

APPROVED

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Education Quality Assurance
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NATIONAL AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

The National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (hereinafter referred to as the National Agency) sees its mission in becoming a catalyst of positive change in higher education and an agent of the formation of a culture of quality. Given this ambition, the National Agency is aware of the high level of responsibility, and therefore of the requirements to its internal assurance procedures and policy.

The quality assurance policy of the National Agency is based on:

- The mission, values, principles of the internal organisation stated in the Strategy of the National Agency to 2022;
- The principles and provisions of the Code of Academic Integrity of the National Agency;
- Current legislation of Ukraine;
- International agreements and statements.

The main principles of the quality assurance system of the National Agency are:

- **The availability of sufficient and balanced resources for the implementation of external higher education quality assurance processes.** The National Agency ensures the proper level of support, operative methodology, and human resources to implement external higher education quality assurance procedures. For this purpose, the National Agency:
 - Involves international and domestic specialists in the field of higher education in the activities of the National Agency;
 - Raises funds from international research and technical support programmes, donor organisations, legal and natural persons to ensure the operations of its external quality assurance system;
 - Uses the resources of the National Agency rationally, productively, and effectively;
 - Implements measures to prevent and fight corruption.
- **The independence of the National Agency's activities.** In accordance with current legislation, the National Agency acts as an independent collegial body, and is registered as a legal person under public law that does not possess the status of a central executive body and is not subordinated to any state executive body. The members of the National Agency and persons involved in its activities carry out their duties based on civil-law contractual agreements. The independence of the National Agency is ensured through the financing of its activities in a separate item of expenditures in the state budget and due to the proper level of remuneration of its employees.
- **Assessment of the acquired experience and improvement of its activities.** To assess and continuously improve its activities, the National Agency implements:

- distribution of responsibilities among its members and employees of the National Agency, structural subdivisions of the Secretariat, committees and subject area expert councils;
 - permanent monitoring of performance quality and execution of decisions (meetings, reports, analysis of effectiveness and results);
 - financial monitoring;
 - completion of an annual Self-Assessment Report based on ENQA recommendations.
- **High professional standards and integrity.** National Agency members, employees of the Secretariat, experts in the accreditation of educational programmes, are all subject to stringent requirements as to their expertise and integrity; they are obligated to act professionally, ethically, and adhere to standards of integrity. For this purpose, the National Agency:
 - considers professional, knowledge-based and reputational qualities during the selection of experts and members of subject area expert councils, representatives of employers and when recruiting employees of the Secretariat of the National Agency;
 - implements educational activities to involve experts on accreditation of educational programmes, members of subject area expert councils;
 - implements activities that encourage experience exchange in the field of higher education quality assurance among National Agency members;
 - implements continuous internal monitoring of accreditation services provided, professional and ethical conduct of persons involved in the work of the National Agency;
 - ensures compliance with the Declaration of Academic Integrity by the National Agency's members, employees of the Secretariat and persons participating in the work of the National Agency, and the application of the Code of Academic Integrity of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance to all abovementioned persons.
 - **Prevention of intolerance or discrimination.** The activities of the National Agency, and of persons involved in these activities, preclude the implementation of procedures or implementation of decisions that are based on prejudices, contain signs of intolerance or discrimination of any kind.
 - **Interaction with the authorities.** To realise policies in the field of higher education quality assurance and to regulate the corresponding relations effectively, the National Agency, within its area of expertise, collaborates with the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, central offices of executive power, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the President of Ukraine. Of particular note is the collaboration of the National Agency with the central office of executive power in education and science (the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine) in the frame of current legislation.
 - **Compliance of the National Agency's activities with ESG.** All procedures in the frame of which the National Agency and its Secretariat implement their activities, and the services of persons involved in the work of the National Agency on a contract basis, must be based on and be compliant with the requirements of the current ESG (the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area).
 - **Cybersecurity and accessibility.** The National Agency protects restricted information and personal data. Simultaneously, the accessibility of the National Agency's website for all users, and its usability is ensured, information is updated in a timely manner.

All the publicly accessed documents, including provisions, individual orders, documents concerning accreditation procedures, methodological recommendations are posted on the website.

Accreditation procedures are carried out in the electronic system *Accreditation*, which allows for a unique process of electronic document circulation and management of accreditation processes; this process eliminates subjective factors that may influence decisions, and simultaneously provides for public scrutiny of all accreditation procedures by providing access for participants to all materials of an accreditation case. Due to the use of the *Accreditation* system, paperwork is entirely eliminated.

The Facebook page of the National Agency is a broad platform for informing, accountability, and dialogue between the National Agency and stakeholders. The social network Twitter is used to spread information mainly in the international arena. The official Youtube channel allows for the conduct of video-broadcasts of the National Agency's meetings, seminars, and other events. The widespread use of Internet resources enables dissemination of public information, promotes open dialogue, ensures transparency and publicity of the National Agency's activities.

- **Avoiding a conflict of interest.** Procedures for preventing and resolving a conflict of interest during the exercise of authority by members of the National Agency and employees of the Secretariat are defined in the Anti-Corruption Programme of the National Agency.

- **Accountability.** Annually, the National Agency prepares and publishes a report on the quality of higher education in Ukraine, its compliance with the tasks of innovative sustainable development of society, a report on its activities, arranges proposals concerning the legislative quality assurance of higher education, and sends these documents to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the President of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and higher education institutions for their discussion and a proper response; publishes in free-access sources financial documents, reports, and the information concerning the application of funds received from the state budget and for the provision of paid services etc.

- **Provision of feedback and reflection mechanisms.** The National Agency actively uses internal and external feedback for continuous development and improvement of its work. For this purpose, the National Agency:

- provides feedback between the members of the National Agency and employers of the Secretariat (internal feedback mechanisms);
- analyses and considers feedback received during (after) the activities organised by the National Agency for experts, members of subject area expert councils of the National Agency, higher education and research institutions;
- analyses and considers feedback received via social networks and emails;
- conducts surveys in focus groups;
- considers feedback on the performance of experts in creating the internal rating of experts;
- analyses and considers feedback from stakeholders during the accreditation procedure, experts' work, and decision-making process.

The National Agency realises that this policy is the basis for setting and reviewing goals concerning the quality of its activities. The aforementioned goals have to be implemented by the National Agency.

The management of the National Agency is obliged to publish this policy and bring

it to the attention of the National Agency members, employees of the Secretariat, experts on accreditation of educational programmes, members of subject area expert councils.

To adhere to and implement these principles, the National Agency conducts periodic monitoring of the Quality Policy.