



**NATIONAL AGENCY  
for HIGHER EDUCATION  
QUALITY ASSURANCE  
(UKRAINE)**

### **NAQA report on the distance accreditations: Experts' Survey - March-May 2020**

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance of Ukraine (NAQA) has transferred all its activities into the online format. There were more than 1500 HEIs' requests to conduct accreditations of study programmes in 2020, so NAQA could not postpone the site visits after the quarantine.

Since the beginning of the quarantine, NAQA has developed a Temporary Procedure for Accreditation Examination Using Technical Means of Video Communication, and during the period March-May 2020, 260 study programmes were successfully examined remotely. To analyse the results of using the distance accreditations know how and to make suggestions on its future development, in May, 2020, NAQA has conducted survey and 332 experts, who experienced distance accreditations, took part in it.

The experts were asked 10 questions on their experience being an expert in distance accreditation, its the pros and cons, and its potential implementation in the future.

The results of the questionnaire survey are evidence of positive evaluation of the whole distance accreditation procedure and its outcomes. The three main advantages of the distance accreditation as the experts have admitted are the following: no need to go to another city and waste time for the trip; the possibility to communicate with stakeholders (graduates, employers) who are outside the city / country of HEI location; technical and advisory support of NAQA representatives.

Among the disadvantages of the processes, the experts outlined lack of live communication and the opportunity to feel the "atmosphere" of the university; limited ability to gather complete and reliable information to evaluate the study programme; technical problems (unstable internet, software problems, etc.). Almost a half of the survey participants (45,8 %) recommends NAQA to continue conducting distance accreditations on agreement with the HEI even after the covid-19 quarantine. 32,2 % of experts recommend using distance accreditations only under exceptional circumstances (such as quarantine). Some experts (16,9 %) advise to use distance accreditations only for previously selected good study programmes that potentially could be assessed with high grades ("B" or "A"). Only 1 survey participant out of 332 (0,3%) does not recommend usage of the distance format in the future. The comparison of "normal" and "distance" formats of accreditation shows that 37,1% of experts find usual format to be more appropriate, 28,8 % of experts don't admit the big difference between these formats and 13,9% of respondents consider distance accreditation to be more effective and appropriate. However, it is important to note that 62,7 % of experts mention that the results of distance accreditations do not differ from the results of the normal one. And 22,3 % admitted that the results of normal accreditations are more reliable, 3,2 % told that the results of distance accreditations are more reliable and fairer.