

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE NATIONAL AGENCY **HIGHER EDUCATION** QUALITY ASSURANCE

Approved by the decision of NAQA (Minutes No. 15 (65)  
dated 27.08.2024)

Kyiv - 2024

## 1. BACKGROUND

The development of a culture of quality and academic integrity in higher education in line with European standards is a requirement of our time, one of the basic prerequisites for Ukraine's European integration and a benchmark for the modernisation of the Ukrainian system of training specialists capable of ensuring the country's competitiveness in the context of the war with the Russian aggressor, other urgent external and internal challenges, the need to consolidate efforts for victory and post-war renovation.

The Russian aggression, which has resulted in numerous casualties, temporary occupation of territories and destruction of civilian infrastructure, has a long tragic history and is aimed at the conquest of Ukraine, which is reflected, in particular, in obstructing Ukraine's European integration, attempts to destroy Ukrainian identity and malicious actions to undermine strategic prospects for social development. That is why the targets of Russian attacks are, among other things, Ukrainian higher education and science.

In this context, communication plays an important role in attracting additional opportunities from international cooperation, maintaining and consolidating public trust in state institutions in the field of education and science, in particular, in the system of quality assurance in higher education in Ukraine, given the strategic importance of this area for the country's future. Ensuring the sustainability and consistency of European integration changes is possible only with public support and the trust of Ukrainian educators in the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter - the National Agency). Overcoming the destruction and catastrophic consequences of the war is possible only if we understand the prospects and have a clear idea of the future of Ukrainian higher education and communicate it to the citizens of Ukraine. The Communication Strategy of the National Agency is dedicated to the understanding of the educational community and the main stakeholders to fulfil these tasks.

The update of the provisions of NAQA's Communication Strategy is related to the adoption in 2024 of new fundamental documents - the Strategy of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance until 2026 (minutes of the meeting No. 12 (62) of 25 June 2024) and the National Action Plan for External Quality Assurance in Higher Education for the period 2024-2026 (minutes of the meeting No. 12 (62) of 25 June 2024).

The current version of the Communication Strategy continues and develops the communication practices defined in the Communication Strategy approved by the decision of NAQA (Minutes No. 16 of 27 September 2022).

## **2. THE PURPOSE AND TASKS OF NAQA IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Objective.**

Effective, efficient and systematic communication of NAQA with stakeholders to ensure the sustainability and consistency of the development of a culture of quality in higher education in Ukraine and its protection.

### **Objectives:**

- Promoting awareness of the Ukrainian society and key stakeholders about the process of European integration of the Ukrainian higher education system and the role of the National Agency in this process.
- Promoting the trust of Ukrainian society and attracting the support of the international community for the modernisation of Ukrainian higher education by providing high-quality, reliable and timely information on the development of a quality assurance system and a culture of academic integrity in Ukraine, in accordance with the standards and recommendations in force in the European Higher Education Area.
- Promoting the mission, goals, principles and main directions and results of the National Agency's activities.
- Maintaining and protecting the reputation of the National Agency as a reliable and independent quality assurance agency in line with European standards.
- Improvement and development of the system of communication channels between the National Agency and stakeholders to build effective partnerships at the national and international levels.
- Transforming the National Agency into a newsmaker in higher education.

The goal and objectives of the National Agency in the field of communications are based on the mission, strategic goals, principles and values of the National Agency.

### **MISSION OF NAQA**

Ensure the sustainability and consistency of the development of a culture of quality in higher education and its protection through effective partnerships of key stakeholders.

### **STRATEGIC GOALS OF NAQA**

- full membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and inclusion in the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAR);

- Improving the system of external quality assurance of higher education, including the creation of a model of institutional accreditation and the functioning of independent quality assessment institutions;
- encouraging innovative practices in higher education institutions in the interaction of research, education and business.

## PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNAL CULTURE OF NAQA

- 1) Respect for everyone's opinion, collegiality, and the pursuit of consensus;
- 2) Striving for self-improvement and self-development based on critical self-assessment;
- 3) Cultivating a spirit of mutual support, sincerity and initiative;
- 4) Building and maintaining institutional and personal reputation.

## VALUES OF NAQA

**Partnership** means cooperation on the basis of equality and respect for partners.

**Innovation** is the development and implementation of new ideas, technologies, and methods related to ensuring the quality of higher education.

**Responsibility** is a conscious attitude to the results of actions and decisions taken.

**Integrity** is a commitment to moral principles and standards.

**Openness** - readiness to cooperate with all parties interested in improving the quality of higher education.

**Transparency** is the willingness to provide the public with complete and objective information about the quality of higher education in Ukraine and the results of the National Agency's activities to ensure it.

**Independence** is the absence of external influence for the full and effective quality assurance of higher education.

**Professionalism** is the consistency of achieving high standards in ensuring the quality of higher education through the use of professional knowledge and experience.

**Trust** is the belief that the participants in the quality assurance process are honestly doing what they are supposed to do.

In its activities, the National Agency adheres to zero tolerance to any manifestations of corruption and adheres to key anti-corruption policies developed in accordance with the requirements of anti-corruption legislation and taking into account the specifics of its powers. The National Agency properly organises work on preventing and detecting corruption, which contributes, among other things, to increasing public confidence in the Agency's powers to ensure the quality of higher education and academic integrity.

In particular, the anti-corruption measures taken by the National Agency are systematic and cover the following areas

training and education of employees, ensuring the functioning of channels for reporting corruption and corruption-related offences and verification of such reports, vetting of counterparties, vetting of candidates for positions vulnerable to corruption risks, identification and settlement of conflicts of interest, assessment of corruption risks, periodic analysis of results and review of anti-corruption policies, etc.

NAQA provides:

- transparent coverage of the selection procedure for candidates for experts and members of sectoral expert councils;
- a transparent procedure for appealing against National Agency's decisions, including the establishment of an independent Appeals Chamber;
- Inclusion of information on compliance with anti-corruption legislation in trainings for experts legislation, in particular, on settlement conflict of interest;
- Involvement of experts and the public in the preparation of draft regulations to ensure the quality of higher education education and academic integrity;
- broadcasting meetings of the National Agency in terms of making decisions on accreditation of educational programmes live on YouTube channel;
- holding public online events on the development of the culture of academic integrity.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Features.	Threats
<p>Active and ongoing information and awareness raising on of the agency's activities, relations with stakeholders and the public.</p> <p>Operating on the basis of openness, transparency and integrity.</p> <p>Trust in the information of the agencies resources by Ukrainian and foreign readers.</p> <p>Active cooperation with relevant international organisations and foreign agencies.</p> <p>Engagement of students to the agency's activities.</p> <p>Recognition of accreditation abroad National Agency</p> <p>Advisory Agency activities during the process accreditation.</p>	<p>Insufficient communication with business and employers.</p> <p>Lack of coherence media culture in social networks and communication field in general.</p> <p>Insufficient capacity to counteract subjective negative reactions aimed at blocking activities agencies.</p>	<p>Attracting a larger audience to the information resources agencies.</p> <p>Creating a network of influencers that enables Improvement of existing support processes quality of higher education.</p> <p>Developing existing channels and attracting new ones Communications, including the press for interaction with stakeholders</p> <p>Use of the most effective technologies, tools and channels communications.</p>	<p>Permanent threat to the lives of members agencies, secretariat staff, participants of the accreditation process as a result of the war with Russia.</p> <p>Destructive criticism and information attacks on agency by of biased individuals.</p> <p>Cyberattacks on the agency.</p> <p>Limited human resources and financial resources.</p>

## 4. KEY AUDIENCES

Interaction with the target audience is one of the key components of successful communication, which determines the formation of communication channels and their activities.

**Ukrainian language communication is required for such audiences:**

- 1) Ukrainian society;
- 2) participants in the educational process;
- 3) business representatives, employers, and professional associations;
- 4) applicants;
- 5) experts and specialists in higher education, quality assurance and academic integrity;
- 6) opinion leaders (influencers);
- 7) NGOs and projects in the educational and scientific fields;
- 8) Ukrainian mass media;
- 9) government agencies and institutions.

**Communication in English is aimed at the following audiences:**

- 1) international educational community;
- 2) foreign experts and specialists in the field of higher education and quality assurance;
- 3) foreign partners - quality assurance agencies, accreditation agencies, etc;
- 4) international organisations in the field of higher education quality assurance and academic integrity;
- 5) international and foreign donors and grantors.

The target audience of NAQA is classified by communication channels.

## 5. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS OF THE NATIONAL AGENCY

NAQA uses internal (own) and external communication channels to best reach the target audience.

The main communication channels are:

- **external** channels communications (mass media, official communication channels, public events, etc.)
- **internal** communication channels (official website, social media pages and channels, etc.).

### **Internal (own) communication channels of NAQA:**

- 1) the official website of NAQA;
- 2) The National Agency's Facebook page;
- 3) National Agency's page on Twitter;
- 4) The National Agency's LinkedIn page;
- 5) the National Agency's Telegram channel;
- 6) The National Agency's YouTube channel.

### **Means of information transmission**

- broadcasts of NAQA's meetings;
- Publications on the official website (announcements, news, explanations, public information, documents, decisions of NAQA etc.);
- posts and messages on social media, using NAQA's own channels;
- newsletters;
- official newsletter using electronic document management system;
- reporting and analytical materials (annual reports, self-assessment reports, etc.);
- public events at regional, national or international level organised by NAQA;
- participation of NAQA in public events and projects of the regional national or international level as co-organiser (partner);
- presence at public events of the regional, national or international level at the invitation of the organisers, in cases where they meet the statutory goals and objectives of NAQA;
- honorary awards of NAQA;
- image materials;
- press briefings and press conferences;
- official comments and interviews in the media by members of the National Agency and authorised secretariat staff.



## 6. CONTENT IN THE PUBLICATIONS OF NAQA

Hashtags are used on NAQA's social media pages and channels to categorise and systematise messages by topic and for the convenience of recipients of information:

**#naqa\_stakeholders** (to mark news about NAQA's cooperation with stakeholders);

**#naqa\_acts** (marking news about the activities of NAQA aimed at helping education, in particular during the full-scale invasion of Russia);

**#naqa\_internationalisation** (designation of information messages about the international activities of NAQA);

**#naqa\_informs** (designation of NAQA's appeals to the educational community);

**#naqa\_comments** (designation of expert and advisory comments of NAQA members, authorised secretariat employees, etc.);

**#naqa\_digest** (designation of a summary of key events in NAQA's activities in a news format);

**#naqa\_reminds** (designation of information messages reminding about important events and processes);

**#naqa\_advises** (to identify a selection of events, educational materials and opportunities that may be useful to educators);

**#naqa\_unbreakable** (designation of information messages related to the activities of educators and higher education institutions during the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine).

The following headings are used on English-language resources:

**#naqa\_stakeholders** (to mark news about NAQA's cooperation with stakeholders);

**#UAEducatorsAtWar** (designation of information messages aimed at informing the international community about the situation in higher education in Ukraine in the context of Russian military aggression);

**#NAQA\_weekly** (designation of weekly reports in the format of a digest on the activities of NAQA for foreign partners);

**#NAQA\_informs** (designation of information important for the international audience, as well as NAQA's appeals to the international educational community).

If necessary, the Public Relations and International Cooperation Department of NAQA may introduce and maintain other headings/hashtags.

For each of the communication channels, the Public Relations and International Cooperation Department **develops a content plan for** official use, which is an internal document.

**The content of each communication channel of NAQA must meet the following criteria:**

- 1) meet the interests and needs of the defined target audience for which the information is published;
- 2) comply with the mission, principles and values of NAQA;
- 3) maintain the high reputation of NAQA;
- 4) adhere to the formats and corporate style developed for a particular communication channel;
- 5) broadcast key messages;
- 6) improve and ensure consistent information exchange.

**NAQA's official communication channels are not included:**

- 1) personal pages on social networks of NAQA's members;
- 2) personal pages of the secretariat staff;
- 3) personal pages of experts and members of industry expert councils.

**At the same time, NAQA recommends that content of posts related to work at NAQA and related issues should be limited to NAQA:**

- 1) did not contradict the laws, official positions, values, professional and ethical requirements of NAQA;
- 2) did not contain confidential information, information with restricted access, unverified information from unreliable sources, including fake, manipulative or pseudo-sensational news.

**NAQA does not restrict the right of persons representing NAQA to maintain their own pages on social media, but calls for the following in online communications**

- 1) communication ethics, including the principles of mutual respect and integrity;
- 2) avoid personal insults, unjustified criticism, spreading rumours or confidential information, swearing, overly emotional statements, etc.

It is advisable to publish posts on personal pages in social networks about participation in an official event and event only after the publication of this event on the official resources of NAQA. Exceptions are cases when publication in this way is agreed with NAQA.

NAQA recommends that the community - members of NAQA, employees of the secretariat, experts and members of sectoral expert councils - distribute the posts published on official resources in order to disseminate information to the target audience and the interested public.

NAQA in publications using its own communication channels, based on the interests of its audience, informs exclusively about events and news related to the development of the higher education quality assurance system and the development of a culture of academic integrity. In the case of implementation of the norms set out in memoranda (agreements) on cooperation and within the framework of obligations set out in international agreements, NAQA may provide information support to projects, but only within the topics related to the statutory activities, mission and goals of the agency, with the adaptation of the format, content and style of the message to the norms set out in this strategy.

## 7. VISUAL STYLE

The visual style of NAQA is built around the logo and corporate colours and is regulated by the National Agency's backbook (Appendix 1).

The logo consists of two main visual parts. The emblem of NAQA is based on a simple and at the same time verified structure of three golden triangles that form a stylised open book, a symbol of education. The second part of the logo is the name of the Agency. The logo uses the Monitorica font.

The visual part of the newsletters contains either a photo report from the scene or a template with a text message that matches the content.

The website, social media and official communications use templates designed in corporate colours in accordance with the brand book. The National Agency's logo and corporate colours are also used on physical media - notebooks, pens, cups, sweatshirts, T-shirts, badges, folders, letterheads, etc.

The use of NAQA's symbols by partners and other organisations in public communications, during the organisation of joint events and projects is possible only with the written consent of NAQA. Consent to use NAQA's symbols is formalised in an official letter prepared by the Public Relations and International Cooperation Department of the Secretariat, which is responsible for keeping records of consents and monitoring the use of NAQA's symbols.

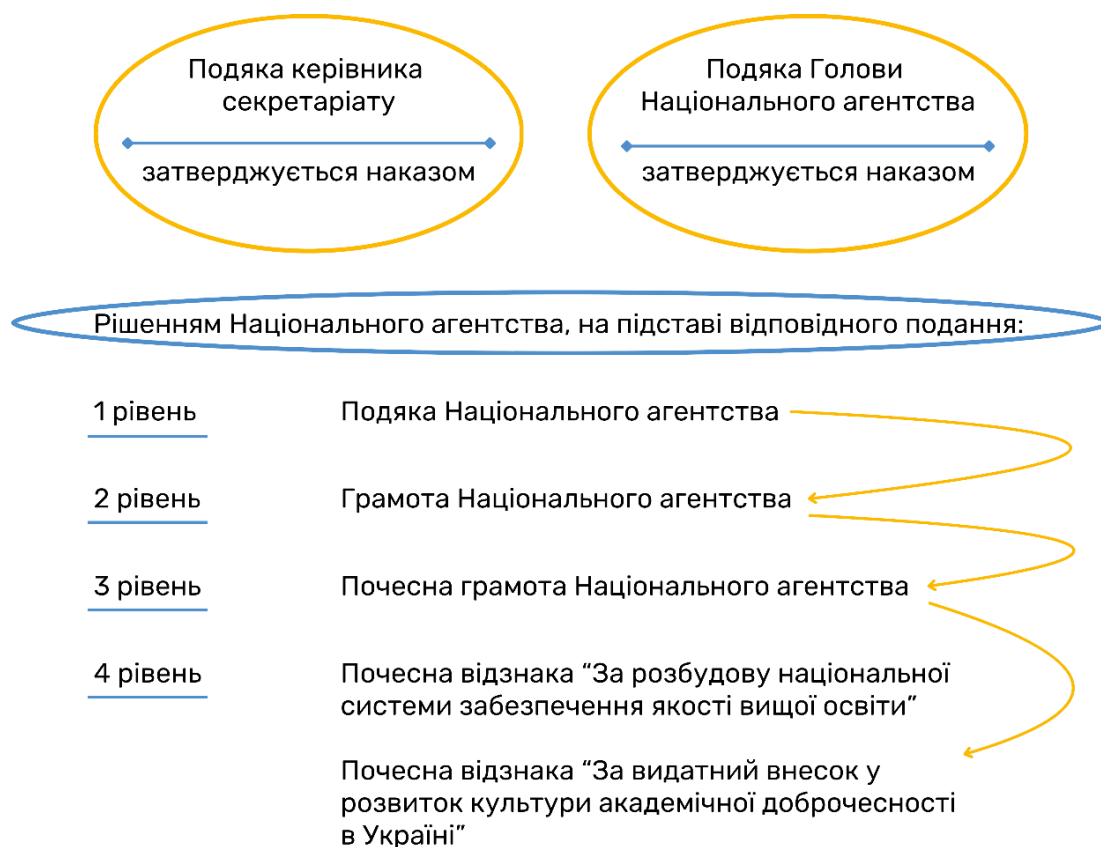
In case of consent to use NAQA's symbols for organising joint events and projects, the Public Relations and International Cooperation Department of the Secretariat provides the relevant symbol templates for further use exclusively in the versions provided in NAQA's brand book. Any unauthorised use, distortion or modification (mirroring, stretching, changing colours or fonts, etc.) is not allowed.

In case of uncoordinated use of its symbols, NAQA reserves the right to take measures to protect its rights and interests.

## 8. HONORARY AWARDS OF NAQA

The honorary awards of NAQA, designed to recognise and encourage best practices in building a system of quality assurance in higher education and developing a culture of academic integrity in Ukraine, are regulated by the relevant Regulations on the honorary awards of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, approved by the decision of NAQA.

The visual style is defined in the brand book of NAQA. The system of honorary awards of NAQA consists of:



The honorary awards of NAQA, granted by the decision of NAQA to recognise individuals or institutions, have the following order of awarding: gratitude, certificate, diploma, honorary certificate, honorary award, without the right to repeatedly award an honorary award of the same level.

The honorary awards are the highest honorary award of NAQA, are awarded once a year, are limited in number (no more than three) and usually have to be timed to professional holidays (Education Worker's Day or Science Day) or to the key communication event of the National Agency - the annual Ukrainian Quality Assurance Forum.

## **9. KEY MESSAGES**

The key messages and tone of voice in NAQA's public communications are approved by the Secretariat once a year, taking into account changes in the internal and external environment, as an annex to the Communication Strategy.

In its public communications, NAQA adheres to a serious, official, respectful, restrained tone of messages, trying to explain complex processes using clear wording, focusing on facts and arguments.

## **10. FINAL PROVISIONS**

The Communication Strategy is approved by the decision of NAQA and published on the official website of NAQA. The Communication Strategy shall be updated annually to reflect changes in the internal and external environment.

The Communication Plan is an annex to the Communication Strategy and defines the frequency, method, form and purpose of communication activities.

Based on the Communication Strategy and the Communication Plan, a communication calendar is created that contains information on planned events and information messages. The Public Relations Department is responsible for creating and maintaining the communication calendar.

In case of reputational/communication threats, NAQA's anti-crisis communication is carried out in accordance with the developed regulation protocol, which is an internal document.

The Public Relations Department is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Communications Strategy.