoring does not include the criteria for assessment of the education quality level.

Along with the state education quality assessment, in accordance with the Federal Law 273-FL “On Education in the Russian Federation”, the following is being done:

- independent education quality assessment;
- public accreditation of education institutions;
- professional-public accreditation of education programs.

Independent education quality assessment is conducted “with the intention of determining whether the education conforms to the needs of a physical person or a legal entity for whose interests the education activity is conducted, facilitating their choice of an organization that carries out education activity, and the choice of an education programme, improving competitiveness of institutions that carry out education activity themselves and the programs realised by them on Russian and international markets” (Federal Law of the Russian Federation of December 29, 2012 N 273-FL “On Education in the Russian Federation”, Chapter 12, Article 95). Independent

education quality assessment is conducted by independent organisations in conformity with the methods, criteria, and forms chosen by those organisations.

Public accreditation can be conducted by Russian, foreign and international organisations. This accreditation aims at determining whether the education organisation's activity conforms to the criteria and requirements of the conducting organizations.

Professional-public accreditation "is the recognition of quality and level of graduates' training (...) corresponding to the requirements of professional standards, requirements of the labour market to specialists, workers and employees of relevant specialization (Federal Law of the Russian Federation of December 29, 2012 N 273-FL "On Education in the Russian Federation", Chapter 12, Article 96). Employers and their associations can conduct professional-public accreditation, as well as organisations authorized by employers in accordance with the procedure established by them.

Education sphere in Russia is developing much faster than the legislation. Thus, for instance as a new form of education is emerging - the so-called digital learning (e-learning). The standards for assessment of this type of learning are not yet developed. Apart from the mentioned above forms of quality assurance there is no form for assessment of digital learning foreseen by Russian legislation. AKKORK tries to solve this problem. Some years ago it integrated the standards for assessing the University Quality in E-learning into its methodology, and thus give the opportunity to Russian HEIs to assess not only the learning outcomes, internal quality assurance mechanisms, teaching staff, but also quality of usage of digital, electronic means and how they contribute to the education quality increase. These standards were used during the assessment of e-learning in 2013 in Vyatka State University and Siberian Federal University. The feedback results from the universities stated that the assessment according to those standards greatly improved the level of e-learning technologies usage.

### **3.2. Russian Education Quality Assessment Organizations**

Since 2015, the number of organizations dealing with education quality assessment in Russia greatly increased. Those organizations can be divided into following groups:

1. According to their nature: state and non-state organizations;
2. According to the ESG application: applying ESG and not applying ESG
3. According to the field of education assessment: universal (assessing all fields of education) and subject-specific organisations.

Below are given some examples.

*The National Accreditation Agency (NAA)* is a state organisation within the jurisdiction of the RF Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science. The Director of the National Accreditation Agency is appointed by the order of the top-manager of RF Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science. The National Accreditation Agency provides organizational and informational–analytical support of procedures for state accreditation as well as organizes their financial support. It works in the whole Russian Higher Education Area, assessing all fields of education.

*The National Centre of Public Accreditation (NCPA)* is a non-state autonomous non-profit organization. The organization applies ESG in their work. The Head of this organisation held the position of the National Accreditation Agency's Director. NCPA was founded in 2009 and positions itself as an organization working, for instance in the sphere of professional-public accreditation, however it is not an employers' association. It works in the whole Russian Higher Education Area, assessing all fields of education.

One of subject-specific organizations is *the Association for Engineering Education of Russia (AEER)* is a non-state All-Russian public organization that includes representatives of the education and scientific community as well as employers in

engineering. One of the areas of the Association's work is professional – public accreditation of education programs only in technology and engineering. The AEER assessment criteria and procedures match with the European standards for engineering programs EUR-ACE and not ESG. The AEER Accreditation Council's Chairman is a Vice rector of a large polytechnic university.

There is a range of subject-specific organizations conducting professional-public accreditation. Mainly they base their work on professional standards. Such organizations are, for instance, the Association of Lawyers of Russia (ALR), Association of Russian Managers, Association of Producers of Computer and Information Technic and some others. Some of these associations use ESG standards.

AKKORK closely cooperates with employers' associations, such as Association of Russian Managers, Association of Producers of Computer and Information Technic, OPORA ROSSII. This cooperation gives to AKKORK opportunity to turn attention of the employers associations to ESG. Some of them try to embed ESG in their standards. AKKORK constantly is enlarging its partnerships among employers and continues promotion of ESG.

### **3.3. Quality Standards Applied in Higher Education in Russia**

In the Russian Federation, a wide range of standards, both national and international, is used in higher education.

The state education quality assurance is based on the **Federal State Educational Standards (FSES)**. Initially, these standards were created in 1992 and were a collection of requirements obligatory for the realization of the higher education programs by state accredited education institutions. These standards were basis for state accreditation. So first the HEI use the state standards, then the compliance of the HEI with the standards is checked and in positive case state accreditation is issued. Once state accreditation is issued the university can grant diplomas of the unified state template. For the period of application of the state education standards starting from 1992, they have developed significantly. Federal Law of 01.12.2007 approved a new structure of a state education standard. In accordance with this structure, the effective Federal State Education Standards include 3 types of requirements:

- 1) requirements to structure of the education programs, including requirements for correlation between parts of the education program and their workload as well as correlation between the obligatory part of the education program and the part formed by the participants of educational process;
- 2) requirements to conditions of realisation of the education programs, including staffing, financing, material support and other conditions;
- 3) requirements to the results of education program mastering.

When designing an education program on the basis of Federal State Education Standards, education institutions are independent, which makes it possible for them to form the structure and content of education programs on the basis of Federal State Education Standards.

During the state accreditation procedures, compliance of the HEI activity and learning outcomes to the Federal State Education Standards requirements is defined. However, a review for state accreditation can be conducted by other standards, too – by **education standards elaborated by higher education institutions independently**. In accordance with the Federal Law 273-FL “On Education in the Russian Federation”, the Lomonosov Moscow State University, Saint Petersburg State University as well as federal universities and HEIs that have the status of “a national research university” have been granted the right to set up education standards independently. Requirements to conditions of realisation and the learning outcomes included into such education standards cannot be lower than the respective requirements of the Federal State

Education Standards.

In the area of independent education quality assessment, public and professional – public accreditation, the following standards are used:

- **ESG Standards** (active work on promoting the ESG standards in Russia that are in strong contrast to the effective state educational standards and accreditation requirements has been started for the first time by the AKKORK Agency that is currently the largest Russian organization applying ESG when conducting procedures for independent education quality assessment). The main differences are ESG does not imply anything in terms of availability of disciplines in the curriculum, for instance, but the state educational standards imply a certain structure of each programme in terms of the competences that need to be developed, what disciplines should be in the programme;
- **Professional standards elaborated by employers or employers' associations** (in Russia, there have been actively elaborated professional standards that are a collection of requirements of employers to graduates of higher education institutions, and that determine a competence-based model of an employee depending on the area of activity and the position held. Among the professional standards elaborated, are, for instance standards adopted by the Council for professional qualifications in the financial market);
- **ISO 9001 series of standards** (the ISO standards have become quite popular in Russia as a basis for shaping internal HEI quality management systems);
- **EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Excellence Model** (the EFQM Model is often used during the process of updating a HEI management system and shaping internal HEI quality management system);
- **UNIQUe System** of the European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning (EFQUEL) (the UNIQUe system is applied at a public accreditation of HEIs that actively use ICT in their educational activity).

A number of organisations working in the area of independent education quality assessment in Russia base their procedures on the ISO and EFQM standards, with them being used as alternatives to the ESG Standards.

The methodology of AKKORK is based on multi-standard approach. This means that the system of criteria and indices designed by AKKORK takes into account all the systems mentioned above. This is one of the distinguished features of AKKORK methodology, which helps Russian HEIs to consider its reports in the framework of State accreditation.

AKKORK often talks about these systems, their fundamental differences, which assist Russian HEIs in looking around the space of education quality assessment in a magazine “Kachestvo obrazovaniya” (“Education Quality”, [www.edu-quality.ru](http://www.edu-quality.ru)) issued by AKKORK. In this context, AKKORK considers its task to inform the educational community of fundamental differences between the standardization systems mentioned above. In the magazine “Education Quality” AKKORK explains the peculiarities of education quality assurance based on the ESG, shows the advantages of such assessment. Materials published in this magazine promote the approaches to the education quality assurance adopted by ENQA, describe how these standards can be used and are used in the Russian practice.

## 4. History and activities of AKKORK

### 4.1. AKKORK Agency and Its Place in Russian Higher Education Quality Assurance System

The Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Career Development (AKKORK) was founded in February 2005 in the form of an autonomous non-profit organization and became the first Russian independent agency in higher education quality assurance.

In accordance with the Federal Law from 12 January 1996 N 7-FL “On Non-Profit Organizations”, the main types of such organizations are organisations owned by a proprietor (for example, *institutions* that often can be owned by the state), organisations based on membership (for example, *societies*, *foundations* and *associations*), and autonomous non-profit organizations.

At the AKKORK establishment, the autonomous non-profit organisation form was chosen as the only type of non-profit organisation from the list envisaged by the legislation that is capable of providing maximum independence of the Agency, including independence from founding parties. This type is different from other legal organizational forms by the fact that the founding members are not proprietors of the company. The practical owner of the autonomous non-profit organization property is the autonomous non-profit organisation itself (See Articles 3.5 – 3.7 of the AKKORK Statutes Annex 1). Besides, the autonomous non-profit organisation does not pre-suppose membership, as organisations based on membership always act in the members’ interests, that is why such organisations, HEI associations in particular, cannot execute functions of independent quality assurance agencies.

In accordance with the Federal Law from 12 January 1996 N 7-FL “On Non-Profit Organizations”, the autonomous non-profit organization founding members’ task is to found the organisation, create start-up conditions for functioning and provide support at the start-up stage. Further on, the founding members are not entitled to interfere in business activities of the organization and all existing AKKORK Councils. The founders’ interest lies not in the profit-making since in this case, the founding members are not entitled to participate in the distribution of profit. The founding members’ activities in AKKORK amount to participation in the General Meeting of Founders and organization of operational audit of financial activity of the Agency. The founding members appoint a special-purpose commission for auditing the AKKORK activity since AKKORK, as any other autonomous non-profit organization, is subjected to the relevant rules defined by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation. The Russian legislation also requires control on the part of the founding members with the view non- violation of principles laid down in the Russian Federation legislation during the process of election and re-election of Councils’ members.

The AKKORK founders are two organizations:

- Limited Liability Company “Obrazovanie Cherez Vsyu Zhizn” (“Life-Long Education”) (OGRN 1107746831390, VAT 7725705522)
- Limited Liability Company “Garantii Kachestva” (“Quality Assurance”) (OGRN 1107746831390, VAT 7743766581)

Both companies carry out activities in realizing education quality projects, and yet, they are not affiliated to any educational institutions or state organizations. **‘organisations’**

LLC “Obrazovanie Cherez Vsyu Zhizn” operates in realization of specialized educational activity projects whose purpose is to build ideology of education quality assurance culture. This organisation fulfils various projects in education quality assurance, does specific work in standardisation of educational activity concerning

Federal State Education Standards; it has participated in elaboration of some education standards. It also takes part in the work on standardisation of e-learning.

LLC “Garantii Kachestva” is also engaged in quality issues, but its range is wider than education. Its establishment has been initiated by the All-Russian Quality Association that ensures quality of process activity, in particular, various models of internal quality management systems.

Being within the framework of the effective legislation, the AKKORK Agency realizes independent education quality assurance that includes such elements as audit, control, monitoring following the results of assessment, and accreditation. For the period from 2005 to 2018, AKKORK assessed the education quality at a program and institution levels of more than 150 educational institutions in Russia and beyond its borders. (<http://www.akkork.ru/e/projects/>)

The role of AKKORK accreditation is to help HEIs benchmark themselves with ESG, best Russian and European educational practices. When a team of reviewers come they bring enhancement based on AKKORK standards. AKKORK standards help HEIs to look to themselves from the other point of view.

The impact of AKKORK activities for the evaluated HEIs is in two levels. Firstly, level is understanding of the level of learning outcomes the students have. See point 6.1. for description of the procedure. The HEI take necessary measures, improve teaching methodologies, if the reviewers discover that the level of learning outcomes is low. Secondly, assessment of the institutional conditions (recourses, processes) of the programmes. The decisions on improving the recourses is made based on the panel report.

As to the status of AKKORK accreditation, it is recognized by the universities also due to the fact that AKKORK is registered in a system for monitoring of professional-public accreditation results and organizations that conduct that accreditation as it is demanded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The system name is Automated System of Monitoring of Professional-Public accreditation ([www.accredpoa.ru](http://www.accredpoa.ru)).

AKKORK became the first Russian organisation that turned to the ESG standards as the foundation for formation of methods and standards of independent education quality assurance. AKKORK representatives with their experience in applying approaches based on the ESG standards as a basis for activity in previous years participated actively in various types of activity related to formation and improving legislation on education, primarily its part concerning regulation of independent education quality assurance system.

Today, AKKORK continues this work through participating in the activities carried out by the States Duma, RF Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and the Government of the Russian Federation concerning improving enactments and other documents on education quality assessment. For instance, from 2012 to 2017 representatives of AKKORK were members of the Council for Quality and Accessibility of Education under the States Duma Education Committee. After the RF Presidents election in 2018, the list of participants was reconsidered, and AKKORK Director-General was included as the member in the expert body of the States Duma Education Committee. In particular, it is due to the AKKORK activity that an article on independent assessment and an article on professional-public accreditation have been included into the Federal Law 273-FL “On Education in Russian Federation”.

The AKKORK Agency develops the international activity sector. It participates in the ENQA work in various areas. For instance, AKKORK Director-General Erika Soboleva was selected to be the member in the ENQA Steering Committee for the external review of ENQA Agency Reviews. Previously AKKORK representatives participated in ENQA WG on Excellence, on Involvement of Stakeholders. AKKORK participates in the



work of other QA Networks (INQAAHE, APQN). AKKORK Director-General is also a Board Member in International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and was a Board member in Asia-Pacific Quality Network. Besides, AKKORK is a member of international organisations concerning QA, such as Central and Eastern European Network for Quality Assurance (CEENQA). It also cooperates with several European quality assurance agencies, such as FIBAA, ZEvA, DEVA-AAC.

The AKKORK activity has become a powerful impetus for developing a higher education quality assurance system in Russia. The Agency's experience was assessed positively not only by the education community, but also by student organisations, employers' associations and governmental authorities of the Russian Federation that carry out administration in education. A number of large professional associations concluded co-operation agreements with AKKORK. For instance, Association of Geological Organizations, Association of Russian Managers, Council for professional qualifications in the financial market, Association of Producers of Computer and IT Technics, All-Russian non-governmental organization of Small and Medium Business OPORA ROSSII, Russian Engineering Union, etc. These professional associations consider results of independent assessment of education programs conducted by the Agency during decision-making on professional-public accreditation.

For more detailed information on areas of domestic and international co-operation, see point 8 of the SAR.

According to the Federal Law 273-FL "On Education in the Russian Federation", being an independent organisation, the AKKORK Agency, executes functions of education quality assurance in all the forms foreseen for by the legislation: independent education quality assessment, public accreditation as well as professional-public accreditation (as an organisation authorized by employers).

In Russia the independent education quality assessment is being currently shaped and still includes a rather limited number of QA agencies. The majority of QA agencies carry out activity in public and professional-public accreditation. In this area, along with AKKORK function such organizations as the National Center of Public Accreditation, Association of Lawyers of Russia, Association for Engineering Education of Russia and many Councils of Professional Qualifications.

AKKORK facilitates improvement of the Russian education quality assurance system in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines. During the AKKORK participation in reviewing Russian legislation in the sphere of higher education with regard to its updating, including the work on a Federal Law 273-FL "On Education in Russian Federation", the Agency introduced the amendments to the effective state regulation from the viewpoint of the ESG standards. These amendments were included in the above mentioned Law (Articles number 95 and 96). Also, to a large extent due to the Agency employees that are part of various expert groups, the ESG requirements are taken into consideration at the elaboration of by-law documents, enactments of the RF Ministry of Science and Higher Education (the cooperation is supervised by Marina Borovskaya the deputy Minister), RF Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science (co-operation with AKKORK is supervised by Sergey Rukavishnikov, the Head of one of the RF Federal Service on Supervision in Education and Science Department) and the States Duma (the AKKORK Director-General is a member of the expert body under Education Committee of the Russian Federation States Duma).

Apart from being active in terms of interaction with state bodies and employers community, AKKORK cooperates closely with the public association "Za Kachestvennoe



obrazovanie” (For Qualitative Education). This is an organization that consolidates the activity of universities students’ councils and state authorities in terms of involvement students to the sphere of education quality assurance. AKKORK asks for student reviewers from this organisation when needed and cooperates in different projects, such as conferences and workshops organisation on quality assurance.

AKKORK carry out many activities aimed at developing an ESG-based higher education quality culture in Russia, continuously promoting these standards and distributing information on the ENQA activity in the Russian Federation. Regular publications in the All-Russian magazine “Education Quality” published by AKKORK help to fulfill this task. The magazine is issued in the number of 10,000 copies, and its subscribers are representatives of federal and regional educational authorities, heads of educational institutions and employers’ associations from various Russian Federation regions and CIS countries. Materials on various aspects of the ESG application in Russia and Europe, descriptions of the best practices of foreign agencies in education quality assessment, announcements on the ENQA projects and events, articles on various issues in education quality assurance that are considered in the context of the European experience are published in the magazine.

**Table 3. List of Articles on ESG**

<i>Authors Name/ research title</i>	<i>Name of Article</i>	<i>No. issue and year</i>
Tatiana Sviridova	April ENQA Forum: key issues	№04/2015
Tatiana Bairampas	ESG: a versatile approach for e-learning and conventional learning	№03/2015
Aishat Temirova, Erika Soboleva	Interview with Colin Tück, EQAR Director “Independence is the key criterion”	№01-02/2016
Tatiana Sviridova	Independence of quality assurance agencies: European conception	№01-02/2016
Tatiana Bairampas	Interview with Pdraig Walsh, Chief Executive of the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and former ENQA President “Quality assurance in education becomes more transparent”	№04/2017
Tatiana Bairampas	Interview with Erika Soboleva, AKKORK Director General “International quality assurance agencies share a unified conception of quality in higher	№03/2017

	education”	
	Quality assurance: participation of interested parties	№02/2018
Larisa Kalinina	Students involvement in independent quality assurance in higher education	№02/2018

All this cooperation and activities helps AKKORK to embed into the Russian Quality Assurance sphere and also makes sure that AKKORK corresponds in its activities to all national requirements.

#### **4.2.Profile of AKKORK**

One of the aims of Bologna Declaration is to form the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). EHEA should be formed taking into consideration many factors, one of them being the results of external assessment based on ESG. Thus, all AKKORK activities should not only correspond to the principles of the Bologna declaration, but also to ESG.

AKKORK initially while forming its criteria took the ESG Standards as a basis for AKKORK methodology.

To confirm the alignment of its activities and methodology with ESG AKKORK became ENQA member.

The mission of AKKORK is to form and develop in Russia an independent system of education quality assessment and assurance that corresponds to the principles of the Bologna declaration and the world best practices. In accordance with the Agency mission, its objectives and tasks have been defined.

The main AKKORK objective is realization of review activity and conduction of independent external quality assessment of education programs and HEIs based on ESG.

Thus, AKKORK supports Russian state and non-state education institutions in developing national educational standards in the area of education quality that fit the best systems of education quality assurance, including Western European one based on ESG, assessment, monitoring and control used in the global educational community. AKKORK contributes significantly to development of the institute of independent external education quality assurance, assessment, monitoring, control, improves competitiveness of Russian education institutions.

AKKORK realizes its objectives through executing the following tasks:

- activity as pioneer (innovator) in establishing and developing the institute of external education quality assurance, assessment, monitoring, control in the Russian Education Area;

- assessment of education quality management systems (in Western Europe this is called internal quality assurance systems) used in education institutions in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation and the Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science, in accordance with the ENQA criteria and international management standards as well as additional criteria elaborated by AKKORK;

- elaboration and implementation of approaches to education quality assurance, assessment, monitoring, control with consideration of international practice, including Western European one based on ESG and research results;

- formation of methodological instruments for education quality assurance, assessment, monitoring, control of education quality; assessment of organization structure efficiency and management of education institutions, assessment of efficiency of information and communications technology use in education. For performing of this task AKKORK acts as a scientific-methodical reference point on elaboration of rules and models of assessment, monitoring and quality assurance as well as was a developer of a model of an All-Russia quality assurance agencies register in 2012.

- promotion of the best practices in education quality assurance, monitoring, control of education quality, reviewing of management efficiency of educational institutions, reviewing of efficiency of information and communications technology use in education in the Russian Education Area that have been accumulated and used by European and international accreditation agencies and networks. This task is aimed at familiarising citizens of the Russian Federation with the experience in assessing and ensuring quality that has been accumulated in the common European Higher Education Area, with the experience of the ENQA, and the ESG application rules as well as explanation of this information;

- long-term co-operation with education institutions that ensures ongoing monitoring of feedback from leadership of educational institutions;

- development of a dialogue with education institutions, relevant authorities; students and employers with regard to education quality assurance. The outcome of this dialogue is generalization of Russian experience in educational quality assurance presented through conferences organization, preparation of publications on this topic, development of a reviewers' community enriched with representatives from academic, employers and students community;

- contribution to the public debate concerning issues of modern development of professional education, in accordance with the AKKORK mission. Part of this is a participation in elaboration of legislation and by-law documents taking into account ESG principles.

The fruitful performance of such tasks is possible only being an ENQA member. This membership is an opportunity to have access to the leading European practices in QA, different QA management strategies through participation in various ENQA working groups, General Assemblies, thus enriching the experience of AKKORK and of Russian Federation as a whole. Cooperation with ENQA helps to receive latest news on development and challenges in QA. So the profile of AKKORK can be described as a traditional QA agency doing QA activities.

AKKORK has organisational structure with the following elements:

- Director General

*performs the overall management of the agency. Director is responsible for any activity and its outcomes performed by the employee of AKKORK in the framework of their duties*

- Projects Office

*. Projects office is the structural element responsible for carrying out assessments of programmes and institutions. Projects office performs functions of searching and selecting candidates for the AKKORK reviewers as well as their subsequent training, organizes and coordinates review work in education institutions. All the stages of independent assessment in one specific HEI are organized by a project manager who is a liaison between reviewers' team and the education institution's employees. There are two regular project managers in the Projects Office, but when the need arises, the AKKORK reviewers that have required experience and have received relevant training can be engaged in the work of the Office;*

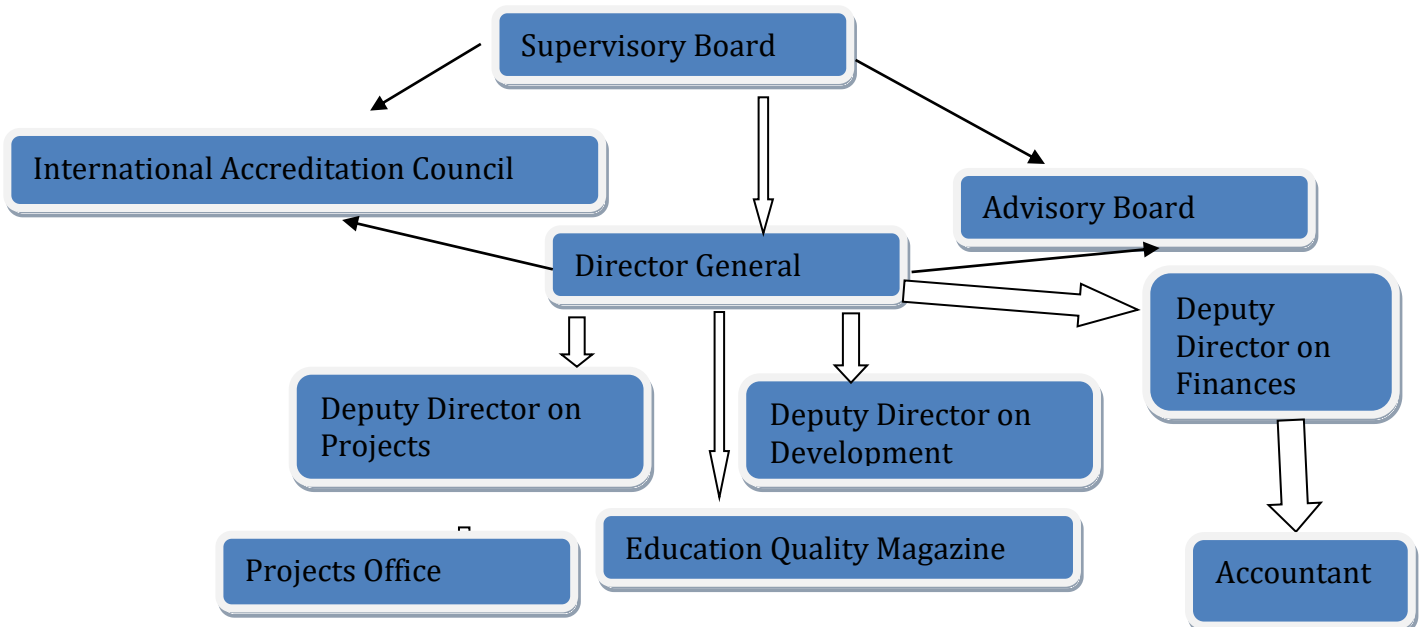
- Development Office

Main responsibility of the Development office is promotion of AKKORK services and conclusion of the contracts with the educational institutions. Development office performs work on preparation of applications for procedures of independent quality assurance, coordination of statements of work for conduct of review and accreditation procedures as well as provides information and support to clients, and organizes promotions of the AKKORK services.;

- Editorial Board of magazine “Kachestvo Obrazovaniya” (“Education Quality”) Organizes issuance and distribution of a monthly news magazine “Kachestvo Obrazovaniya” (“Education Quality”).

All in all, the AKKORK staff consists of 12 persons, which makes it possible to achieve the declared objectives and execute the assigned tasks. These 12 persons are: Director General, Deputy Director on projects, Deputy Director on Development, Deputy Director on Finances, Manager in Projects Office, Accountant, IT specialist, 1 Office Manager, Editor in Chief of Educations Quality Magazine, Designer and Corrector in Education Quality Magazine.

The AKKORK Agency structure is presented in the following graph:



**Graph 1. Structure of AKKORK**

The AKKORK International Accreditation Council was created in 2015. The members are: Jagannath Patil – Immediate Past President of Asia-Pacific Quality Network, Karl Donnert – Director of European Quality Center President of European Geographers Association EUROGEO, Ruben Topchyan – director of ANQA (Armenian QA agency), Patricia-Georgieva- ENQA Reviewer and Vice Rector Accreditation and quality control at University of agribusiness and rural development, Mikhail Solovov - Vice-rector for networking and social partnership at Minin Nizhniy Novgorog State Pedagogical University.

More on the Supervisory Board and Advisory Council see chapter 7 of the present report.

AKKORK posts all the relevant information to its website. Currently we are changing the design of the website and often the old text of the website appears although it is already changed.

#### **4.3. The key activities of AKKORK**

AKKORK being a traditional QA agency and seeing its main task in reviewing the HEI does not limit itself to this function. In fact, in Russia it can't be limited because the QA activities based on ESG are not obligatory for the HEIs. To explain and stimulate Russian HEIs to undergo the review based on ESG AKKORK has to perform also other activities.

First of all, AKKORK performs five different external quality assurance activities (see point 5 of the present SAR for more information on these activities):

- Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme and institutional levels (this is the activity when AKKORK evaluates the programmes and HEIs according to its standards. The core of these standards are ESG);
- Independent evaluation of education quality for professional-public programme accreditation (this is the activity when AKKORK evaluates the programmes according to the AKKORK criteria (the same as in the first point) and the results are presented to the employers associations for a decision making. );
- International accreditation of education programmes and institutions (this is the activity which AKKORK conducts jointly with its partners, foreign QA agencies, such as FIBAA, ZEvA, DEVA-AAC);
- International e-learning accreditation (this is the activity when AKKORK assesses the level of ICT and e-learning implementation into the work of the HEI or Faculty);
- Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation (IQAS) (this is the activity when AKKORK assesses the work of internal education quality management system (internal quality assurance system)).

The assessment procedure in any quality assurance activity is split from the accreditation because the HEI can be willing to do the assessment only and not to pass the accreditation based on the results of the assessment. "Split" means that all the universities do not need mandatory after assessment to submit documents for the accreditation and has the right to withdraw their application after they receive the reviewers report. This decision was made because sometimes universities seeing the negative report do not wish to receive a denial in accreditation and prefer first to fulfill the reviewers recommendations and then submit once more for accreditation. Currently that was not the case in the last 5 years. All the above mentioned activities are based on the ESG

The other activities are:

- Expert activity when AKKORK participates in the different expert bodies like in States Duma Committee on Education, see point 2;
- ESG promoter activity, when AKKORK publishes different articles and participates in the conference where its representatives talk about ESG;
- a publishing activity realized through issuing a quarterly magazine "Kachestvo Obrazovaniya" ("Education Quality");
- education activity, where AKKORK educates its reviewers and conducts seminars for the universities on how to integrate ESG in their activities;
- activity as a generalizer of information on different quality assurance methodology through publication in the magazine "Kachestvo Obrazovaniya".

From the list you can see that all these activities support the main AKKORK's mission which is to evaluate higher education institutions.

Table 4: General information on AKKORK's external quality assurance activities

	<b>Institutional/ programme evaluation</b>	<b>National/ international evaluation</b>	<b>Higher education level(s) covered</b>	<b>Criteria used</b>	<b>Decision made by</b>

Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme and institutional levels	<b>Both institutional and programme</b>	<b>Review team includes international reviewer</b>	<b>Bachelor, master, Ph.D. further education</b>	<b>AKKORK criteria</b>	<b>AKKORK International accreditation Council</b>
Independent evaluation of education quality for professional-public programme accreditation	<b>programme</b>	<b>Only Russian review team</b>	<b>Bachelor, master, Ph.D. further education</b>	<b>AKKORK criteria</b>	<b>Accreditation councils of employer's associations or employers themselves</b>
International accreditation of education programmes and institutions	<b>Both programme and institutional</b>	<b>International review panel</b>	<b>Bachelor, master, Ph.D.</b>	<b>Criteria of partner QA agency</b>	<b>Accreditation councils or decision making bodies of partner QA agency</b>
International e-learning accreditation	<b>Institutional</b>	<b>International review panel</b>		<b>Criteria developed by EFQUEL</b>	<b>AKKORK International accreditation Council</b>
Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation (IQAS)	<b>Institutional</b>	<b>International review panel</b>		<b>AKKORK Criteria</b>	<b>AKKORK International accreditation Council</b>

## 5. Higher Education Quality Assurance Activities of the Agency

The AKKORK activities in education quality assurance includes the following:

- Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level at the level of secondary, higher and additional professional education programs and at the institutional level;

*(In this activity are interested not only Russian HEIs, but also HEIs from the neighboring countries, such as Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, etc. This activity is about assessment of quality of learning outcomes and institutional conditions of HEI such as teaching staff, material, technical and financial resources. During this activity is performed the site-visit to a university and if the assessed programme or university corresponds to AKKORK criteria, the decision on AKKORK accreditation is made by AKKORK International Accreditation Council). For more information and procedural steps see Point 6.2.1. of the present report;*

- Independent evaluation of education quality for professional - public programme accreditation;

*(AKKORK acts as an expert organization for conducting procedure of professional–public accreditation of bachelor’s degree and master’s degree education programs authorized by employers’ associations and professional communities (AKKORK partners in this area of activity is the Russian Engineering Union, All-Russian Public Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises “OPORA ROSSII”, Association of Russian Managers, Association of Geological Organizations, etc.) based on the Article 96 of the FL-273 “On Education in Russian Federation” only big employers and Associations of employers can conduct and make decisions on the professional-public accreditation). For more information and procedural steps see Point 6.2.2. of the present report;*

- International accreditation of education programmes;

*(Being a local Russian strategic partner of a number of European accreditation agencies, AKKORK also has an opportunity to offer Russian higher education institutions, besides AKKORK accreditation, joint accreditation of AKKORK and a partner accreditation agency). For more information and procedural steps see Point 6.2.3 of the present report;*

- International e-learning accreditation

*(This activity is done when a university wants the assessment of its e-learning system. This assessment is done by international peers based on international University Quality in e-learning project. E-learning system may be assessed at the level of a Faculty, for instance Faculty of Economics, or at the level of the University. During this procedure are done: external independent review of efficiency of the e-learning system and the use of information and communications technology in an educational process, external independent assessment of compliance of the e-learning system and information and communications technology of an education institution/Faculty with set of standards proceeding from University Quality in e-learning project.) For more information and procedural steps see Point 6.2.4 of the present report.*

- Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation (IQAS): assessment of correspondence of HEI education quality management system (internal quality assurance system) to national and global quality management standards

*(An internal quality assurance system (Education Quality Management System) is understood as a system of administrative and educational process of an educational organisation focused on achieving the key result of the activity – the planned learning outcomes that meet modern requirements of the labour market, and strengthening of education quality assurance. An Education Quality Management System also allows an education organisation) harmonisation of its activity with external procedures of independent education quality assessment, professional – public accreditation, and qualification certification.*

*The AKKORK Agency has elaborated its own method in accreditation of Education Quality Management Systems in compliance with the multi-standard approach. On the basis of this method, AKKORK conducts independent assessment of an existing Education Quality Management System of a HEI, complex of consultative and methodological work on development of Education Quality Management System). For more information and procedural steps see Point 6.2.5 of the present report;*

**Table 5 Statistics of AKKORK work in 2014-2018**

<b>Accreditation/evaluation type</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level	5 <sup>1</sup>	21	5	20	11
Independent evaluation of education quality on the institutional level	0	0	0	0	0
Independent evaluation of education quality for professional - public programme accreditation	58	51	42	53	16
International accreditation of education programmes	5	11	1	19	19
International e-learning accreditation	1	0	1	0	0
Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation	1	0	0	0	0

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<sup>1</sup> 1 HEI in Kyrgyzstan



## **6. Processes and their methodologies**

### **6.1. Overall information on methodology**

From the very beginning of the AKKORK work, its leadership made a decision to use the ESG standards as the basis for developing its own quality standards and methods for independent quality assurance procedures. AKKORK became the first Russian organisation that declared its commitment to use the ESG Standards and started not only using them in its work, but also promote these standards in the education community as well as improving national legislation, in particular statutory documents concerning independent education quality assessment with the focus on European approaches to quality assurance.

Since both AKKORK and the HEIs that the organisation carry out their activities in the Russian Federation, the Agency cannot ignore other quality standards applied in the Russian education system, primarily the Federal State Education Standards enacted in the Constitution of the Russian Federation (<http://www.constitution.ru/10003000/10003000-4.htm> Article 43).

In this context, the AKKORK standards have been elaborated with regard to the multi-standard approach and take into consideration not only the ESG requirements but also the requirements of Federal State Education Standards, employers' professional standards, and also include components of generally acknowledged technological, managerial and other standards, among others, for instance EFQM and ISO. It is worth noting that for more than 20 years ISO standards were used by Russian Universities as means for establishing internal QA procedures.

Also it must be taken into consideration that Federal State Education Standards are subjected to change almost each year. Since they are now in the process of development. This evolution aims at from one side giving HEIs more flexibility in designing the programmes (trying to define a certain order for the programme development and certain contents for programmes in different fields), from the other side bridging the Federal State Education Standards with the professional standards developed by professional associations (such professional associations consist of different employers' organizations). In contrary the ESG represent itself a stable very well structured and self – explanatory document. That was the other reason for AKKORK to select ESG as a basis for its own criteria.

At the start of it's work in 2005-2006 the Agency has conducted big work on harmonizing the above mentioned documents, which allowed AKKORK to create standards that reflect all the ESG requirements with regard to external quality assurance in HE as well as fully correspond to Federal State Education Standards.

This makes it possible to consider the AKKORK reports during the state accreditation procedures, when the HEI wishes so and facilitates establishment of the ESG-based quality culture in the Russian Federation.

During its procedures AKKORK employs multi-standard approach taking into account:

- European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA (ESG),
- Federal state educational standards of the Russian Federation,
- Professional standards and qualification requirements,
- European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model criteria,
- International Standards Organisation quality management standards (ISO 9001),
- The best Russian and foreign practices in the sphere of organization and management of realization of educational programmes.

The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model criteria, International Standards Organisation quality management standards (ISO 9001), the best Russian and foreign practices in the sphere of organization and management of realization of educational programmes were used partly by AKKORK. The points that do not relate to QA higher education sphere<sup>2</sup> and ESG were not considered.

In general, it was a very tough work on bridging all the above mentioned standards. It was very useful since, based on it AKKORK, created criteria that are used not only assess educational programmes, but also propose some enhancement actions related not only to European QA practice, but to Russian QA practice also.

With regard to the follow up after the procedures, in case there are compulsory recommendations in terms of conditional accreditation the university has to provide recommendations fulfillment in the timeframe stipulated in the accreditation council's decision. In terms of other recommendations their fulfillment is presented once the process of renew of accreditation is started. This is stated in the contracts with the universities. Read more in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of this report.

It should be noted that the process of the RF state accreditation procedure does not foresee the follow up, either accreditation or denial of accreditation and then new submission. AKKORK on the contrary sticks to the ESG including this point in the contracts with universities.

## **6.2. Processes and methodology described by activity**

The basis for AKKORK methodology is assessment of the quality of learning outcomes. AKKORK correlate them with the competences' formation, methodology of Federal State Education Standards and analysis of the real assessment of students achievements.

AKKORK criteria are divided into two parts. One is about the education quality (quality of learning outcomes), the other is about all the recourses used for programme creation and realization, the processes of their management and internal QA system of the HEI (institutional conditions for programme realisation. It should be noted, that criteria for independent evaluation of education quality on programme and institutional level does not differ from independent evaluation of education quality for professional public accreditation. The explanation to this is in point 6.1. The only difference is in the decision making body. In case of independent evaluation of education quality on programme and institutional level it is AKKORK International Accreditation Council. In case of independent evaluation of education quality for professional public accreditation these are the Accreditation Councils of employers' unions. Currently AKKORK is working on revision of the criteria, to make them more clear based on the results of feedback from some of the HEIs. They asked to remove some duplications from the criteria.

### ***6.2.1 Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level at the level of secondary, higher and additional professional education programs and public accreditation***

AKKORK has designed and developed its criteria based on a multi-standard approach. Into account were taken first of all ESG ENQA, Federal State Standards of Education and professional standards by field developed by the employers associations of Russia, EFQM and ISO criteria. This activity is defined by the Article 95 of the FL-273 "On Education in Russian Federation". There is stated that it is the assessment of students

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<sup>2</sup> Part 8.4 Managing the processes, products and services supplied by external suppliers, for instance.

acquisition level of educational programme or its parts, provision of information to educational process participants (stakeholders) on the preparation quality of students. This evaluation should be based on criteria and requirements of Russian and Foreign organizations.

In this activity, doing the assessment at the programme level AKKORK does the assessment of learning outcomes quality ([Education quality criteria](#)) and the level of achievement of the learning outcomes from the point of view of different stakeholders.

Moreover AKKORK assesses the institutional conditions for programme realization ([Institutional conditions](#), in AKKORK documents it is called quality assurance of programmes, meaning the study and other conditions created in the HEI that assure the quality of the learning outcomes) . This involves the assessment of the internal QA system in the HEI, assessment of study-methodical materials of programme, quality of the teaching staff, quality of the recourses used for programme realisation, quality of student services, quality of scientific activity carried out by the programme teaching staff and how the results of this activity is integrated into the programme.

When the assessment is done on the institutional level only the institutional conditions that university creates are assessed. This means only the recourses, their management processes and internal QA system is assessed. The basis for assessment of institutional conditions that university creates is represented in 2 articles in the FL-273 “On Education in Russian Federation”, Articles 95 and 96. One is the independent assessment of the institutional conditions of the education activity and the other one is public accreditation. Under independent assessment of the institutional conditions of the education activity is understood assessment of programme realization process based on the public information, provision of information to educational process participants (stakeholders) on the quality of educational activity conditions<sup>3</sup>. As to the public accreditation in the Law it is described as recognition of the fact that the level of educational organisation activity corresponds to the criteria and requirements of Russian and Foreign organizations;

At the end of each assessment in case of positive decision made by AKKORK International Accreditation Council the accreditation certificate is issued to the university. The accreditation period is the period for which the HEI can guarantee that institutional conditions will stay stable and will guarantee the same quality of learning outcomes in case of programme accreditation.

#### **Aims:**

- Independent evaluation and quality assurance of educational programmes;
- Improvement of education quality and preparation quality of the graduates, whose competences meet labor market requirements;
- Strengthening competitiveness of accredited programmes;
- Strengthening of institutional conditions of educational programmes realization.

#### **Types of reviewers involved (5 people in the panel):**

- Project manager

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<sup>3</sup> It is called institutional conditions of programme realization in AKKORK methodology

- Reviewer from academic community,
- Reviewer from foreign country
- Reviewer from employers community
- Reviewer from students community.

All the reviewers undergo selection, training and certification.

**Procedural steps by initial application:**

- Application for undergoing the procedure of independent education quality evaluation.
- HEI members training in internal education audit methodology.
- Preparation of a self-evaluation report by an educational institution.
- Formation of a certified review panel, representing the academic community both Russian and foreign, labour market and student community.
- Desk review of the self-evaluation report done by the reviewers.
- 2-3 days on-site visit to the educational institution.
- Preparation and submission of the reviewers' reports to the educational institution for feedback<sup>4</sup>.
- Correction of the report (if needed) according to the feedback from HEI.
- Submission of the reviewer's reports to the AKKORK Advisory council.
- Approval of the reviewer's report by the Advisory Council
- Submission of the Reviewers report to the AKKORK International Accreditation Council for decision on accreditation
- Issuing an accreditation certificate in case of positive decision
- In case of conditional accreditation submission of the follow up report in the period stated in the International Accreditation Council's decision.

**Appeals and complaints procedure:**

For lodging complaints and appeals there exist 2 different procedures. Complaints can be lodged to project manager in an oral form first. If project manager can't solve it, he contacts directly AKKORK Director-General. Then the Director discusses this complaint and situation that led to it with respective contact persons in the HEI. Then depending on the situations necessary actions are taken. There has been no complaints so far.

After receiving reviewer's reports and decision on accreditation Educational organization, may not agree with the with the decision of the Accrediting organization Accreditation Council. In such cases, an educational organization may submit an [appeal to the accrediting](#) organization. See chapter 10 of the present report for more information.

***6.2.2 Independent evaluation of education quality for professional - public programme accreditation***

AKKORK has designed and developed its criteria based on a multi-standard approach. Into account were taken first of all ESG ENQA, Federal State Standards of

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<sup>4</sup> By feedback here is meant the following process. Once the review panel has written the report it is sent for approval and comments to the HEI. The comments relate to the factual inaccuracies in the report.

Education and professional standards by field developed by the employers associations of Russia. This gives to the universities that come to AKKORK opportunity to hand over the results of the evaluation to the Accreditation councils of employers organizations. AKKORK in this case acts as an expert organization for conducting procedure of professional–public accreditation of bachelor’s degree and master’s degree education programs authorized by employers’ associations and professional communities. AKKORK partners in this area of activity is the Russian Engineering Union, All-Russian Public Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises “OPORA ROSSII”, Association of Russian Managers, Association of Geological Organizations, etc. This activity is defined by the Article 96 of the FL-273 “On Education in Russian Federation”. There is stated that only big employers and Associations of employers can conduct and make decisions on the professional-public accreditation. So, once a university comes to AKKORK with the interest in professional-public accreditation, the programme assessment is done based on the selection from AKKORK criteria. This selection was previously agreed with the particular association of employers where later on the University would like to present results for decision making on accreditation. So, based on university request AKKORK prepares the reviewers report and sent them to partner employers association for accreditation decision.

**Aims:**

- Independent evaluation and quality assurance of educational programmes according to the criteria recognized by associations of employers;
- Improvement of education quality and preparation quality of the graduates, whose competences meet labor market requirements;
- Strengthening competitiveness of accredited programmes.

Professional-public accreditation “is recognition of quality and level of graduates’ training (...) corresponding to the requirements of professional standards, requirements of the labor market to specialists, workers and employees of relevant specialization (Federal Law of the Russian Federation of December 29, 2012 N 273-FL “On Education in the Russian Federation”, Chapter 12, Article 96). Professional - public accreditation can be conducted by employers and their associations as well as organizations authorized by employers in accordance with the procedure established by them.

AKKORK conducts independent assessment of education quality for further procedure of professional – public accreditation in employers’ associations and professional communities. AKKORK partners in this area of activity are:

- Russian Engineering Union,
- All-Russian Public Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises “OPORA ROSSII”,
- Association of Russian Managers,
- Council for professional qualifications in the financial market,
- Association of Producers of Computer and IT Technics
- Etc. Full list of partners see here <http://www.akkork.ru/e/partners/>

**Types of reviewers involved (4 people panel):**

- Project manager
- Reviewer from academic community,
- Reviewer from employers' community,
- Reviewer from students community.

### **Procedural Steps:**

- Application for undergoing the accreditation procedure.
- HEI members training in internal education audit methodology.
- Preparation of a self-evaluation report by an educational institution.
- Formation of a certified review panel, representing the Russian academic community and labour market.
- Desk review of the self-evaluation report done by the reviewers.
- 2 days on-site visit to the educational institution.
- Preparation and submission of the reviewers' reports to the educational institution for feedback<sup>5</sup>.
- Correction of the report (if needed) according to the feedback from HEI.
- Submission of the reviewer's reports to the AKKORK Advisory council.
- Approval of the reviewer's report by the Advisory Council
- Submission of the independent education quality evaluation results – reviewer's reports on each educational programme – to the Accreditation Council of the Employer's association.
- Accreditation decision by the Employer's association Accreditation Council .
- Issuance of accreditation certificates to an educational institution in the case of positive decision of the Accreditation Council of the Employers association.
- In case of conditional accreditation submission of the follow up report in the period stated in the International Accreditation Council's decision.

### **Appeals and complaints procedure:**

For lodging complaints and appeals there exist 2 different procedures. Complaints can be lodged to project manager in an oral form first. If project manager can't solve it, he contacts directly AKKORK Director-General. Then the Director discusses this complaint and situation that led to it with respective contact persons in the HEI. Then depending on the situations necessary actions are taken. There has been no complaints so far.

After receiving reviewer's reports and decision on accreditation Educational organization, may not agree with the with the decision of the Accrediting organization Accreditation Council. In such cases, an educational organization may submit an [appeal to the accrediting](#) organization. See chapter 10 of the present report for more information.

### ***6.2.3. International Accreditation of Education Programmes***

Being a local Russian strategic partner of a number of European accreditation agencies, AKKORK also has an opportunity to offer Russian higher education institutions, besides AKKORK accreditation, joint accreditation of AKKORK and a partner

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<sup>5</sup> By feedback here is meant the following process. Once the review panel has written the report it is sent for approval and comments to the HEI. The comments relate to the factual inaccuracies in the report.

accreditation agency. This is an activity demanded by big HEIs (more than 30 000 students and over 500 educational programmes) such as Saint-Petersburg State University, Peoples Friendship University of Russia, etc. Those universities have many joint programmes with Western European Universities. For them is interesting to receive an accreditation from foreign QA agency. AKKORK performs this procedure jointly with the partners FIBAA, ZEvA, DEVA-AAC.

**Aims:**

- Assessment of the compliance of the quality and level of preparation of graduates with the requirements of international educational standards and demands of the labour market to specialists;
- Identification of areas and instruments for improvement of the processes for the implementation of the education programme based on the best foreign education practices;
- Formation of system of education quality management at the level of the education programme in accordance with modern standards and the best international practices;
- Development of quality culture among academic teaching staff and engineering teaching staff, functional staff, administrative staff;
- Formation of the external proof of educational programmes quality in the form of an international accreditation of educational programs;
- Development of international academic mobility;
- Inclusion of the education programmes into the international ratings.

AKKORK carries out the international accreditation procedures of education programmes according to ESG and EQF, and best education practices.

**Objectives:**

- assessment of the compliance of the quality and level of preparation of graduates with the requirements of Russian and international professional standards and demands of the labour market to specialists;
- identification of areas and instruments for improvement of the processes for the implementation of the education program based on the best Russian and foreign education practices;
- formation of system of education quality management at the level of the education programme in accordance with modern standards and the best international practices;
- development of quality culture among academic teaching staff and engineering teaching staff, functional staff, administrative staff;
- formation of the external proof of educational programmes quality in the form of an international accreditation of educational programs;
- development of international academic mobility;
- inclusion of the education programmes into the international ratings.

**International Reviewer's Panel (7 members panel):**

- Project manager;
- Russian and international reviewers representing academic community;
- Russian and international reviewers representing employers;
- Student reviewer.

**What is assessed:**

- The quality of Education Programme based on ESG and partner methodology;  
<http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/>

- The quality of the Institutional conditions for programme realization based on ESG and partner methodology; <http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/>

**Procedure:**

- Application for undergoing the international accreditation procedure;
- HEI members training in internal education audit methodology
- Preparation of a self-evaluation report by an educational institution and its submission to AKKORK and to a partner QA agency;
- 
- Formation of a joint certified international review panel, representing the academic community, labour market and students community;
- Desk review of the self-evaluation report done by the reviewers;
- 2-3 days on-site visit to the educational institution;
- Preparation and submission of the reviewers' reports to the educational institution for feedback<sup>6</sup>;
- Correction of the report (if needed) according to the feedback from HEI;
- Submission of the reviewer's reports to the AKKORK Advisory council for their approval and to the Accreditation council of partner QA agency;
- Accreditation decision by the International Accreditation Council members and Accreditation Council of partner QA agency<sup>7</sup>;
- Issuance of accreditation certificates to an educational institution in the case of positive decision of International Accreditation Council and Accreditation council of partner QA agency.
- In case of conditional accreditation submission of the follow up report in the period stated in the Accreditation Council's decision.

**Appeals and complaints procedure:**

For lodging complaints and appeals there exist 2 different procedures. Complaints can be lodged to project manager in an oral form first. If project manager can't solve it, he contacts directly AKKORK Director-General. Then the Director discusses this complaint and situation that led to it with respective contact persons in the HEI. Then depending on the situations necessary actions are taken. There has been no complaints so far.

After receiving reviewer's reports and decision on accreditation Educational organization, may not agree with the with the decision of the Accrediting organization Accreditation Council. In such cases, an educational organization may submit an [appeal to the accrediting](#) organization. See chapter 10 of the present report for more information.

***6.2.4 International e-learning accreditation***

This activity is done when a university want the assessment of its e-learning system. This e-learning system may be assessed at the level of a Faculty, for instance Faculty of Economics,

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<sup>6</sup> By feedback here is meant the following process. Once the review panel has written the report it is sent for approval and comments to the HEI. The comments relate to the factual inaccuracies in the report.

<sup>7</sup> In case Russian university wishes to receive the AKKORK accreditation, the documents are submitted to the AKKORK International Accreditation Council for decision. AKKORK International accreditation council adopts the decision of a partner agency. So far it was not the case as the main thing the Russian university management is aspiring in this procedure is the accreditation from and agency based in Western Europe.



or at the level of the University. In the framework of this procedure are done: external independent review of efficiency of the e-learning system and the use of information and communications technology in an educational process, external independent assessment of compliance of the e-learning system and information and communications technology of an education institution/Faculty with national and global standards and requirements.

**Aims:**

- Evaluation of HEIs e-learning system compliance with European standards in the sphere of e-learning;
- Working out recommendations in the e-learning system improvement;
- Familiarization with best practices in the e-learning system development.

**European UNIQUE Quality Seal for E-learning:**

In 2005 on European Commission's initiative European Foundation for Quality in E-learning<sup>8</sup> (EFQUEL) worked out an all-European system of institutional accreditation of traditional HEIs, which use e-learning instruments in the course of their activity. The project was named "Quality Assurance of E-learning in European universities (UNIQUE)".

EFQUEL was the first to receive the right of carrying out institutional accreditation in the HEIs that demonstrate high performance standards in the sphere of e-learning.

The goal of UNIQUE is professional help to HEIs in defining quality of correspondence of e-learning with European standards in the sphere of e-learning and working out recommendations in the e-learning system perfection.

UNIQUE criteria are based on the integrated approach to education services quality management, combination of academic traditions of reviewer's evaluation and modern methods of educational audit of a HEI's institutional activities. These criteria touch upon all sides of learning with the help of e-learning instruments.

**International Reviewer's Panel (4 members panel):**

- Project manager;
- Russian reviewer representing academic community;
- International reviewer representing academic community;
- Student reviewer.

**The main stages of international accreditation, with the UNIQUE quality seal conferment are:**

1. Application
2. Assessment of a HEI's compliance to UNIQUE programme requirements; Criteria
3. Self-assessment report;
4. Reviewer's evaluation:
  - Review of self-assessment report,

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<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Foundation\\_for\\_Quality\\_in\\_e-Learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Foundation_for_Quality_in_e-Learning)

- 2-3 days on-site visit,
  - Preparation of the report by the review panel.
5. Decision by the AKKORK International Accreditation Council
  6. UNIQUe Accreditation
  7. In case of conditional accreditation submission of the follow up report in the period stated in the International Accreditation Council's decision.

**Appeals and complaints procedure:**

For lodging complaints and appeals there exist 2 different procedures. Complaints can be lodged to project manager in an oral form first. If project manager can't solve it, he contacts directly AKKORK Director-General. Then the Director discusses this complaint and situation that led to it with respective contact persons in the HEI. Then depending on the situations necessary actions are taken. There has been no complaints so far.

After receiving reviewer's reports and decision on accreditation Educational organization, may not agree with the with the decision of the Accrediting organization Accreditation Council. In such cases, an educational organization may submit an [appeal to the accrediting](#) organization. See chapter 10 of the present report for more information.

***6.2.5. Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation (IQAS)***

An internal quality assurance system (Education Quality Management System) is understood as a system of administrative and educational process of an educational organization focused on achieving the key result of the activity – the planned learning outcomes that meet modern requirements of the labour market and strengthening of education quality assurance. An Education Quality Management System also allows an education organization to harmonize its activity with external procedures of independent education quality assessment, professional – public accreditation, and qualification certification.

The AKKORK Agency has elaborated its own method in accreditation of Education Quality Management Systems in compliance with the multi-standard approach. On the basis of this method, AKKORK conducts independent assessment of an existing Education Quality Management System of a HEI, complex of consultative and methodological work on development of Education Quality Management System

**Aims:**

- Enhancement of the efficiency of system of educational activities quality management of a HEI.
- Maintenance of permanent competitiveness of educational programmes enhancement on the educational services market and of alumni on the labour market.
- Formation of effective mechanism of quality assurance demonstration and responsibility of an educational institution to the stakeholders.
- Image consolidation in target groups of educational services consumers.

Internal quality assurance system (IQAS) is a total of administrative-and-managerial and educational processes of a HEI, focused on achievement of key result of activities– high

education results, corresponding to modern labour market requirements, and education quality assurance consolidation. IQAS also allows a HEI to harmonize its activities with external procedures of education quality evaluation, social and professional accreditation and qualifications certification.

### **Methodology:**

AKKORK methodology in the sphere of IQAS development and accreditation is developed in accordance with the multi-standard approach and it takes into account the following:

- ESG standards;
- EFQM Excellence model;
- UNIQUe standards.
- GOST ISO 9001–2015 «Quality management systems. Requirements»

### **Procedural steps:**

- A request (application) on IQAS development from an educational institution
- HEI members training in internal education audit methodology
- Preparation of a self-evaluation report by an educational institution and its submission to AKKORK;
- Formation of a certified international review panel, representing the academic community, labour market and students community;
- Desk review of the self-evaluation report done by the reviewers;
- 2-3 days on-site visit to the educational institution;
- Preparation and submission of the reviewers' reports to the educational institution for feedback<sup>9</sup>;
- Correction of the report (if needed) according to the feedback from HEI;
- Submission of the reviewer's reports to the AKKORK Advisory council for their approval;
- Accreditation decision by the International Accreditation Council members;
- Issuance of accreditation certificates to an educational institution in the case of positive decision of International Accreditation Council.
- IQAS accreditation.
- Permanent improvement of IQAS based on the recommendations of review panel. In case of conditional accreditation submission of the follow up report in the period stated in the International Accreditation Council's decision.

### **Appeals and complaints procedure:**

For lodging complaints and appeals there exist 2 different procedures. Complaints can be lodged to project manager in an oral form first. If project manager can't solve it, he contacts directly AKKORK Director-General. Then the Director discusses this complaint and situation that led to it with respective contact persons in the HEI. Then depending on the situations necessary actions are taken. There has been no complaints so far.

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<sup>9</sup> By feedback here is meant the following process. Once the review panel has written the report it is sent for approval and comments to the HEI. The comments relate to the factual inaccuracies in the report.

After receiving expert's reports and decision on accreditation Educational organization, may not agree with the with the decision of the Accrediting organization Accreditation Council. In such cases, an educational organization may submit an [appeal to the accrediting](#) organization. See chapter 10 of the present report for more information.

## 7. Agency's internal quality assurance

AKKORK governing and organization structure is composed by the following elements:

- Supervisory Board
- Advisory Council
- International Accreditation Council
- Office: (Director, Deputy Directors, staff)

**Table 6 Composition of Supervisory Board**

<b>№</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
1	Vadim Kovalev	Chairman, First deputy director Association of Russian Managers
2	Diana Mashtakeeva	Director of the Council for Professional Qualifications in the Financial Market
3	Igor Koryakin	Director Association of Geological Organizations
4	Susanna Karakhanyan	INQAAHE President
5	Elena Lyapunsova	Head of the Entrepreneurship Committee in All-Russian Small and medium companies association "OPORA ROSSII", Director of the Association of teaching staff "League of the University Teachers"
6	Olesya Zelenova	Director of Neftegazconsalt company

The function of the Supervisory Board is to oversee the strategy and policies of AKKORK. The Council meets once a year. This Council was appointed a year ago.

**Table 7 Composition of the Advisory Council**

<b>№</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
1	Vladimir Shadrikov	Chairman, Academic of Russian Academy of Education, Doctor of Science (Psychology), Former vice-minister and Minister of Education of Russian Federation
2	Svetlana Kosyakova	Director of the Center for Corporate Strategies and Decisions, AKKORK reviewer
3	Vladimir Zyryanov	Deputy Dean Economic Faculty Moscow State Lomonosov University, Doctor of Science (Sociology), AKKORK reviewer
4	Olga Afanas'eva	Deputy Dean Communications, Media and Design Faculty in Higher School of Economics (National Research University), Ph.D.(Politics), AKKORK reviewer
5	Larisa Danchenok	Dean of the Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Further Education in Russian State University n.a. Plekhanov, Doctor of Science (Economics), AKKORK reviewer
6	Inna Stecenko	Vice-rector for Research in Baltic International Academy, D.Sc. (econ) AKKORK reviewer
7	Artem Tarkhanov	Student, MGIMO

Advisory Council of AKKORK is a body responsible for the quality of Reviews.

During the councils meeting face to face or asynchronous meeting (meeting by correspondence, meaning the cases when the members just sent their decision via e-mail) the members discuss the review panel reports and in case of agreement approve them. Then the reports are sent to AKKORK International Accreditation Council or to Accreditation Councils of the employers Association or Accreditation Councils of Foreign QA agencies. In case the Advisory Council members disagree with the quality of the report, meaning they found some recommendations written in a very generic way (like to improve and no mention how) they have the right to send the reports back for improvement by the reviewers.

AKKORK office is doing all the operations concerning the projects attracting (meaning promotion of AKKORK within the Universities) and projects realization (finding the reviewers, certifying them, organization of in-site visit, etc.). The Director-General is responsible for the whole work of AKKORK. Deputy Director on Development is responsible for AKKORK promotion and first direct contacts with client Universities, concluding contracts with them, planning the next projects, contacts after the procedure-sending the questionnaires. Deputy Director on Projects is responsible for duly carrying out of the projects, planning them, approving the reviewers with Director of AKKORK and the HEI, carrying out assessment of the reviewers work, carrying out the training for the reviewers, all the other activities concerning the project realization. Deputy Director on Finances is responsible for overseeing the financial situation, planning the budget, all the other things concerning finances.

AKKORK internal quality assurance system is operating according to AKKORK mission and quality targets.

Those targets are:

- 1) Integrity and Independence in its work – carry out evaluation procedures taking into account independence, impartiality and flexibility and its decisions are evidence-based;
- 2) Transparency and accountability of operations and their results - provide information on assessment documentation and methodology on website or by the means of other mass media resources.;
- 3) Confidentiality - information received by the experts or by the Agency in the course of preparation and conduct of education audit is confidential, has to be used only inside of the Agency by consent of the HEI, and its sources are not divulged.
- 4) Efficiency and efficacy - as the results of the review at program or institutional levels the HEI is provided with the experts' conclusions that help improve follow-up activity of the HEI.
- 5) Effective allocation of resources of the agency;
- 6) Respect for the diversity and autonomy of the Russian higher education institutions - pay attention to the diversity of higher education institutions, together with their complete freedom to organize and run themselves under their self-governing capability;
- 7) Fostering social partnerships - facilitate the engagement of a broad range of stakeholders in quality evaluation procedures: students, university community; researchers; employers; authorities; the general public.

AKKORK's quality policy has been developed in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education (ESG), as well as the legislation of the Russian Federation in the sphere of education. Basic principles include: openness, transparency and objectivity. Quality policy is available on agency's website in English and Russian (<http://www.akkork.ru/e/about/documents/>). This Policy includes

responsibilities of the Agency in terms of quality of internal operations and external assessment of the agency's activity.

Quality of the procedures conducted by AKKORK and its decision-making is ensured with the use of efficient model of business operations organization – plan-do-check-act (PDCA). Planning is done through the planning of work of each zone of activity (promotion and development, review organization, other activities). Do is fulfillment of plans created for each zone of activity. Check is the assessment whether the plan was fulfilled or not. Act is some corrective actions done based on the check results of needed. This model has been developed as a mechanism guaranteeing that all the stages of external independent education quality assurance (primarily quality review) are conducted conscientiously and comply with the quality targets set above and standards of operation for an independent accreditation agency as described in ESG part 3.

The basis of the AKKORK qualitative operation is primarily quality of reviewers' activity as well as that of administrative staff and bodies responsible for decision-making.

In order to ensure proper quality of the AKKORK operation, a number of documents regulating the business operations of the Agency have been developed. Activity of the AKKORK administrative staff is regulated by the Internal Regulations (Annex 4 to present report). In this document are described responsibilities of the staff at each position, the system of internal quality assurance of the administrative staff.

Responsibility for planning, motivation, organization and monitoring of the Administration Office is borne by the AKKORK Director (Annex 4).

The Deputy Director on Projects in its turn, plans, organizes and monitors reviewers' work. With the view of ensuring the best quality of reviewers' work, the Projects Office conducts the following procedures:

- competitive selection of reviewers (Annex 5);
- reviewers' training (Annex 5)
- attestation and certification of reviewers (Annex 5).

During reviews, reviewers are to rely on the Regulation on Reviewers work (Annex 6).

Monitoring of the reviewers' activity focused on bringing their activity in compliance with the said documents is carried out by the Projects Office employees.

Monitoring of the University satisfaction level is carried out by the Deputy Director on Development. After the completion of the procedure the Deputy Director sends the questionnaires to the university

In case of any doubts or questions any of the employees can turn at any time to AKKORK Director-General, schedule a meeting and discuss particular issues. The PDCA cycle is executed on a day by day basis under the control of Director General.

In AKKORK, final decision-making following the results of procedures for external education quality assessment is carried out by multi-stage scheme elaborated with the view of ensuring quality and transparency of the process, fairness of the decisions made and their independence of any of the interested parties. This scheme consists of the following stages:

- reviewer's report analysis conducted by all of the Advisory Council members (in case faults or doubt with regard to credibility of the data are found, the report is returned to the Projects Office for improvement);
- consideration of the report at the meeting of the Advisory Council (in case there is the need to clarify some or other items of the report or to submit additional information, reviewers that have participated in the report preparation and the project manager are invited to the meeting);
- approval of the report by the Advisory Council;

- submission of the approved report to the AKKORK International Accreditation Council if the HEI wishes so<sup>10</sup>;
- consideration of the report by the AKKORK International Accreditation Council (in case the data is inadequate for final decision-making, the International Accreditation Council members may request additional information from the HEI or insist on a supplementary review);
- decision-making concerning accreditation at the AKKORK International Accreditation Council meeting.

Activity of the Advisory Council and International Accreditation Council is regulated by the respective regulations (Annex 7, 8).

General monitoring of the AKKORK activity and supervision of compliance with the approved AKKORK standards, regulations and standing orders are carried out by the AKKORK Supervisory Board (according to the Regulations on Supervisory Board). The Supervisory Board approves the general development strategy once a year, and Director General is accountable to the Supervisory Board and submits reports, which is the basis for approval of the overall strategy of AKKORK activity.

In order to avoid any conflict of interest between the members of the staff and members of AKKORK bodies with regard to the reviews they are involved in/decide about a special mechanism is introduced, once becoming a staff member or the member of any AKKORK body a person sign a declaration on independence. Please see Annex 11 to this report.

As to the interaction, between employees regularly are conducted the internal briefings where the current status of the projects and further activities are discussed.

Besides this, every new employee has to get acquainted with ESG, read them through and then discuss with Director General of AKKORK.

According to availability of funds new employees have an opportunity of visiting ENQA's two GA events.

Also the new employees need to participate at least once in the review conducted by AKKORK during their first year of work.

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<sup>10</sup> If the HEI does not wish to receive an accreditation, it could happen in the case of negative review report, then after Advisory Council the report is sent to the University and the projects finishes.



## 8. Agency's international activities

One of the priority tasks of the AKKORK Agency is development of international co-operation. In accordance with this task, the Agency carries out activity in the following areas:

**1. Participation** in activity of international organizations in the area of education quality assurance

AKKORK is a member of a number of international associations:

- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). In 2018 Erika Soboleva was selected to be a member in ENQA Steering Committee for the external review of ENQA Agency Reviews.. Erika yearly participates in two ENQAs GAs , contributing to the discussions on QA and bringing back the best ideas to implement them in the Russian Federation quality assurance sphere;

- European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) (registered there);

- International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) is a world-wide association of over 300 organizations active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education. In 2013, Erika Soboleva, Director General of AKKORK, became a member of the INQAAHE Board of Directors (it must be noted that it is first time when representative of Eastern Europe was included in such position). In 2015 she was reelected for the second time and in 2018 reelected for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. Being a Board member she leads there the Recognition Committee and the Regional committee on Eastern Europe and Central Asia. She is also a member of the Global Quality Assurance Register Working Group.

- The Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) established in 2003 functions as a regional network.

In 2013, AKKORK participated in the network working group on establishing the Asia-Pacific Quality Register. Also AKKORK is APQN Quality Hub (The reference point of APQN members in gathering the information on QA status and activities in the Eastern European and Central Asia region).

- EAQAN (The Eurasian Quality Assurance Network – founded in 2004. It is a network of organisations (bodies) that carries out external education quality assessment at the national and regional level in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries and Baltic region).

- CEENQA (The Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education. It was founded in 2001 and comprises nationally or internationally recognized quality assurance agencies working in the Central and Eastern European region).

**2. AKKORK** closely cooperates with the foreign quality assurance agencies on conducting joint accreditation procedures, on engagement of international reviewers in conducting the AKKORK procedures.

Interaction with foreign education quality assurance agencies with the view of concluding agreements on conducting joint (international) accreditation makes possible for AKKORK to adhere to pan-European trends in quality assurance in higher education as well as to compare its work concerning application of ESG with the best practices of foreign agencies. *AKKORK has agreements on conducting joint accreditation with the following organisation:*

- FIBAA (Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation) conducts quality assessment of education programs and higher educational institutions in economics, management, law and social sciences. The last evaluation together with FIBAA was carried out in 2017-2018 in Russian Presidential Academy of National

Economy and Public Administration (based in Moscow, more than 20000 thousands students);

- DEVA-AAC (In 2013, Spanish Accreditation Agency DEVA-AAC and the AKKORK Agency concluded agreements on co-operation in the area of international accreditation of educational programs). The last evaluation with Deva-AAC was carried out in 2018 in Peoples Friendship University of Russia (based in Moscow, more than 15 thousands students, including many international ones)

- ZEvA (Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency Hanover) conducts accreditations in wide range of subjects. Last project together with AKKORK was in 2017-2018 in the Saint Petersburg State University (based in Saint Petersburg, one of the oldest university, more than 20000 students).

In 2014 – 2018, AKKORK conducted external independent reviews with engagement of foreign reviewers of educational programs in several Russian University. For instance, one of them is Saint Petersburg State University that is one of the largest Russia HEIs (more than 20000 students) and another in Rostov State Economic University (more than 10000 students). Per 2017 statistics 8 universities with more than 30 programmes passes the procedures with involvement of international reviewers.

Also AKKORK conducted cross-border activity in evaluating programmes in Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University named after B.N. Yeltsin (Kyrgyzstan) in 2014 evaluating several programmes.

Being active in different organizations is not the only one type on international activities of AKKORK.

**3. AKKORK** sees itself as a generalizator of best international practices in QA. To promote ESG values and other international QA practices it invites speakers from ENQA, organizes and co-organizes conferences on QA theme, participates in the international conferences held in Russia and abroad on QA theme (see Table 8 below).

In April 2018 AKKORK together with the National Accreditation Agency (ROSAKKREDAGENTSTVO) was a co-organizer of the big Regional Consultation meeting for Eastern Europe and Central Asia under the auspices of UNESCO and INQAAHE. This Regional meeting was conducted to present results of the Regional study done by UNESCO, INQAAHE, National Accreditation Agency and AKKORK in terms of getting information of the state of the art of QA procedures in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The conference took place in Moscow. The main outcomes of the conference were:

- Identification of major opportunities and challenges to the development of QA in Higher Education in the region;
- Reflections on the role of Higher Education and QA in sustainable development;
- Development strategies for engaging governments, QA bodies, HEIs and other stakeholders in enhancement of QA to enable it responding to system needs and transformations;
- Exchange of good QA practices in the region and beyond;
- Development of a regional synthesis report.

This conference was a huge success and gave impetus for further consideration and reflection on the notion of independent quality assurance in Russia.

AKKORK will be the host of the INQAAHE biennial Forum to be held in March 2020 in Moscow. This will be a historical event, for the first time such global conference on QA will come to Eastern Europe. The decision on holding such conference was made based on the results of the Study made in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region by INQAAHE, AKKORK and ROSAKKREDAGENTSTVO in 2017-2018. The study was focused on the defining the level of independent education quality assurance development

in the region. The results of the Study will be included in the INQAAHE Global Study report published by Springer 2019-2020. Erika is one of the authors of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Study report.

**Table 8. List of International event**

<i>Event name</i>	<i>Organizers/ place</i>	<i>Participants from AKKORK</i>
IV International Forum of the International Association of Corporate Education	International Association of Corporate Education and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation/Moscow	15 April 2016
International Conference “Role of accreditation in quality assurance in education”	Department of Accreditation and Nostrification under the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan/ Baku	02 December 2016
International APQN Conference “New horizons: Dissolving Boundaries for a Quality Region”	Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration/ Moscow	26-28 May 2017
VIII International Scientific and practical Conference “National quality concepts: integration of education, science and business”	Saint Petersburg State University of Economics/ Saint Petersburg	03-07 October 2017
II Central Asian International Forum on Quality Assurance in Education	Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating together with the Foundation of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Elbasy/Astana	16 October 2018
Regional Consultation Meeting for Eastern Europe and Central Asia “The role of quality assurance in higher education: challenges, developments and trends”	UNESCO/NAA/AKKORK; Moscow	23-24 April 2018

**4. AKKORK** publishes the articles on ESG, GGP INQAAHE and other significant developments in its magazine “Education Quality”.

**Table 9. List of Articles on international developments**

<i>Authors Name/ research title</i>	<i>Name of Article</i>	<i>No. issue and year</i>
Tatiana Sviridova	April ENQA Forum: key	№04/2015

	issues	
Tatiana Bairampas	ESG: a versatile approach for e-learning and conventional learning	№03/2015
Aishat Temirova, Erika Soboleva	Interview with Colin Tück, EQAR Director “Independence is the key criterion”	№01-02/2016
Tatiana Sviridova	Independence of quality assurance agencies: European conception	№01-02/2016
Tatiana Bairampas	Interview with Pdraig Walsh, Chief Executive of the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and former ENQA President “Quality assurance in education becomes more transparent”	№04/2017
Tatiana Bairampas	Interview with Erika Soboleva, AKKORK Director General “International quality assurance agencies share a unified conception of quality in higher education”	№03/2017
	Quality assurance: participation of interested parties	№02/2018
Larisa Kalinina	Students’ involvement in independent quality assurance in higher education	№02/2018

**5. Moreover,** AKKORK is a non-EU member of the DEQAR project and is about to list the accredited programmes in DEQAR.

## 9. Compliance with European Standards and Guidelines (Part 3)

### ESG 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance.

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

AKKORK mission is available on the main page of the website <http://www.akkork.ru/e/>.

According to the aims set in AKKORK Statutes (Annex 1) AKKORK is offering several procedures to Russian and international HEI (Point 5 and 6 of this report). Such as: independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level, independent evaluation of education quality for professional - public programme accreditation, international accreditation of education programmes, international e-learning accreditation, Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation (IQAS). For each procedure there is a section on the website describing the aims and objectives, steps of the procedure. Unfortunately, not all the procedures are in demand among the HEI with which AKKORK works. The most popular are: independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level, independent evaluation of education quality for professional - public programme accreditation and international accreditation of education programmes. This can be explained by the fact that other procedures are more expensive<sup>11</sup> and require more efforts from the side of the university. The most important here are efforts of the University. In Russia there as is already written in this report exist 3 types of accreditation: state, professional-public and international and independent evaluation of education quality. So the university decide by themselves what is better for them in terms of fit for purpose. State accreditation- purpose is to receive right to issue diploma of state form which is recognized everywhere. Professional-public accreditation – receive confirmation that they correspond to existing professional standards. International accreditation - receive confirmation that they correspond to international standards. Additionally it is worth mentioning that the e-learning accreditation and IQAS are the procedures that offer the assessment of aspects which are still under development in Russia.

In independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level and international accreditation of education programmes participate academic reviewer, reviewer from employer's side and an international reviewer. The decision is made by AKKORK International Accreditation Council

In independent evaluation of education quality for professional - public programme accreditation participate academic reviewer, reviewer from employer's side and a student. The accreditation decision is made by Accreditation council of the employers union- AKKORK partner in this procedure.

In AKKORK Supervisory Board, Advisory Council and International Accreditation Council there are members of Russian and international academic

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<sup>11</sup> This is the information, which is gathered during the direct talks with the university clients while promoting AKKORK services and is discussed often during the staff meetings (See about staff meetings Internal Regulations Annex 4).

community, the employers' community and the student community. This information is located on the AKKORK website. <http://www.akkork.ru/e/about/Structure/>

Initially AKKORK methodologies design was done with the involvement of the stakeholders in 2005-2006. When there was a decision made by Advisory Council that this is the time to align the AKKORK criteria to ESG 2015 there was sent out a request to some universities, employer's associations for consultation. In this request the stakeholders were to send their point of view of whether the suggested methodology is in line with Russian legislation and can be used for assessment of Russian Universities or not. The overall reply was yes, the methodology is useful and can be applied.

***Progress since last review: AKKORK has formed International Accreditation Council. AKKORK in every procedure includes students.***

***Documents:***

Annex 1 AKKORK Statutes

Annex 4 AKKORK Internal Regulations

**ESG 3.2 Official status.**

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

AKKORK is an autonomous non-profit organization that carries out independent assessment of education quality in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation. AKKORK's activities are recognized by authorities of the Russian Federation, as confirmed with the following documents:

- AKKORK's Statutes (Annex 1), registered by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation.

AKKORK's partners include:

- Public organization of employers «OPORA ROSSII»
- Association of Russian Managers
- Union of employers in the sphere of Electroenergetics
- Union of employers in the sphere of IT
- Education and methodic association of university polytechnic education
- Education and methodic association in the field of management
- Technical Committee on standardization 461 «Informational and communication technologies in education (ICTE)»

The various list of partners shows that AKKORK is collaborating with different stakeholders in Russia. With some of the AKKORK works in terms of reviewers recommendation, such as Education and methodic association of university polytechnic education, Education and methodic association in the field of management. With some of them jointly conducts procedures of professional public accreditation such as Association of Russian Managers, Union of employers in the sphere of Electroenergetics, Union of employers in the sphere of IT, etc.

AKKORK interacts with state administration bodies in the following main directions:

- In accordance with current legislation, results of independent assessment of education quality, carried out by AKKORK, are may be considered in the course of state accreditation of educational institutions by the Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science. For instance it was the case with professional-public and international accreditation procedure of Rostov State Economic University (more than 20 000 students) when before the State accreditation procedure the university decided to undergo the professional-public and international accreditation in AKKORK in order to later present the results for consideration of the state reviewers.

- - Joint organization of the conferences, for instance UNESCO conference organized together with Rosakkredagentstvo in 2018.

- Participation in events related to QA in Russian Parliament (States Duma).

In addition, under current legislation, the agency 'AKKORK', which is an independent organization, performs a function of non-governmental control of education quality in all forms mentioned by the law: independent assessment of education quality, public accreditation, as well as professional - public accreditation (as an organization authorized by employers). (See Point 5 and 6 of this SAR).

### ***Documents:***

Annex 1 AKKORK Statutes

### **ESG 3.3 Independence.**

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

The independence of AKKORK's activities is guaranteed both at the level of national legislation of the Russian Federation and at the level of AKKORK's corporate rules.

Organisational independence is stipulated in:

- In accordance with Clause 1 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, it is not allowed arbitrary interference in private affairs of organizations. Thus, AKKORK, at legislative level, is protected from the influence of both public authorities and educational institutions;

- In accordance with Point 1.1 of the Articles, AKKORK is an independent organisation bearing full responsibility for its actions and decisions;

- In accordance with Clause 1 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, AKKORK's Statutes, European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education (ESG) and internal documents, AKKORK determines and carries out quality assurance procedures independently;

- In accordance with the Federal Law 'On non-profit organizations', founders of the autonomous non-profit organization 'AKKORK' are not owners of the company and shall not interfere in its operational activities.

Operational independence is stipulated in Internal Regulations (Annex 4) where in p. 3 of General provisions is said that AKKORK itself carries out operation of the agency's procedures according to the methodology defined and the nomination and appointment of external reviewers. These are undertaken independently from third parties such as higher education institutions, governments and other stakeholders.

Independence of the formal outcomes is guaranteed by the 2 steps decision making process. First the review reports are submitted to the Advisory Council and then after approval to the International Accreditation Council. According to the Regulations of these

councils their members should not coincide.

In addition, the guarantee of AKKORK's independence in determining and carrying out quality assurance procedures is public nature of its activities, that is reflected in holding conferences and seminars and publishing materials, in which techniques and tools for elaborating and carrying out quality assurance procedures are disclosed publicly.

In case of any abusive or dependent behavior of reviewers in carrying out quality assurance procedures, the agency publishes the information about these reviewers in so-called 'black list' on AKKORK's website. The appointment of reviewers is an important aspect in AKKORK's activities. To that end, the selection and appointment of reviewers is made on the basis of strict criteria stipulated in the section dedicated to selection, training and work of reviewers in public control and quality assessment for educational services provided by higher education institutions.

AKKORK implements a policy of the participation in procedures of education quality assessment and quality assurance with different groups of interested parties: employers, students, state bodies, and public organizations.

Selected reviewers are trained for precise understanding of goals and objectives of education quality assessment procedures. At the end of training, AKKORK issues relevant certificates for reviewers.

Reviewers have different education, gender, nationality, live in different geographical locations, being specialists in various fields of human knowledge. See Annex 5 Regulations on work with Reviewers.

AKKORK also allows persons with disabilities to work as reviewers.

To guarantee the quality of reviewers' work, the agency has developed the Guidelines for Reviewers (Annex 6). After having finished all actions and procedures stipulated in AKKORK's standards and rules, reviewers issue a review report that is passed to project manager.

Project manager supervises timely preparation and quality of review reports and summarizes results for making a full report for the Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council considers and approves full reports. The chairman of the Advisory Council undersigns the document.

Above-listed order of consents and approvals of results of education quality assessment and education quality assurance determines AKKORK's responsibilities for results of procedures for education quality assessment and education quality assurance.

***Documents:***

Annex 4 Internal Regulations

Annex 5 Regulations on work with Reviewers

Annex 6 Guidelines for Reviewers

Annex 7 International Accreditation Council Regulations

Annex 8 Advisory Council Regulations

**ESG 3.4 Thematic Analysis.**

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

Due to rapid changes in Russian education legislation it is impossible to detect any trend within one year. Starting from 2015 AKKORK decided to publish thematic analysis every three years. The three different thematic analyses were published in 2018. Then AKKORK director-general decided to stipulate it in Annex 4 AKKORK Internal Regulations. First on theme of employer participation in the educational programme



realization, second on usage of e-learning platform and tools and third on students' participation in the educational programme realization. They are published on AKKORK website. <http://www.akkork.ru/e/about/documents/> The procedure of thematic analysis publication is the following. At the end of the year the Director – General, his deputies and employees involved in the project work gather together and discuss the outcomes of the year. Based on the results of the years procedures and reviewers' recommendations are defined the theme for highlighting in the annual report. After this if a theme continues to be in place after 3 years a thematic analysis is published. Thematic analysis is written based on the review reports.

The first theme is based on the urgency of correlation of the study programmes with the demands of the labor market and participation of the employers in the programme realization. These were the most common reviewers recommendations.

The second theme is about necessity to use e-learning tools in students education, especially in the era of generation Z and digital economics.

The third theme is about students' participation in the educational programme realization which is very important issue in Russia, and may be not only in Russia since the student is regarded as a person who knows little.

Moreover, to provide objective information about processes and results of its activities to as wide range of interested parties as possible, AKKORK regularly publishes materials that contain the information about made reviews and research in the Russian mass-media. In particular, the all-Russian magazine 'Kachestvo Obrazovaniya' ([www.edu-quality.ru](http://www.edu-quality.ru)) has become a platform for enlightening agency's activities, events and feedback in regard to agency's work. See Points 4 and 8 of the present report for the selection of articles.

#### ***Documents:***

Annex 4 AKKORK Internal Regulations

### **ESG 3.5 Resources.**

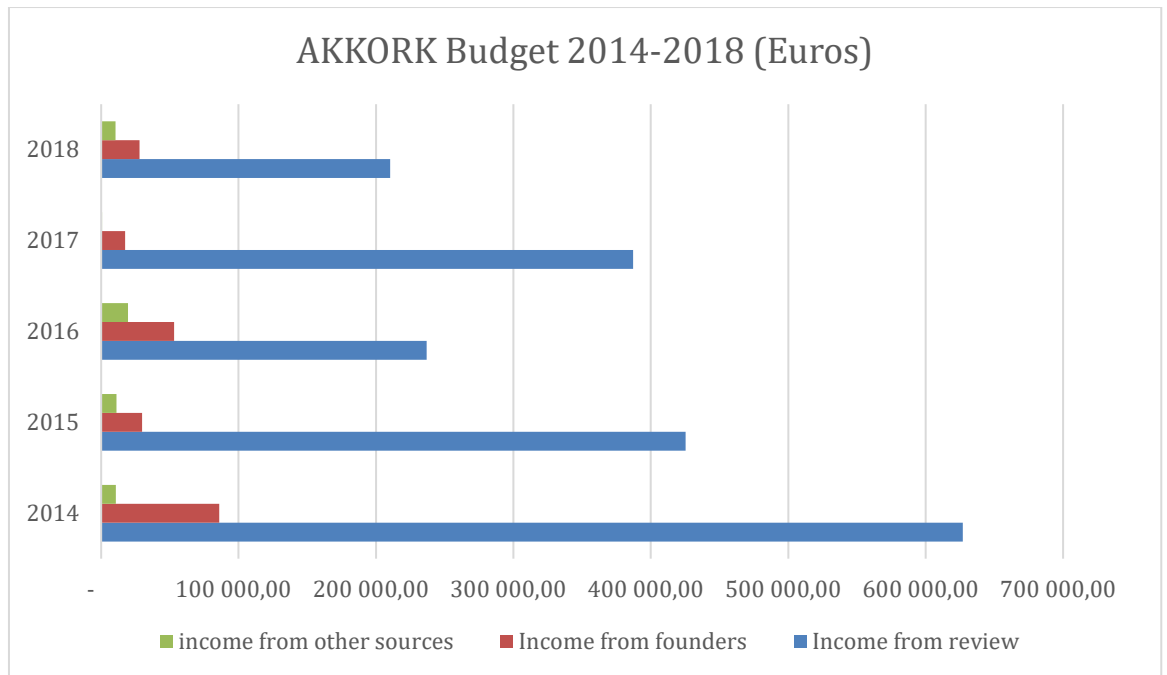
Standard: Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

In accordance with the Statutes, AKKORK operates on the basis of self-financing and self-sufficiency. AKKORK's financing is ensured with funding from agency's core activities: procedures of independent external quality assessment and research activities. About 85% of AKKORK's revenues represent the income derived from carrying out independent quality review and research<sup>12</sup>, and about 15% – funds received from founding members and other income sources<sup>13</sup> (See Annex 2 AKKORK Budget). The funds received from the founding members that are in money form are as additional support for the agency which it spends on additional training of staff and equipment of office. Also the founders help AKKORK in non-material form such as give for rent AKKORK the existing premises. The rental payment for AKKORK is twice lower than the average rental payment for such type of office. The fact that in budget the income is the same as the expenses is due to the fact that AKKORK due to Russian legislation as a non-profit organization can't distribute any profit among founders, employees. So all the surplus that AKKORK has is reinvested in some activities.

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<sup>12</sup> There was no research projects in 2014-2018. Before 2014 we had several research projects which were successfully finished.

<sup>13</sup> By other income sources, we mean, for instance, conducting of the fee paying seminars in the universities.



**Diagram 1.** AKKORK Budget 2014-2018 (Euros)

As to the adaptation to fluctuations of the budget the deficit is provided from the founders when needed.

Agency's revenues are reinvested in the organisation, in particular spent on measures to ensure external quality assurance: between years 2014 and 2018, using funds coming from procedures of independent external quality assessment, AKKORK has carried out:

- Participation more than 7 scientific conferences concerning the education quality assurance;
- Carrying out more than 5 seminars concerning further training of AKKORK's reviewers;
- Carrying out of works for improving and developing methods for assessing higher education quality (in particular, there have been revised standards and criteria of the independent external quality assessment, used by AKKORK according to ESG 2015).

To ensure the efficiency of agency's activities, it has been created a team of professionals, unified into a structure described in details in Chapters 4 and 7 of this Report. AKKORK puts an emphasis on shaping a pool of reviewers certified by the agency: agency's database of reviewers is being continuously expanded by involving representatives of academic community, employers and students, specialists in education quality assessment and education quality assurance, international reviewers in all mentioned fields. Principles for selecting reviewers correspond to the objective to enable the creation of competent reviewer's panels for carrying out the assessment of education programs for whole range of education spheres.

Agency's full-time staff composition is sufficient for the current activities and is determined according to current needs of the organization to ensure the efficiency of its activities. In addition, after AKKORK's special training, it has been created a pool of specialists (10 persons), from which the agency can involve part-time project managers for periods of acute increase in the demand for AKKORK's services related to independent external assessment of education quality.

The price for the AKKORK services is determined individually based on the

requests from the HEI (it depends on the location of the HEI, amount of programmes, size of the HEI in case of institutional accreditation).

***Documents:***

Annex 2 AKKORK Budget

**ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct**

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

AKKORK's quality policy has been developed in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education (ESG), as well as the legislation of the Russian Federation in the sphere of education. Basic principles include: openness, transparency and objectivity. Quality policy is available on agency's website in English and Russian (<http://www.akkork.ru/e/about/documents/>).

AKKORK's mission and goals of quality assurance are reflected in the following processes of agency's work:

- Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level
- Independent evaluation of education quality for professional - public programme accreditation
- International accreditation of education programmes
- International e-learning accreditation
- Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation (IQAS)

The AKKORK work is reflected in the list of the agency's projects (<http://www.akkork.ru/r/projects/>).

To prevent conflicts of interest in the work of external reviewers, the agency applies a certain system for the settlement of conflicts of interest and disagreements in carrying out education quality assurance. This system overlooks first of all absence of mutual projects among the assessed programme or university representatives and secondly all the interaction in the framework of the assessment is carried out through the project manager. This, from our point of view, helps to prevent and eliminate any disagreements and conflict of interest. In accordance with this system, reviewers are obliged to officially inform AKKORK about all events or circumstances that may interfere with efficient performance of their liabilities, as well as to formally declare their independence by completing and signing a form confirming reviewer's independence.

Reviewers, included in panel, shall notify AKKORK of possible conflicts of interest with their participation in the assessment of higher education institutions in writing. Reviewer's notification of possible conflicts does not mean that his/her candidature is automatically rejected. AKKORK may approve reviewer's candidature, if it comes to a conclusion that there is no conflict.

Higher education institutions may disagree with preliminary composition of reviewers' groups, presented by AKKORK, either because of possible conflicts of interest with any of reviewers or because of doubts whether reviewers' level corresponds to the level of disciplines being under the assessment. In this case, institutions shall submit their comments to the agency in writing and discuss them with AKKORK. Final decision in regard to the composition of reviewer panels is made by AKKORK Director-General.

If any conflict of interest already exists or occurs during any procedure, reviewers must notify project manager, who shall decide, what measures should be taken to resolve such a conflict.

All signed forms – confirmations of reviewers' independence – are stored in AKKORK. All cases of conflicts of interest and disagreements are registered.

AKKORK independently carries out all stages of the procedure of education quality assessment without transferring it to any other parties.

For purposes of procedures for internal quality assurance, the agency applies mechanisms of internal and external feedback to take into account opinions of employees, reviewers and various interested parties when shaping agency's development strategy and organization of its activities.

To ensure internal feedback, it is used regular meeting with employees, as well as interviews with reviewers concerning review results. On those meetings are discussed work of the employees, the plans for self-development, projects results, plans for future development. Of course, since the staff of AKKORK is not big, these meetings are always very productive. If there is a problem, it is solved very quickly. One of the rules, for instance is that each AKKORK new employee should read and understand the ESG and then discuss with the Director on his/her understanding.

External feedback is ensured by using such tools as periodic questioning of students and employers, as well as two-stage questioning of representatives of education institutions undergoing external assessment by AKKORK: on the basis of on-site visits, representatives of education institutions are offered to answer questions about the professionalism of reviewers and efficiency of their work, and after the approval of final reports – about the compliance of assessment procedure results with set goals and objectives.

Questioning data are systematically analysed at the end of each year, taken into account in making managerial decisions and used in designing agency's development strategy, as well as in the preparation of analytical reports.

In order to avoid any conflict of interest between the members of the staff and members of AKKORK bodies with regard to the reviews they are involved in/decide about a special mechanism is introduced, once becoming a staff member or the member of any AKKORK body a person sign a declaration on independence. This refers to any person who becomes the member of AKKORK bodies and staff. If the AKKORK reviewers become the members of AKKORK bodies they can still be reviewers in projects if considered necessary. In this case during the bodies operation they abstain from voting in case the decision is made on review they were involved in.

All the described above is used in all procedures carried out by AKKORK.

***Documents:***

Annex 4 AKKORK Internal Regulations

Quality policy

**ESG 3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies.**

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

According to Russian legislation the external review of AKKORK is not mandatory. AKKORK is doing this activity based on its own voluntary decision in order to be fully embedded in the sphere of QA and to confirm the independence of its procedures and their transparency. AKKORK has undergone the first ENQA review in

2014, so the current ENQA review in 2019 is the second for AKKORK.

AKKORK being an ENQA member since 2014 has updated its Internal Regulations (Annex 4) and based on them is undergoing the review in ENQA in 2019. AKKORK is also listed in EQAR. As it is written there AKKORK should undergo external assessment every five years.

The self assessment exercise and the procedure as a whole will help AKKORK to understand its achievements and areas for future development. In case of positive decision AKKORK will continue to be part of European QA agencies family, to help Russian Universities to build their programmes and IQAS upon ESG.

***Documents:***

Annex 4 AKKORK Internal Regulations

## 10. Compliance with European Standards and Guidelines (Part 2)

### ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance.

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

The assessment of internal quality assurance system of educational institutions is a required element of external assessment, carried out by AKKORK, at both institutional and program level, and is based on the analysis of self-evaluation reports of educational programs and/or educational institutions, documents related to internal quality assurance, provided by educational institutions, and results of on-site visits. As explained earlier in this self-assessment report the AKKORK criteria for independent evaluation of education quality and those ones used for professional-public accreditation procedure are the same. To internal QA is related the following criteria and indicators:

**Table 10 Correspondence between ESG criteria and AKKORK criteria**

ESG Criteria	AKKORK Criteria for Independent evaluation of educations quality and for professional-public accreditation	International E-learning accreditation	Internal Quality Assurance System Accreditation
1.1 Policy for quality assurance	<p>Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE. Criterion 1. STRATEGY, AIMS AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Internal monitoring results of educational quality are generalized and brought to the notice of all concerned, they are also taken into account while updating education programme</p> <p>There is an independent structure subdivision (or employee/employees of educational</p>	<p><i>Area 1 – Learning / Institutional Context Criterion 1.1 – Strategy and e-Learning Sub-criterion 1.1.3.</i></p> <p>Quality procedures relating to e-learning and technology-enhanced learning (TEL), are in place, and are at least as stringent as those applied to 'traditional' learning</p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 1.1.7.</i></p> <p>Internal stakeholders are represented within decision-making structures of the institution, and particularly those</p>	<p>ISO 9001-2015</p> <p>4.4.Scope and processes of the quality management system.</p> <p>5. Leadership.</p> <p>5.3.Organizational roles, responsibilities and authorities.</p> <p>6.1.Planning risks and opportunities action. 6.2. Quality objectives and planning to achieve them. 6.3.Planning of changes.</p> <p>EFQM Criterion 1 Leadership</p>

ESG Criteria	AKKORK Criteria for Independent evaluation of educations quality and for professional-public accreditation	International E-learning accreditation	Internal Quality Assurance System Accreditation
	organisation, whose duty is to monitor constantly the educational quality)	related to ICT policy.	
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	<p>Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE.</p> <p>Criterion 1. STRATEGY, AIMS AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT</p> <p>There is a approval, analysis and updating procedure of offered programme with involvement of employers</p> <p>Coherence of programme's goals with the goals and tasks of professional activity of the programme's graduate.</p> <p>Criterion 2. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE PROGRAM</p> <p>Programme's content is aimed at competence formation and considers opinion of the parties concerned: state, regional labour markets, social partners, students.</p> <p>Prove that all the</p>	<p><i>Area 2. 2 – Learning Resources</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 2.3 - University Staff</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 2.3.1.</i></p> <p>Course Design and Delivery Guidelines are available for relevant staff</p> <p><i>Area 1 – Learning / Institutional Context</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 1.3 – Openness to the Community</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 1.3.2.</i></p> <p>Analysis and review of the potential needs within the community and labour market for technology supported learning are regularly carried out.</p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 1.3.3.</i></p> <p>Coherence between the Institutional objectives/mission and needs/ demand of the community/market</p>	<p>ISO 9001-2015</p> <p>8. Activities at the stages of the life cycle of products and services</p> <p>EFQM</p> <p>Criterion 5 Processes</p> <p>Criterion 6. Customer Results</p>

ESG Criteria	AKKORK Criteria for Independent evaluation of educations quality and for professional-public accreditation	International E-learning accreditation	Internal Quality Assurance System Accreditation
	disciplines of the programme are aimed at formation of competences of a graduate (provide, if necessary, the matrix of competencies)	in which the institution operates is periodically checked by governing body	
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	<p>Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE. Criterion 2. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE PROGRAM</p> <p>Describe the processes of the main forms of students' progress monitoring. How does the technology of performance monitoring and a mid-term attestation allow to evaluate the forming competences?</p> <p>Criterion 10. STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT</p> <p>How do students participate in the programme management (including through the bodies of the student government, participation in monitoring and others.). Please list documents regulating these processes</p>	<p><i>Area 2 – Learning Resources</i>  <i>Criterion 2.2 – Students</i>  <i>Sub-criterion 2.2.5.</i>  Students evaluation on the learning experience is collected and used for improving the eLearning experience.</p> <p><i>Area 3 – Learning Processes</i>  <i>Criterion 3.1 – Quality of the Offer</i>  <i>Sub-criterion 3.1.6.</i>  Tools and procedures for evaluation of the outcomes of the learning process-including using data collected from stakeholders and graduates- are taken into consideration for improving the quality of the offer</p> <p><i>Area 3 – Learning Processes</i>  <i>Criterion 3.2 – Assessment of</i></p>	<p>ISO 9001-2015</p> <p>8. Activities at the stages of the life cycle of products and services</p> <p>EFQM</p> <p>Criterion 5 Processes</p> <p>Criterion 6. Customer Results</p>



ESG Criteria	AKKORK Criteria for Independent evaluation of educations quality and for professional-public accreditation	International E-learning accreditation	Internal Quality Assurance System Accreditation
		<p><i>Learning</i>  <i>Sub-criterion 3.2.2</i>            Continuous self-assessment opportunities are made available to students to allow them to reflect on their learning experience (promoting self-development initiatives).</p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 3.2.7.</i>            An efficient and fair system for grievances from assessment results is in place.</p>	
1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	<p>Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE. Criterion 12. CAREER GUIDANCE AND APPLICANTS' PREPARATION</p> <p>How system of identifying and attracting the most prepared persons to education is organized?</p> <p>Criterion 2. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE PROGRAM</p> <p>Describe the processes of the main forms of students' progress monitoring.</p>	<p><i>Area 1 – Learning / Institutional Context</i>  <i>Criterion 1.3 – Openness to the Community</i>  <i>Sub-criterion 1.3.4.</i>            eLearning offerings are covered by an equivalent credit/module system to the university's other offerings.</p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 1.3.7.</i>            Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure transparency and recognition of all the institution's credits</p>	<p>ISO 9001-2015            8. Activities at the stages of the life cycle of products and services</p> <p>EFQM            Criterion 5            Processes</p>

ESG Criteria	AKKORK Criteria for Independent evaluation of educations quality and for professional-public accreditation	International E-learning accreditation	Internal Quality Assurance System Accreditation
	<p>How does the technology of performance monitoring and a mid-term attestation allow to evaluate the forming competences?</p> <p>Criterion 1. STRATEGY, AIMS AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Programme management system (list and composition of sub-departments, functions, official duties and distribution of areas of responsibility of different subdivisions) is effective.</p>	<p>and qualifications</p> <p><i>Area 2 – Learning Resources</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 2.2 – Students</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 2.2.4.</i></p> <p>Students’ progress in eLearning is monitored (through continuous assessment) and made available to students</p> <p><i>Area 3 – Learning Processes</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 3.1 – Quality of the Offer</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 3.1.3.</i></p> <p>Learning opportunities include a clear statement/description of intended learning outcomes, learning content, expectations of learner activities, opportunities for interaction, and assessment methods</p> <p><i>Area 3 – Learning Processes</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 3.2 – Assessment of Learning</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 3.2.1</i></p> <p>Both formative and summative</p>	

ESG Criteria	AKKORK Criteria for Independent evaluation of educations quality and for professional-public accreditation	International E-learning accreditation	Internal Quality Assurance System Accreditation
		assessment are used.	
1.5 Teaching staff	<p>Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE.</p> <p>Criterion 5. TEACHING STAFF</p> <p>Describe the system of internal monitoring of activity of faculty and administrative and managerial staff, its relationship with the motivational system. Give examples of legal acts regulating the process.</p> <p>Assess how the system of internal monitoring of faculty activities allows to estimate the potential of faculty development (professors' ambition for perfection and self-development, i.e. by integration into the work of educational, research and innovation activities)</p>	<p><i>Area 2 – Learning Resources</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 2.3 - University Staff</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 2.3.4.</i></p> <p>It is ensured that all faculty members are qualified in information technologies by providing continuous possibilities and incentives for further qualification and development</p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 2.3.5.</i></p> <p>All staff involved in course design and teaching hold regular academic titles / positions within the university structure.</p> <p><i>Area 3 – Learning Processes</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 3.3 – Human Resource Development</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 3.3.1.</i></p> <p>Teaching staff needs analysis are regularly implemented through staff competence reviews or self-assessment processes.</p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 3.3.2.</i></p> <p>Training services and materials (e.g. Guidelines) for the</p>	<p>ISO 9001-2015</p> <p>8.5 Production and provision of services</p> <p>EFQM</p> <p>Criterion 3 People</p>

ESG Criteria	AKKORK Criteria for Independent evaluation of educations quality and for professional-public accreditation	International E-learning accreditation	Internal Quality Assurance System Accreditation
		<p>staff in charge of learner's services are available in order to support them (if required) in the process of moving from conventional teaching to (fully or partially) on-line teaching.</p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 3.3.4.</i> All staff responsible for course design undergo processes of peer-learning and review, evidenced through academic resources for attendance to conferences and activity in academic publications.</p>	
1.6 Learning resources and student support	Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE. Criterion 6. MATERIAL AND TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THE PROGRAMME	Area 2 – Learning Resources Criterion 2.1 – Resources for Learning	ISO 9001-2015 8.5 Production and provision of services  EFQM Criterion 4 Partnership and Resources
1.7 Information management	Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE. Criterion 1. STRATEGY, AIMS AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT  The programme's	<i>Area 2 – Learning Resources</i> <i>Criterion 2.1 – Resources for Learning</i> <i>Sub-criterion 2.1.5.</i> Metrics on students' usage of learning resources are	ISO 9001-2015 9.1. Monitoring, management, analysis and evaluation. 9.2. Internal audit  EFQM

ESG Criteria	AKKORK Criteria for Independent evaluation of educations quality and for professional-public accreditation	International E-learning accreditation	Internal Quality Assurance System Accreditation
	<p>Heads fulfil programme’s analysis, identify its strengths, and define programme’s promotion tactics, its topicality and unique advantages in presentation in comparison with the competition.</p> <p>Availability of current key indicators system of subdivisions effectiveness, involved into programme’s realization</p> <p>Criterion 5. TEACHING STAFF</p> <p>Criterion 10. STUDENTS’ PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>collected, and made available to quality and course review procedures.</p> <p><i>Area 3 – Learning Processes</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 3.1 – Quality of the Offer</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 3.1.6.</i></p> <p>Tools and procedures for evaluation of the outcomes of the learning process-including using data collected from stakeholders and graduates- are taken into consideration for improving the quality of the offer</p>	<p>Criterion 2 Strategy</p>
1.8 Public information	<p>Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE.</p> <p>Criterion 1. STRATEGY, AIMS AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Informational availability of documented goals of the programme to all concerned.</p>	<p><i>Area 1 – Learning / Institutional Context</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 1.1 – Strategy and e-Learning</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 1.1.4.</i></p> <p>Institution has procedures in place to ensure the visibility and transparency of the provision, methods, tools and results of eLearning and TEL, both to students, as well as to the wider</p>	<p>ISO 9001-2015</p> <p>8.5 Production and provision of services</p> <p>EFQM</p> <p>Criterion 1 Leadership</p> <p>Criterion 5. Processes</p>

ESG Criteria	AKKORK Criteria for Independent evaluation of educations quality and for professional-public accreditation	International E-learning accreditation	Internal Quality Assurance System Accreditation
		academic community.	
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	<p>Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE.</p> <p>Criterion 1. STRATEGY, AIMS AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Criterion 3. TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS</p> <p>How is the interaction of various departments and departments coordinated in the development and actualization of teaching materials? The mechanism of teaching materials actualization is described taking into account changing conditions in the federal, regional and local labour markets and internal monitoring of the quality of education</p>	<p><i>Area 2. 2 – Learning Resources</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 2.3 - University Staff</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 2.3.1.</i></p> <p>Course Design and Delivery Guidelines are available for relevant staff</p>	<p>ISO 9001-2015</p> <p>8.7.Nonconformity and corrective actions. Continual improvement.</p> <p>9.1. Monitoring, management, analysis and evaluation. 9.2. Internal audit</p> <p>EFQM Criteria in the Results block</p>
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	<p>Part 1. EDUCATION QUALITY</p> <p>Criterion 1. DEMAND FOR THE GRADUATES OF THE PROGRAMME ON THE FEDERAL AND REGIONAL LABOUR MARKETS</p>	<p><i>Area 2. 2 – Learning Resources</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 2.3 - University Staff</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 2.3.1.</i></p> <p>Course Design and Delivery Guidelines are available for relevant staff</p>	<p>EFQM Criterion 1 Leadership</p>

<b>ESG Criteria</b>	<b>AKKORK Criteria for Independent evaluation of educations quality and for professional-public accreditation</b>	<b>International learning accreditation</b>	<b>E- Internal Quality Assurance System Accreditation</b>
	Share of educational programme's graduates, who successfully passed external evaluation of qualifications from the total amount of graduates (point out, who conducted evaluation) Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE. Criterion 1. STRATEGY, AIMS AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT		

Elaborated indicators enable reviewers to assess the completeness, transparency and efficiency of quality assurance system, as well as processes of internal monitoring and assessment of quality assurance system. Reviewers also determine how internal quality system ensures the achievement of goals outlined in development strategies of educational institutions.

The basis for such division of criteria into two part was the fact that the main emphasis in AKKORK methodology is put to the achievement of learning outcomes. As a support to this is the second part of the criteria quality assurance of the programme, i.e. all the resources that HEI has should be used to facilitate achievement by students of the intended learning outcomes. The internal quality assurance is analysed in all AKKORK criteria.

For instance, in Part 2. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE. Criterion 1. STRATEGY, AIMS AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT there are the following indicators: There is an independent structure subdivision (or employee/employees of educational organisation, whose duty is to monitor constantly the educational quality)

Internal monitoring results of educational quality are generalized and brought to the notice of all concerned, they are also taken into account while updating education programme.

The international accreditation is carried out according to the standards of partner agencies. All the AKKORK partners (FIBAA, ZEvA, DEVA-AAC) are current members of ENQA, this means that the correlation of their standards to ESG is confirmed.

The IQAS accreditation is carried out based on 4 main set of standards, ESG, UNIQUe, ISO 9001-2015 and EFQM.

In general the internal quality assurance systems are being revised now in Russia according to the ESG. This is also after the university undergoes the procedures in

AKKORK. Since this is the time when HEI reflect on what is going on inside of it.

***Documents:***

Annex 10 Guidelines for Educational organization

**ESG Standard 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose.**

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

Procedures and criteria of quality assessment and accreditation, used by AKKORK, are pre-determined and published (<http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/>); when elaborating these procedures, opinions of educational institutions, student organizations, employers, public organizations, and education authorities have been taken into account. All the AKKORK criteria were updated based on the ESG 2015 with the respective consultations with the stakeholders. There was a decision made by Advisory Council that this is the time to align the AKKORK criteria to ESG 2015, after the criteria was prepared by the AKKORK the material was sent out a request to some universities, employer's associations for consultation. In this request the stakeholders were to send their point of view of whether the suggested methodology is in line with Russian legislation and can be used for assessment of Russian Universities or not. The overall reply was yes, the methodology is useful and can be applied. Being based on ESG means that AKKORK criteria and indicators do not have the threshold requirements. That allows them to be flexible for any kind of institutions and programmes. The universities based on the results of the questionnaires value the assessment of AKKORK experts and even if in the beginning the dean, for instance was against the procedure, at the end we receive positive feedback from him (Letter from Vladimir Halin, Dean of the Faculty from Saint-Petersburg State University). AKKORK collects the follow-up reports from HEIs in case of conditional accreditation (this is made part of contract with HEI) in the period stipulated by the AKKORK International Accreditation Council, in case of full accreditation when HEI turn to AKKORK for the second time to evaluate the same programme (this is made part of contract with HEI).

As to the effectiveness and use of the procedures. We consider that programme procedures for sure work very well and are in demand. Considering the two institutional procedures, this is as it was written earlier the problem of not yet fully developed (meaning in every university) the e-learning and IQAS for assessment.

***Documents:***

Annex 10 Guidelines for Educational organization

**ESG Standard 2.3 Implementing processes.**

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

- a self-assessment or equivalent
- an external assessment normally including a site visit
- a report resulting from the external assessment
- a consistent follow-up



The steps for the reviews are defined for each procedure on the website The Regulations on Reviewers work and Regulations for the HEI - determines the procedure and timeframe for performing follow-up procedures. The criteria for each procedure is posted on the website. (<http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/>).

Procedures for education quality assessment are based on internal criteria, developed by the agency, and include:

- Self-assessment of relevant education institution;
- Desk analysis of self-examination reports;
- Visiting relevant education institution by AKKORK's reviewers;
- Preliminary reports;
- Final reports;
- Follow-up in case of conditional accreditation. In case of conditional accreditation in the certain period stipulated by AKKORK International Accreditation Council or Accreditation Council of employer's association the University submits the follow-up report in a form of a table and supporting documents. That is sent to reviewers who did the assessment for a feedback. If the reviewers consider the conditions fulfilled the accreditation stays with the University. If the reviewers consider the conditions not fulfilled the accreditation is withdrawn.

When creating reviewer's panels, AKKORK executing the ENQA panel recommendation from the previous review pays particular attention to the participation of representatives of students and employers, as well as international reviewers. The agency develops the cooperation with students' unions, employers' associations and foreign accreditation agencies. One of results of this cooperation is the involvement of reviewers from communities of: students, entrepreneurs, international specialists in QA upon recommendations of partners. AKKORK uses four reviewers in its evaluations, evaluation reports are published under the link <http://www.akkork.ru/e/projects/>.

Criteria for decisions are placed on AKKORK website

AKKORK collects the follow-up reports from HEIs in case of conditional accreditation (this is made part of contract with HEI) in the period stipulated by the AKKORK International Accreditation Council or Accreditation Council of Employer's association. In case of full accreditation when HEI turn to AKKORK for the second time to evaluate the same programme the presentation of the follow-up is made part of contract with HEI.

The processes that AKKORK is doing are now become quite familiar to the universities all over Russia which makes it easier for AKKORK to work. Still the understanding of follow-up report in case of full accreditation is not there. This also happens due to the fact that the State accreditation procedure bears "yes" or "no" character.

#### ***Documents:***

Annex 10 Guidelines for Educational organization

### **ESG 2.4 Peer-review experts.**

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

Procedures of AKKORK's education audit comply with its purpose, since their validity, reliability and availability are guaranteed with the use of common rules of external quality evaluation, consideration of internal quality assurance, rules of selecting, training and certificating reviewers, regular trainings, participation of reviewers from students and employers communities, as well as international reviewers.

AKKORK has a special mechanism of conflict of interest solving. All the work with reviewers is described in a Regulations on work with Reviewers (Annex 5). AKKORK invites international reviewers to participate in its procedures. After ENQA review in 2014-2015 the international reviewer and reviewer from student community participate in every procedure for independent evaluation of education quality, international accreditation conducted by AKKORK. AKKORK uses four reviewers in its evaluations, evaluation reports are published under the link <http://www.akkork.ru/e/projects/>.

When performing the candidate reviewers selection procedure, it is necessary to carry out a number of activities: questionnaires and/or interviews. The procedure described below is applied to every reviewer including students.

Questionnaires are performed by correspondence. As a result of questionnaires, the reviewer provides individual information, bearing rather formal character (name, address, marital status, age, educational background, professional experience, information about the key knowledge and skills in the field of educational assessment; information about the motives to work in the field of educational expertise, information on guarantors).

Interviewing assumes face-to-face meeting of the candidate reviewer with the project manager (head). The main purpose of the interview - to get an idea about reviewer's demeanor, personal qualities, intelligence, sense of responsibility and communication skills.

Training is organized for approved candidate reviewers, during which reviewers are familiarized with the examination methodology, the examination technique, criteria, indicators, and gain the skills to fill the reviewer report.

Candidate reviewers, who have successfully completed the training, participate in a "pilot" project, and after successful completion of a "pilot project" receive Reviewer's certificate, confirming that they are AKKORK reviewers.

AKKORK database is gradually extended. Now it amount to 300 people in it. According to needs of AKKORK are conducted the seminars for reviewers. The Reviewer certificate is issued only for a period of two years and then needs to be renewed. The reviewers are selected to participate in the assessment according to their experience in the field of accredited programme and/or institution.

The AKKORK still has problems in finding the reviewers from employers' side. Taking into consideration that they do not understand why they should be a reviewer. With explanations of AKKORK they would often change the decision.

***Documents:***

Annex 5 Regulations on work with Reviewers

**ESG 2.5 Criteria for outcomes.**

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

Initially there were only Russian members in the AKKORK Accreditation Council. Then based on ENQA recommendations and advices from stakeholders was created the International Accreditation Council. Its members are:

- Jagannath Patil – Immediate Past President of Asia-Pacific Quality Network;
- Karl Donnert – Director of European Quality Center President of European Geographers Association EUROGEO;
- Ruben Topchyan – director of ANQA (Armenian QA agency)
- Patricia-Georgieva- ENQA Reviewer and Vice Rector Accreditation and quality control at University of agribusiness and rural development

- Mikhail Solovev - Vice-rector for networking and social partnership at Minin Nizhniy Novgorog State Pedagogical University.

Decisions of AKKORK's International Accreditation Council are based on understandable, clear and published criteria that are used in a coherent and consistent way. This is guaranteed by the criteria for making decisions and by the participation of the Director-General in every meeting of International Accreditation Council. For making decisions, there are used written review reports, considered and approved by AKKORK's Advisory Council.

Terms and criteria for decisions, are described below.

**Table 11** Terms for decisions

No	Decision	Programmes of higher education (Bachelor)	Programmes of higher education (Master)
1	Accreditation on high standards	6 years	4 years
2	Full accreditation	4 years	3 years
3	Accreditation with condition	2 years	2 years
4	Accreditation with condition	1 year	1 year
5	Refusal in accreditation		

Criteria of decision making on accreditation of the programme. The basic criterion - evaluation of education quality, is defined on the basis of the peer reviews of learning outcomes on the declared education programme.

The evaluation of education quality assurance supplements the evaluation of education quality, characterizing ability of the educational institution within the term of accreditation to support and improve education quality provided within the limits of the programme which is certified in the course of accreditation.

As a result of the review evaluation based on the indices, the rank values are established which are defined by degree of confidence of reviewers that the education programme is capable to support and improve education quality and assurance during the term of accreditation.

The positive decision on accreditation is accepted only in case the criterion of quality evaluation and each criterion of quality assurance have values 3, 4 or 5. In a case when at least one of criteria of the evaluation of education quality assurance has the evaluation 2, the decision "Refusal in accreditation" is made.

Obtaining of "Accreditations on high standards" on the education programme, i.e. obtaining the highest reviewer evaluations of education quality and assurance means that the programme considerably exceeds (threshold) standards and shows the examples of the best practice on all or separate criteria. Such education programme may be accepted for the reference.

Terms of accreditation with regard to programme accreditation were revised in 2015 after ENQA recommendation and seems to be more understandable to the universities.

Criteria for International E-learning accreditation are based on the fulfillment of mandatory criteria and other criteria. If the mandatory criteria are fulfilled and not other ones than the accreditation is granted for 3 years, if every criteria is fulfilled for 5 years. There could be also the case for conditional accreditation.

Criteria for IQAS accreditation are based on the fulfillment of each type of criteria used. Depending on how many points in ESG, UNIQUe, EFQM, ISO 9001-2015 are considered fulfilled it is written in the annex to the accreditation certificate with which criteria HEI IQAS complies, with which complies partially and with which not. The general decision on accreditation is made on majority of standards complied and terms are 3-5 years. The conditional accreditation can also be the case.

***Documents:***

Annex 10 Guidelines for Educational organization

**ESG 2.6 Reporting**

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

AKKORK publishes summary reports, consisting of brief reports. By request of the interested party can be sent full reports. A brief report contains the description of where the university is in terms of its activities, region of location, external assessment process, assessment results, main recommendations, and a full report contains all facts and information, gathered by reviewers, analysis, conclusions and recommendations of reviewers. In the reports are described the environment and competitors of the HEIs and programmes under assessment, mentioned the CV of reviewers involved.

Before sending the report to the AKKORK International Accreditation Council or Accreditation Council of Employers Association AKKORK sends the report to HEI to correct the factual errors. If the errors are detected they are corrected and the report is sent once more for approval.

After the approval of the report by the HEI it is sent to Accreditation Councils for decision. The reports are uploaded in a user – friendly PDF format on AKKORK website in the section Projects. The reports for professional public accreditation are published on a website of automated information system POA (professional-public accreditation) [www.accredpoa.ru](http://www.accredpoa.ru). On AKKORK website is given a link to that website.

**ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals.**

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

For lodging complaints and appeals there exist 2 different procedures. Complaints can be lodged to project manager in an oral form first. If project manager can't solve it, he contacts directly AKKORK Director-General. Then the Director discusses this complaint and situation that led to it with respective contact persons in the HEI. Then depending on the situations necessary actions are taken. The procedure is the same for every type of service under this review. There has been no complaints so far.

Educational institutions which disagree with conclusions of reviewers or think that they have committed some violations in performing educational audit procedures, have an opportunity to lodge appeals that will be considered by AKKORK within 3 months. The appeals procedure is described in the Guidelines for Educational organization. Also based on the ENQA recommendation the appeals procedure is posted on the website under each service AKKORK offer. For instance:

<http://akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/>

Educational organization, after receiving reviewer's report and decision on accreditation, may not agree with the conclusions of the expert team and/or with the decision of the Accrediting organization Accreditation Council. In such cases, an educational organization may submit an appeal to the accrediting organization, in writing and signed by the rector of the educational organization. Appeals in verbal form are not considered. The appeal shall specify exactly, which expert opinions (or conclusion of the Accreditation Council) not accurately reflect the situation in the educational organization. Accrediting organization, after receiving an appeal, shall notify the representatives of the educational organization of the fact that the appeal is received.

The appeal is heard by a committee composed of members of the Accrediting organization Accreditation Council and senior staff of expert organization. The committee line-up determined for each specific case by the Chairman of the Accreditation Council and the expert organization Director General. None of the committee members shall have any relation to the assessment been the subject of the dispute. The required support is provided to the committee by the expert organization employees, not related with the assessment been considered whatsoever. The committee, after completion of the work, reports its conclusions and recommendations to the Accreditation Council.

The committee shall consider procedures, performed by experts, conclusions, made by them, and to verify, do the experts' conclusions remain correct and clear in the light of the issues, stated in the appeal.

The procedure is the same for every type of service under this review. There has been no appeals so far.

***Documents:***

Annex 10 Guidelines for Educational organization

## 11. Information and opinions of stakeholders

### 11.1. Information on overall cooperation

The AKKORK Agency develops national and international co-operation with representatives of interested parties: state administrative bodies, HEI associations, employers' associations, student associations as well as various organizations operating in quality assurance. Within the framework of co-operation agreements, AKKORK interacts on a regular basis with a number of partners in Russia and abroad (see point 8 for more information on international activities). (<http://www.akkork.ru/e/partners/>)

#### *Interaction with State Administrative Bodies*

Erika Soboleva, AKKORK Director-General is a member of an expert body in the States Duma Education Committee. As a member of this body she participated in November 2018 in discussions on modernization of the state regulations procedures of education sphere. Erika cooperated closely with Pavel Kondrashov, head of the Executive office of States Duma Education Committee. Her proposals on contents of the resolution of those discussions initiated great interest and were taken into account in drafting the final text

Also, the AKKORK Agency is under a process of becoming an expert organization under the RF Federal Service on Supervision in Education and Science. This means that AKKORK will be engaged in conducting quality reviews within the framework of procedures of state accreditation of educational institutions and state supervision and monitoring activities in education by the order of National Accreditation Agency (part of Federal Service on Supervision in Education and Science). The impact that we expect would be that AKKORK work becomes officially recognized by the QA state authority. This will give a certain impetus for the university to come to AKKORK for a QA procedure on programme level and institutional level. This is based on the fact that on December 25, 2018, the Government of the Russian Federation adopted the Law No. 497-FL "On Amending Article 92 of the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation". The amendment states that results of independent assessment of students learning outcomes quality must be taken into consideration in the framework of state accreditation procedure. The mechanism of this consideration must be described in the Regulations on State Accreditation. AKKORK expects the mechanism of recognition could be that only the results of QA procedures from such expert organizations would be recognized. This means that more universities would turn to its services since the mechanism will be in place for recognition and that would ease the accreditation procedure and lessen accreditation burden.

In this case the NAA would be appointing different organizations to perform the tasks within the framework of procedures of state accreditation of educational institutions and state supervision and monitoring activities in education. AKKORK already has experience in such procedures and current staff and resources are sufficient for fulfillment of this procedure.

Apart from this AKKORK cooperates with National Accreditation Agency, which works under the Federal Service on Supervision in Education and Science. This cooperation flows in the following way:

- Joint conduction of international survey on QA in Russia and Eastern Europe, for example INQAAHE survey in 2017-2018;
- Organization of joint international events in Moscow, such as UNESCO Regional Consultation Meeting in April 2018. Currently the Director of the NAA Lemka Izmailova is a member of an the Russian Advisory Board of the INQAAHE Forum

which will be organized by AKKORK in Moscow, in March 2020.

*Interaction with Employers*

The AKKORK Agency considers widening the participation of business representatives in education quality procedures to be one of the priority tasks of development of the Russian education quality assurance system and pays great attention to co-operation with employer organizations in the following areas:

- conduct of independent education quality assessment as an expert organization, results of which are subsequently used by employers and their associations at professional – public accreditation (for example, in 2016 – 2017, on the basis of the AKKORK independent quality assessment, professional – public accreditation by the Association of Russian Managers was received by 23 educational programs of HEIs, and professional – public accreditation of an Association of Geological Organizations was received by 4 education programs of HEIs); engagement of reviewers from employers and employers’ associations in conduct of quality reviews within the framework of independent education quality assessment procedures;

- inclusion of employer organizations’ representatives into the AKKORK reviewer teams, Advisory Council and International Accreditation Council.

It should be noted that active co-operation of the Agency with employers, distribution of information about foreign and Russian practices of independent quality assessment and promotion of the idea of engagement in the QA processes of all interested parties yields visible results: Accreditation Councils are working in employer organizations (for example, in the Association of Russian Managers, Association of Geological organizations, besides, interest of HEIs in receiving professional – public accreditation has increased. The number of HEI addresses to AKKORK with the request of organizing professional – public accreditation procedure in some or other professional area has significantly increased (in 2017, professional – public accreditation following the results of the AKKORK independent assessment was received by 53 educational programs, in comparison in 2014 only 36 programmes applied for professional-public accreditation). In this context, AKKORK broadens its range of partners by engaging all the more employer organizations in conduct of professional – public accreditation.

*Interaction with Organizations in Area of Education Quality Standardization and Assessment*

AKKORK employees are members of the sub-committee “Ensuring of e-Learning Quality”, technical committee 461 “Information and Communications Technology in Education” that is a national working body of ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 36 “Information Technology for Learning, Education and Training”, and participate in work on elaboration of standards of use of information technology in learning, education and training.

In 2013, the AKKORK Agency, National Center for Public Accreditation (NCPA), and the Association for Engineering Education of Russia concluded an agreement on establishing the association “National Public Registry of Accrediting Organizations in Education” whose activity is to facilitate recognition of the forming national system of independent assessment, public and professional – public accreditation in education, both at the national and international level. Unfortunately due to the fact that the QA sphere in Russia is undergoing rapid changes, there has not yet been made a decision how to proceed with work of this Registry. The main aspiration for it is to be recognized by the State authorities. Currently the Ministry of Science and Higher Education is new, so we are waiting to see what will be the current changes in the QA sphere and then decide on how to move on with this initiative.

## 11.2. Opinion of Stakeholders

The main stakeholders for the agency are the HEIs. According to the satisfaction surveys made in 2017 and 2018 HEIs are continuously satisfied by the AKKORK procedures. See table below for more information. Such research are taking place annually.

**Table 12 Analysis of stakeholder's satisfaction**

Criteria	Mark 2017	Mark 2018
1. The degree of satisfaction of the educational organisation with the criteria for evaluating the educational activities of HEI:	4,7	4,8
2. The degree of satisfaction of the educational organisation with assessment procedures:	4,7	4,7
3. The degree of satisfaction of the educational organisation with reviewers:	4,9	4,9
4. The degree of objectivity, accuracy and clarity (transparency) of the conclusions and reviewers' recommendations on programs	4,8	4,9
5. Assess the quality of the work of the Development Office (stage of the conclusion of the contract)	4,3	5
6. Assess the quality of the work of the project manager	4,5	5
7. The usefulness of the recommendations of experts AKKORK:	4,4	4,5

The marks are given from 1 (dissatisfied) to 5 (completely satisfied). The criteria are divided into sub criteria, see form of the questionnaire attached (see Annex 9) for detailed information.



## 12. Recommendations and main findings from previous review(s) and agency's resulting follow-up

ESG	ENQA recommendations from 2015	AKKORK follow-up
2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures	<p>The report reads on page 16: “The review panel could, however, not find evidence that a systematic assessment is undertaken for programme reviews to what extent all programme features are linked to the institutional quality assurance system. Therefore, it could not be concluded that all aspects that form part of the ESG 1 are consistently applied in AKKORK’s procedures”.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">→ As not all processes described in Part 1 of the ESG are consistently applied in AKKORK’s procedure, this leads to a finding of partial compliance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation from the panel:</b> AKKORK should further elaborate its criteria in order to ensure that systematic assessments of study programmes are embedded in the review process and that all aspects of the ESG Part 1 are assessed.</p>	<p>AKKORK starting from the beginning of its activities in 2005 was the follower of the ESG ENQA criteria. AKKORK is conducting the systematic assessment of the study programmes, evaluating also how different programme features are linked to the institutional quality assurance system. From the comparative table enclosed you can find out how ESG Part 1 is presented in AKKORK criteria.</p>
ESG 2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes	<p>The panel report reads on pages 17-18 that: “public information about the aims and objectives are not available for each of the different individual assessment processes. This information can only be found for some of the types of services that AKKORK provides”.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">→ As the aims and objectives are not publicly available for all QA processes, this leads to a finding of partial compliance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation from the panel:</b> AKKORK should systematically provide information about the aims and objectives for each of its activities. This information could also be offered in a comparative manner in order to better outline the differences between the assessment activities.</p>	<p>Now aims and objectives for every service AKKORK offer is available in respective section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service: Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/</a></li> <li>• Service: Participation in professional - public education programme accreditation: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/pppepa/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/pppepa/</a></li> <li>• Service: Independent education programme accreditation: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iepa/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iepa/</a></li> <li>• Service: International accreditation of education programmes: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/</a></li> <li>• Service: International e-learning accreditation: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iela/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iela/</a></li> <li>• Service: Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation (IQAS): <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iqasd ac/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iqasd ac/</a></li> <li>• Service: Assessment of administrative and teaching staff: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/aoaats/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/aoaats/</a></li> </ul> <p>The comparative table of aims of AKKORK services is enclosed to this letter.</p>
... ESG 2.3 Criteria for decisions	<p style="text-align: center;">This is one of the key standards to be met. Indeed, as pointed out by the panel,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Now criteria for every service AKKORK offer is available in respective</p>

ESG	ENQA recommendations from 2015	AKKORK follow-up
	<p>“the easy availability of criteria is not just an important feature for interested HEIs, but also for other actors and stakeholders in the Russian Federation and internationally in order to determine the value of the work of AKKORK”. However, according to the report, page 19: “The precise criteria are not easily locatable. [...] AKKORK added criteria during the review, but not for all of its external quality assurance activities. For the ones that are published, finding them is slightly complicated, as they are not clearly marked as criteria.” For some procedures, criteria are lacking completely (page 19): “international accreditation of programmes, international accreditation of e-learning, and the audit and accreditation of quality management system, criteria cannot be found”.</p> <p>→ As criteria are mostly not published and if they are, they are not explicitly marked as criteria, this leads to a finding of partial compliance.</p> <p>ENQA Criterion 6 – External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The appeals procedure is missing as the Agency does not have appeals regulations in place. The appeals procedure should be made available on its website.</li> <li>- The criteria that AKKORK uses are not accessible for all external quality assurance activities and are not fully published.</li> <li>- There is no structure follow-up mechanism for every review.</li> <li>- Not all review reports are published.</li> <li>- Students are not systematically</li> </ul>	<p>section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service: Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/</a></li> <li>• Service: Participation in professional - public education programme accreditation: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ppepa/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ppepa/</a></li> <li>• Service: Independent education programme accreditation: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iepa/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iepa/</a></li> <li>• Service: International accreditation of education programmes: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/</a></li> <li>• Service: International e-learning accreditation: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iela/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iela/</a></li> <li>• Service: Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation (IQAS): <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iqasdac/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iqasdac/</a></li> <li>• Service: Assessment of administrative and teaching staff: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/aoaats/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/aoaats/</a></li> </ul>

ESG	ENQA recommendations from 2015	AKKORK follow-up
	<p>involved in review teams.</p> <p>→ This leads to a finding of partial compliance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation from the panel</b></p> <p>AKKORK should fully publish its criteria on its website in a more easily accessible and clear manner.</p>	
<p>ESG 2.5 Reporting</p>	<p>Not all reports are published. The panel notes that “reports from institutional reviews are not published, but are only available on request”; “Negative reports are neither published, nor is there any indication that a review at all took place”.</p> <p>→ As only reports of successful study programmes accreditation are published, this leads to a finding of partial compliance.</p> <p>ENQA Criterion 6 – External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The appeals procedure is missing as the Agency does not have appeals regulations in place. The appeals procedure should be made available on its website.</li> <li>- The criteria that AKKORK uses are not accessible for all external quality assurance activities and are not fully published.</li> <li>- There is no structure follow-up mechanism for every review.</li> <li>- Not all review reports are published.</li> <li>- Students are not systematically involved in review teams.</li> </ul> <p>→ This leads to a finding of partial compliance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation from the panel</b></p>	<p>AKKORK publishes all the reports on the website. If you go to section Projects on the website <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/projects/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/projects/</a> you will see six groups of projects that AKKORK has done including Register of non-accredited programmes (negative reports) and Registry of programmes that passed institutional assessment and/or accreditation.</p>

ESG	ENQA recommendations from 2015	AKKORK follow-up
	<p>AKKORK should publish all of its review reports on its website, including those at institutional level and negative ones.</p>	
<p>ESG 2.7 Periodic reviews</p>	<p>The report lacks evidence to support the substantial compliance of this standard. The panel recognises the lack of a clear cycle of reviews which is due to the possibility that subsequent rounds of accreditation may be performed by another agency. Furthermore, the 3-year validity of accreditations is highlighted by the panel as being a short period to observe progression and improvement.</p> <p>→ The lack of a clear periodicity of reviews leads to a finding of partial compliance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation from the panel:</b> AKKORK should consider extending the validity for all its accreditations to avoid accreditation fatigue in universities.</p>	<p>As you can see from the reports posted in the section Registry of accredited programmes, AKKORK periodically carries out its activities. Mainly as you can see from that list the names of the universities each year are the same. For instance, Tyumen State Oil and Gas University underwent review in AKKORK in 2013 and 2014, National Research Tomsk State University underwent review in 2014, in 2015, and we are starting now a new project there. Higher School of Economics (National Research University) underwent the review in 2015 and we have review there which is going on now and will finish in May 2016. Those are really big universities which have a lot of programmes and for each year plan some amount of programmes for the review in AKKORK.</p> <p>AKKORK urges the universities that if they undergo each time the review in AKKORK it will help them to constantly and consistently monitor the strategy, success and problems of the education programmes, which is an important part of the review activity.</p> <p>After considering the recommendations AKKORK started to grant accreditation for 4 years period for which received positive feedback from the universities, stating that it is very convenient for them, because either covers full bachelor cycle or two full masters cycles.</p>
<p>ESG 3.3 Activities</p>	<p>The Board concurs with the panel’s recommendation that “AKKORK should continue to ensure that consultancy services</p>	<p>Having received such recommendation AKKORK decided to</p>

ESG	ENQA recommendations from 2015	AKKORK follow-up
	<p>and external quality assurance are not offered at the same HEI within a reasonable timeframe” (page 29).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendation from the panel:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">AKKORK should continue to ensure that consultancy services and external quality assurance are not offered at the same HEI within a reasonable timeframe.</p>	<p>withdraw consulting from the list of services it offers.</p>
<p>ENQA Criterion 4 – Mission statement (ESG 3.5)</p>	<p>The panel believes (pages 33-34) that “AKKORK uses its mission in order to determine its activities. However, there was no documentation that would prove that this is done in a systematic manner”. The mission statement “is not publicly available. Instead, the various elements contained therein are placed in different parts of the website”.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ Documentation does not prove that AKKORK’s activities are undertaken systematically. The mission statement is not published, but its content is. This leads to a finding of substantial compliance.</p>	<p>The mission was always seen on AKKORK front page. Also it was present in the hard copy in the office of the agency. We decided to publish in in the section About/Documents. It can be found following the link: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/about/documents/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/about/documents/</a></p> <p>Documentation concerning all the review activities contains references to the mission.</p>
<p>ENQA Criterion 6 – External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The appeals procedure is missing as the Agency does not have appeals regulations in place. The appeals procedure should be made available on its website.</li> <li>- The criteria that AKKORK uses are not accessible for all external quality assurance activities and are not fully published.</li> <li>- There is no structure follow-up mechanism for every review.</li> <li>- Not all review reports are published.</li> <li>- Students are not systematically involved in review teams.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">→ This leads to a finding of partial</p>	<p>Now appeals procedure for every service AKKORK offer is available in respective section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service: Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ieoeq/</a></li> <li>• Service: Participation in professional - public education programme accreditation: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ppepa/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ppepa/</a></li> <li>• Service: Independent education programme accreditation: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iepa/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iepa/</a></li> <li>• Service: International</li> </ul>

ESG	ENQA recommendations from 2015	AKKORK follow-up
	<p>compliance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation from the panel:</b> AKKORK should clearly determine its appeals procedure and make it available on its website.</p>	<p>accreditation of education programmes: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iaep/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service: International e-learning accreditation: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iela/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iela/</a></li> <li>• Service: Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation (IQAS):<a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iqasdac/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/iqasdac/</a></li> <li>• Service: Assessment of administrative and teaching staff: <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/aoaats/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/aoaats/</a></li> </ul>
<p>ENQA Criterion 6 – External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)</p>	<p>- The appeals procedure is missing as the Agency does not have appeals regulations in place. The appeals procedure should be made available on its website.</p> <p>- The criteria that AKKORK uses are not accessible for all external quality assurance activities and are not fully published.</p> <p>- There is no structure follow-up mechanism for every review.</p> <p>- Not all review reports are published.</p> <p>- Students are not systematically involved in review teams.</p> <p>→ This leads to a finding of partial compliance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation from the panel</b> AKKORK should ensure that there is a structured follow-up mechanism for each of its reviews. This should be made part of the contract signed with the HEI.</p>	<p>Part of each contract which the university signed with AKKORK is the schedule of the procedure. In the procedure is always foreseen the time for follow up.</p>
<p>ENQA Criterion 6 –</p>	<p>- The appeals procedure is missing as the Agency does not have appeals</p>	<p>After the recommendation was expressed by the panel on the last day of visit,</p>

ESG	ENQA recommendations from 2015	AKKORK follow-up
<p>External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)</p>	<p>regulations in place. The appeals procedure should be made available on its website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The criteria that AKKORK uses are not accessible for all external quality assurance activities and are not fully published.</li> <li>- There is no structure follow-up mechanism for every review.</li> <li>- Not all review reports are published.</li> <li>- Students are not systematically involved in review teams.</li> </ul> <p>→ This leads to a finding of partial compliance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation from the panel:</b> AKKORK should ensure that students are part of the review team for each assessment.</p>	<p>AKKORK carefully planned the integration of students in each of the reviews. AKKORK conducted the training for a certain amount of students reviewers and started to involve students in all its reviews starting from October 2015. This can be seen in the sections Register of accredited programmes <a href="http://www.akkork.ru/e/projects/">http://www.akkork.ru/e/projects/</a>.</p>
<p>ENQA Criterion 7 – Accountability procedures (ESG 3.8)</p>	<p>The panel recommends AKKORK to “develop a mechanism to ensure that staff and members of AKKORK’s bodies do not have any conflict of interest with regard to reviews they are involved in / decide about”. There is no provision for regular external review of the Agency.</p> <p>→ This leads to a finding of partial compliance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation from the panel:</b> AKKORK should develop a mechanism to ensure that staff and members of AKKORK’s bodies do not have any conflict of interest with regard to reviews they are involved in / decide about.</p>	<p>Members of AKKORK Advisory and Accreditation Councils are approved by the Supervisory Board of AKKORK. Advisory and Accreditation councils are completely independent in their decision making from each other, the Director of AKKORK, reviewers. Each of them has regulations where is stated that their members can’t coincide. This is made in order for members not to be connected by mutual interests.</p> <p>With regard to the staff: it is part of their labour contracts that they sign an impartiality declaration, stating that if there is any conflict of interest with the HEI, they should inform the director about that cases. Then the director addresses this case or brings it to the appeals commission. One of the employees was fired from AKKORK due to misconduct during the review and conflict of interest with the HEI.</p>

ESG	ENQA recommendations from 2015	AKKORK follow-up
		<p>For reviewers AKKORK has an impartiality declaration, first of all and also the work of AKKORK is organized in the way, that reviewers do not have direct contacts with the HEI its all done through the manager of AKKORK. Thus they are protected from the pressure that the HEI can put on them. In their contract it is prescribed that they should inform the management of AKKORK if they were approached by the HEI with some pressure or inquiries on how to influence the results of reviews. If the reviewer is detected to be affiliated with the reviewed HEI, he is fired and put in the List of dishonest reviewers.</p>
	<p>AKKORK should officially adopt that it will undergo an external review at least every five years.</p>	<p>According to the internal standards AKKORK agency passes the external review every 5 years subject to ENQA recommendations. This is stated in the AKKORK Internal Rules. See the section ABOUT on the web site.</p>
	<p>AKKORK should disseminate its analytical reports to HEIs and among stakeholders in a more efficient and consistent way.</p>	<p>AKKORK disseminates its analytical reports and news to the HEIs and among stakeholders, moreover the AKKORK also publishes news and achievements in the field of QA in the «Quality of Education» Magazine (<a href="http://www.edu-quality.ru/">http://www.edu-quality.ru/</a>), rectors, vice-rectors and HEIs, partner organizations are subscribed to it.</p> <p>Also based on AKKORK analytical reports and work there were published several books: System of Education Quality Assessment: International Practice and Russian Experience; Education Quality Assessment in the Framework of Russian Education Environment Development. Articles published in 2015:</p>



ESG	ENQA recommendations from 2015	AKKORK follow-up
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="959 271 1465 394">1. AKKORK as a member of international integration process// Education Quality, №1-2</li> <li data-bbox="959 409 1465 533">2. INQAAHE 2015-2016: new aspirations and prospects // Education Quality, №1-2</li> <li data-bbox="959 548 1465 672">3. Global experience in university branding initiatives // Education Quality, №1-2</li> <li data-bbox="959 687 1465 810">4. ESG: universal approach to e-learning and traditional education // Education Quality, №3</li> <li data-bbox="959 826 1465 898">5. The April ENQA forum: key issues // Education Quality, №4</li> <li data-bbox="959 913 1465 985">6. INQAAHE: search for answers to global challenges // Education Quality, №4</li> <li data-bbox="959 1001 1465 1124">7. Higher education as a tool for promotion of Russia's image in the international arena // Education Quality, №4</li> <li data-bbox="959 1140 1465 1263">8. Globalization and diversification of higher education quality assessment: APQN Conference // Education Quality, №6</li> <li data-bbox="959 1279 1465 1447">9. Interview with Erika Soboleva: open borders and increasing the mobility of students are the future of Russian education // Education Quality, №7-8</li> <li data-bbox="959 1462 1465 1585">10. The accreditation of experts and expert organizations // Education Quality, №7-8</li> <li data-bbox="959 1601 1465 1673">11. ESG: transition to the new version // Education Quality, №9</li> </ol>

### 13. SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis of AKKORK was developed by the same team which developed the present SAR. The preparation of SWOT started simultaneously with the preparation of SAR.

**Table 1 Composition of the SAR team**

<b>Name/ scientific title</b>	<b>Position, organization</b>	<b>Responsibilities in SAR WG</b>
Erika Soboleva, Ph.D. (econ)	General-Director, AKKORK, INQAAHE Board Member	Overall coordination of the activities of the WG,
Anna Soloveva	Deputy Director, AKKORK	Draft of the preliminary version of the report
Liudmila Stepanchenko	Deputy Director, AKKORK	Analysis of the feedback proposals
Vadim Kovalev	Deputy Director of Association of Russian Managers, Member of Moscow City Public Chamber, Head of AKKORK Supervisory Board	Feedback from the employers
Larisa Danchenok, D.Sc. (econ)	Dean of the Business and Additional Education Faculty, Plekhanov Russian University, member of Russian Marketing Association, Russian Association for Entrepreneurship Education, AKKORK Advisory Council member	Feedback from the academic community
Vladimir Shadrikov, Academic of Russian Academy of Education, D.Sc. (Psychology)	Head of the Psychological lab in Higher School of Economics (University), member of Russian Psychological Society, Head of AKKORK Advisory Council	
Artem Tarkhanov	All-Russian Public Organization “ For Qualitative Education”, Member of AKKORK Advisory Council	Feedback from the students community
Dr. Susanna Karakhanyan and Dr. Patricia Georgieva, Dr. Karl Donert	INQAAHE President member of AKKORK Supervisory Board, University Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, President of EUROGEO members of AKKORK International Accreditation Councils	Feedback from the international community

#### **Strengths:**

- Existence of quality assessment and quality assurance methods, which take into account the particularities of the Russian education environment used in more than

- 100 educational institutions;
- Usage of well-developed methodological approaches to assessment of institutional conditions for programme realisation;
- Well-established core and managerial processes and procedures:
  - Standardized processes of independent quality assessment and accreditation projects;
  - Formalized processes of the organization, planning, staff motivation and control;
  - Well-established system of selection, training and certification of reviewers;
  - Formed database of reviewers from the academic community (RF and foreign ones), employers and students sufficient for undertaking quality assessment .
- Practical experience of the assessment and / or accreditation in more than 100 educational institutions;
- Transparency of evaluation procedures;
- Promoting ESG to be part of internal QA system in Russian universities by a certain methodology;
- Clear two steps decision making procedure, which provides grounds for independent decision;
- Partner relations with accreditation agencies from Western Europe:
  - AKKORK is collaborating with FIBAA, ZEvA and DEVA-AAC;
- Presence in the staff of the Agency employees who speak foreign languages;
- Supportive nature of AKKORK administrative staff and reviewers, which is being mentioned by the HEIs;
- Experience of international accreditation and assessment procedures (2 HEI in Kyrgyzstan and Armenia);
- Publishing of AKKORK’s own specialized information-analytical journal “Kachestvo obrazovaniya” (“Quality of education”), which allows to publish in open access information on the analytical reports made by AKKORK, results of the educational audit, trends and approaches to quality assurance in Russia and abroad, ensuring the educational institutions competitiveness in the educational market, promoting development of “quality culture” notion in Russian universities;
- Recognition of AKKORK by international quality assurance associations, such as ENQA, APQN, INQAAHE and international organisations such as UNESCO;
- - Membership of Director – General of AKKORK in different international Bodies, such as ENQA Steering Committee, INQAAHE Board;
- Experience in carrying out joint international research projects, such as Regional study in Eastern Europe and Central Asia about the level of development of QA procedures. This project was carried out together with UNESCO, INQAAHE, National Accreditation Agency;
- Based on the results of the Regional study was organized Regional Consultation meeting for Eastern Europe and Central Asia under the auspices of UNESCO and INQAAHE;
- AKKORK usage of ESG for multiple QA procedures defined by the Russian legislation, such as: professional-public accreditation, independent education quality assessment, public accreditation;
- Existence of the partnership relations and collaboration with employers:
  - Non-governmental organisation «Delovaya Rossiya»
  - Union of Russian Interpreters
  - Association of Russian Managers
  - Council for professional qualifications in Finance market sector
  - Society of Social Sciences

- Russian Psychological Society
- State Corporation ROSCOSMOS (in the Space area)
- Neftegazconsalt (company specializing in recruitment of staff for oil and gaz sphere)
- Institute of Radiotechnics and electronics of the Russian Academy of Sciences
- Association of Geological Organizations
- Council for Professional Qualifications in IT Sphere
- Availability of partnerships and successful practices in cooperation with the professional academic community in the development of a methodology for assessing quality and quality assurance in the sphere of the specialty specific's as well as the involvement of reviewers;
- Experience in conducting the assessments in the framework of the big international projects: TEMPUS.

## **2. Weaknesses:**

- Involvement of students is questioned by the universities;
- Involvement of employers is sometimes difficult;
- Absence of Register of QAA in Russia which prevents AKKORK from full-scale work;
- Absence of an expert corporate information system allowing to automation part of the routine processes and procedures;
- Accreditation fatigue of Russian HEIs.

## **3. Opportunities:**

- Recognition by Federal Service on Supervision in Education in Science under AKKORK functions of an independent quality assessment and quality assurance of education in procedures during the conduction of state accreditation procedures;
- The formation of the state register of independent accrediting agencies joining of it by AKKORK;
- Expanding of the AKKORK's work geography in CIS and Asia-Pacific Region;
- Promotion of methodology for quality management systems in HEIs;
- Supporting the development of the QA systems in neighboring countries;
- Enlarging the partner QA agencies from Asia-Pacific region network;
- Involvement in the development of All-Russian QA register<sup>14</sup>;
- Organising gratis seminars for different pools of reviewers;
- Organising gratis seminars for different universities – potential clients of AKKORK presenting AKKORK experience;
- Russian National project “Education” in the framework of which is prescribed that by 2024 60 universities need to undergo procedures of international accreditation;
- Cooperation with HEIs from neighboring countries.

## **4. Threats:**

- Reduction of the spread of the practice of independent assessments and accreditation because of educational institutions' financial resources decrease;
- Increasing the timing of projects due to the complexity in the formation of a highly qualified team of reviewers from abroad.
- Risks connected with the fact that the RF Education legislation is constantly changing, which bear risks for AKKORK activity;
- Many accreditation mills in Russia.

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<sup>14</sup> This is the register methodology for which AKKORK created in the framework of the State project in 2011-2012. The project was successfully defended in the RF Ministry of Education and Science.

## **14. Current challenges and areas for future development**

To conclude the SAR it is worth mentioning that this is the opportunity for AKKORK to reflect on its activities. We have reflected and you can see through out the report that the situation in Russia is very favorable for development but very challenging.

### **14.1. Challenges**

The main challenges are:

1. Absence of the Register of QAAs which can work on the territory of Russian Federation;
2. Absence of clear internal documents in the universities and in points in the legislation that state that HEIs are to undergo the accreditation in ENQA member agencies;
3. The process started back in 2018 on discussion of reformation of independent education quality assessment;
4. Risk-oriented model of the supervisory activity of Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science. The challenges for AKKORK are how to divide AKKORK activity into supervisory activity and activity for education quality increase. The supervisory activity is regarded as a clear check in accordance with Federal State Standards of Education and it will appear within AKKORK only if AKKORK becomes an expert organization in Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science.
5. Universities can realise college programmes and colleges realise university programmes;
6. In Russia starting from 2018 are realized programmes focused on development of educational programmes for digital economics sphere. This means that the e-learning sphere would be also quickly developing.

### **14.2. Opportunities**

1. It is useful to attract attention of the RF Governmental structures to the existing ESG requirements, further work with ministry on developing policies based on ENQA requirements;
2. For AKKORK it is worth to be recognized by the State Education Authorities;
3. Try to divide supervision functions from review and accreditation functions. This means that AKKORK should develop policies of work with HEI being the expert organization of Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science;
4. The attention in terms of review should be drawn to colleges which do the university programmes;
5. In AKKORK methodology there should be special criteria related to e-learning assessment and to assessment of how these new methodologies help to increase education quality.
6. Future development can be foreseen in extending the database of reviewers;
7. Conducting seminars and trainings for reviewers.
8. Bringing some international conferences to Russia, for example AKKORK is conducting the INQAAHE Forum in Moscow in March 2020.

## GLOSSARY

- AEER** Association for Engineering Education of Russia  
**AKKORK** Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Career Development  
**ALR** Association of Lawyers of Russia  
**APQN** Asia-Pacific Quality Network  
**CEENQA** Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education  
**CHEA** Council for Higher Education Accreditation  
**EAQAN** Eurasian Quality Assurance Network  
**EFMD** European Foundation for Management Development  
**EFQM** European Foundation for Quality Management  
**EFQUEL** the European Foundation for Quality in E-Learning  
**ENQA** European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education  
**ESG** Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area  
**Expert Organization** – this is non-profit organization, that organizes the work of reviewers in the sphere of education and science.  
**EQANIE** European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education  
**FIBAA** Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation  
**HE** Higher Education  
**HEI** Higher Education Institution  
**INQAAHE** International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education  
**ISO** International Organisation for Standardisation  
**NAA** National Accreditation Agency of the Russian Federation  
**NCPA** National Centre of Public Accreditation  
**QA** Quality assurance  
**RF** Russian Federation  
**SER** Self-evaluation report  
**UNIQUE** University Quality in E-Learning