

NAQA report on Experts' survey, 2020



In 2020, National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (NAQA) conducted three waves of expert surveys to ensure systematic self-analysis, receive feedback from experts and their suggestions, identify possible urgent problems in the accreditation process, and obtain feedback from experts on the work of their colleagues.

The first survey (which coincided in time of the first weeks of the nationwide quarantine) involved 67 experts; the second - 646; and the third - 901 experts. All questionnaires were carefully analysed to understand the direction of further improvement.

Accreditation period	2019		2020 Jan-Feb		2020 Mar-Aug		2020 Sept-Dec	
	Experts:		Experts:		Experts:		Experts:	
Number of Responses	255		67		646		901	
Please evaluate the new accreditation process for study programmes in general:	8,60		8,63		8,58		8,75	
Assess how useful the trainings were for the experts	9,16		9,28		9,20		9,21	

The results of each survey have consistently shown that experts highly evaluated the accreditation process in general, as well as the effectiveness of the training offered by NAQA for experts. In 2020, many new activities and updates were added to the training package for experts: a new training course on report writing, an updated programme of two-day training for experts, 32 instructions on the eve of accreditation examinations, webinars and other events for information support of experts and regular dialogue.

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	Experts:		Experts:		Experts:		Experts:	
Number of Responses	255		67		646		901	
Issues encountered during participation in the accreditation of study programmes								
Openness of the HEI	6	2%	2	3%	48	7%	43	5%
Passive students	14	5%	2	3%	48	7%	70	8%
Insufficient time	74	29%	15	22%	104	16%	276	31%
Heavy workload	88	35%	13	19%	171	26%	231	26%
Financial issues	22	9%	2	3%	180	28%	85	9%
Lack of understanding of the process after sending the expert report	48	19%	9	13%	48	7%	27	3%
Communication with NAQA	29	11%	5	7%	11	2%	5	1%
Lack of understanding of criteria	11	4%	4	6%	26	4%	38	4%
Report writing	55	22%	4	6%	52	8%	92	10%
Cooperation with experts	11	4%	2	3%	21	3%	26	3%
Compilation and adherence to the visit plan	12	5%	2	3%	10	2%	16	2%

Working in the accreditation system			32	48%	43	7%	30	3%
Incomprehension of SEC's decision on the case	N/A		N/A		89	14%	99	11%
Incomprehension of the agency's decision on the case	N/A		N/A		25	4%	17	2%
Other	26	6%	3	3%	51	8%	37	4%
No problems	7	2%			147	23%	324	36%

The results of the surveys showed that one of the main problems faced by experts is the lack of time and heavy workload during the accreditation review process. Therefore, at the end of 2020, having reviewed the entire accreditation process, NAQA made adjustments that increase the time allocated to experts to study the case and write a report. Starting from January 2021, have been made extension for 5 additional days to study the case and an additional day to prepare a draft report of the expert group. It is expected that it will at least partially facilitate the work of experts and increase its efficiency.

According to the results of the survey in February 2020, the main problem of the expert was identified as «Working in the new accreditation system» (48%). Thanks to systematic communication and numerous explanations, as well as the development and publication of detailed Instructions for using the accreditation system¹, this factor remained problematic for only 3% of experts at the end of the year.

During the year, NAQA also introduced a number of tools (and supporting explanations) that promote transparency of the accreditation procedure at each stage. In particular, a public portal with detailed information on the status of each accreditation case was published at <https://public.naqa.gov.ua>. The availability of this resource has completely eliminated the problem mentioned by experts in the surveys: the indicator «Unclear process after sending the expert report» has decreased from 19% to 3%.

Another positive trend is a significant increase in the number of experts who have not encountered any significant problems while working as an expert of NAQA(36%).

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Evaluate the support of Expert Support Department of NAQA	9,18		9,37		9,26		9,54	
Evaluate the support of Accreditation Department of NAQA	9,13		9,18		9,36		9,43	
Evaluate the support of other departments of NAQA	7,73		8,6		8,46		9,01	

An important aspect for NAQA is the level of experts' satisfaction with the support of all Secretariat departments. At the end of 2020, there was a constant positive dynamic and the highest score in 1.5 years for the support of all departments. This reflects the continuous improvement of all processes and well-coordinated teamwork.

¹ <https://wiki.naqa.gov.ua/system>

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Evaluate the usefulness of the recommendations that have been prepared for your case	8,89		8,81		8,99		8,89	
Evaluate the usefulness of the feedback-review on the draft report of the expert group, if any (for cases of the 2020-2021 academic year)							8,23	

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Accreditation Department of NAQA prepared individual methodological recommendations for each accreditation case to help new experts effectively study the self-evaluation information sent by HEIs and to focus on the necessary facts that experts should find out during the examination. The experts consistently praised the usefulness of such recommendations.

Since September 2020, when most experts have already understood the basic principles of studying self-assessment data, individual methodological recommendations have been replaced by a feedback (review) from the Accreditation Department on the draft report of the expert group, which was accompanied by recommendations for possible improvements to the experts' arguments and the justifications for the grades assigned. The relatively low score of this review can be explained by its novelty and the need for further analysis over time.

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If your accreditation was attended by an observer or technical moderator from the NAQA, please evaluate the professionalism of the observer/moderator	9,04		7,80		9,60		9,53	

As already mentioned, the need to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic and the accompanying restrictive quarantine measures by introducing remote examinations required the NAQA to make extraordinary efforts. The constant support of such accreditations, the requirement for an observer or technical moderator to be present at almost every examination to provide assistance if necessary, led to the mobilisation of a large number of support staff, including from other departments of the Secretariat. The analysis of the experts' responses shows that the presence of an observer was the most highly rated among all issues, which indicates the success of these efforts and the effectiveness of the assistance and consultations provided. It is also worth noting that since September 2020, the technical moderation of almost all accreditation examinations has been carried out by experts independently, which indicates that the periodic presence of an observer (in particular in problematic situations) provides significant assistance, support and a guarantee of trust.

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Did you have any difficulties with the preparation of the expert group's report								
No	186	74%	61	91%	597	92%	803	89%
Yes*	64	26%	6	9%	49	8%	98	11%
Did you manage to achieve teamwork with the expert group during the accreditation examination?								
Yes	240	94%	60	90%	599	93%	840	93%
Partly	14	5%	6	9%	42	7%	56	6%
No	1	0%	1	1%	5	1%	5	1%

The report writing and teamwork of the expert group remained consistently positive, as a result of ongoing training in these areas.

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Evaluate the professionalism of the expert you have worked with								
Number of Responses 8-10	745	90%	128	90%	1706	86%	2285	90%
Number of Responses 5-7	67	8%	14	10%	252	13%	220	9%
Number of Responses 0-4	13	2%	0	0%	26	1%	40	2%

As part of this survey, NAQA also received more than 2,500 ratings and detailed comments on individual experts: the survey allowed the respondent to select a specific name of the expert (the one with whom he or she worked in the expert group) and leave an evaluation of his or her performance and the justification for this evaluation. Experts stably (at the level of 90%) evaluate the work of their colleagues at the level of 7 points or higher (out of a maximum of 10). Those experts who are assessed negatively by their colleagues may not be included in the NAQA's register of experts in the future. All assessments with justifications were analysed and transferred to the register of experts for mandatory consideration in the further formation of expert groups.