



NATIONAL AGENCY
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UQAF-2025: Best Practices

an analytical review

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List of Abbreviations

- ChSTU** – SP “Design and Visual Culture” of the second (master’s) level of higher education, Cherkasy State Technological University
- ID** – SP “Economics” of the third (doctoral) level of higher education, Mykhailo Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Life Quality Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
- KNEU1** – SP “Social Management” of the second (master’s) level of higher education, Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman
- KNEU2** – SP “Personnel Management” of the first (bachelor’s) level of higher education, Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman
- KPI** – SP “Technology of Printed and Electronic Editions” of the first (bachelor’s) level of higher education, National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”
- NaUKMA** – SP “Political Science” of the third (doctoral) level of higher education, National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy”
- NUBiP** – SP “Technology of Production and Processing of Livestock Products” of the second (master’s) level of higher education, National University of Life Resources and Environmental Sciences
- SumDU** – SP “Marketing” of the third (doctoral) level of higher education, Sumy State University
- ZPSU1** – SP “Accounting and Taxation” of the first (bachelor’s) level of higher education, Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University
- ZPSU1** – SP “Software Engineering” of the first (bachelor’s) level of higher education, Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University

In the 2024/2025 academic year, NAQA made 10 decisions regarding study programme accreditation with the designation "Exemplary". These programmes are offered at the bachelor's (4 SPs), master's (3 SPs) and doctoral (3 SPs) levels of higher education, and represent the following specialities: 022 Design, 051 Economics, 052 Political Science, 071 Accounting and taxation, 073 Management, 075 Marketing, 121 Software engineering, 186 Publishing and printing, 204 Livestock production and processing technologies of animal products, 232 Social welfare.

It is important to note that, following the new Regulations on Accreditation (2024), the conditions for decisions regarding study programme accreditation with the designation "Exemplary" have been revised. The study programme has been established to meet compliance at level "A" with five or more criteria, including Criterion 2. Structure and content of the study programme, 6. Human resources and 8. Internal quality assurance of the study programme, and for doctoral programmes – also Criterion 10. Learning through research.

Therefore, all the study programmes mentioned above have demonstrated exemplary compliance with criteria 2, 6, and 8. Additionally, three doctoral study programmes also met Criterion 10 at level "A". Exemplary compliance was also established with the following criteria: 1. Design of the study programme (7 SPs), 4. Learning and teaching in the study programme (5 SPs), 7. Educational environment and material resources (4 SPs), 9. Transparency and publicity (3 SPs), 3. Access to the study programme and recognition of learning outcomes (1 SP) and 5. Control measures, assessment of students and academic integrity (1 SP).

These study programmes are provided at the following HEIs: Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University (2 SPs), Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman (2 SPs), National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", National University of Life Resources and Environmental Sciences, National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy", Sumy State University, Cherkasy State Technological University, as well as in one scientific institution – the Mykhailo Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Life Quality Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

In this review, we analysed best practices identified in the study programmes for which, in the 2024/2025 academic year, NAQA made a decision on accreditation with the definition of "Exemplary", in accordance with the Accreditation Criteria specified in the Regulations on Accreditation (2024).

Criterion 1. Design of the study programme

Best practices under Criterion 1 emphasise the study programme's correspondence with global trends in relevant fields, aligning with its goals and learning outcomes (NaUKMA, NUBiP, ZPSU1, ZPSU2), as well as direct HEI's engagement with stakeholders during the development of the study programme (ChSTU, ID, KNEU1, KNEU2, NUBiP).

Accreditation results highlight the study programme's uniqueness in the Ukrainian higher education system, e.g. through enhanced programme learning outcomes and specialised competencies (ChSTU, ID, KNEU1, KNEU2), and integration of national educational requirements with international professional standards (ZPSU1). Among the best practices for **considering global trends in specialty development**, the following were highlighted:

- Designing the doctoral study programme in cooperation with colleagues from the Institute of Political Science and International Relations of the Jagiellonian University (Poland) and the Stockholm Analytical Centre for East European Studies (Sweden), involving representatives of the academic community of EU countries in reviewing the study programme (NaUKMA);
- Recognition of the study programme's compliance with international professional standards (CIMA, ACCA, IFA) and its accreditation by the CIMA Partnership Programme and the IPA-IFA Partner Programme (ZPSU1);
- Integrating experiences of international cooperation into the design of study programmes, particularly from the implementation of Erasmus+ and Tempus projects (ZPSU1, ZPSU2).

HEIs were aligning their study programmes with societal expectations and community needs through **direct engagement with external stakeholders** (ChSTU, ID, KNEU1, KNEU2, KPI, ZPSU1, ZPSU2). The following points were recognised as best practices:

- The functioning of the Professional Advisory Committee, which includes leading industry experts, and whose primary task is proposing improvements for study programmes (KNEU1, KNEU2);
- Consultations with professional organisations (ACCA, CIMA, IFA) during the study programme design (ZPSU1);
- Collaboration on joint projects of regional significance with external stakeholders (ChSTU);
- Incorporation of the three key components into the study programme: research conducted by academic staff that addresses the needs of industry and the region, the application of research findings by businesses, and the continuous improvement of the study programme and its educational components (KPI).

Additionally, the development of an IT company affiliated with HEI by the study programme's creators was recognised as a best practice. The outcome of its efforts was the creation and commercialisation of its innovative software product "Digital University UA," which facilitates a comprehensive digital transformation and digitalisation of HEI's activities. (ZPSU2).

Integrating the strategic priorities of the HEI into study programmes is exemplified by the emphasis on innovative development and the inclusion of a modern digital ecosystem in the educational process (KNEU2).

Thus, the exemplary practices in designing study programmes focus on engaging with external stakeholders to address societal needs and labour market demands, as well as global industry trends.

Criterion 2. Structure and content of the study programme

The innovativeness of their content characterises all the analysed study programmes. Among the exemplary practices noted:

- Taking into account current challenges and trends of the relevant industry within the study programme's content (ChSTU, KPI, NaUKMA, NUBiP, SumDU, ZPSU1, ZPSU2);
- Creating contemporary courses based on the research findings of academic staff (ID, KNEU2, KPI, NaUKMA, SumDU);
- Enhancing the core curriculum of mandatory disciplines by incorporating international best practices from professional organisations (CIMA, ACCA), while ensuring training aligns with the IFAC Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (ZPSU1);
- Integrating contemporary Big Data analysis techniques into academic curricula to examine demographic changes and socio-economic policies (ID);
- Emphasising digitalisation and change management in academic curricula (KNEU1);
- Introducing a behavioural laboratory as an experimental component in the structure of the study programme (SumDU).

The study programme's exemplary qualities are evident in its **focus on practice-oriented educational components**. Specifically, it includes:

- Training courses (KNEU1), practice-oriented authors' courses with the involvement of industry experts in teaching (NaUKMA);
- Training through practical projects in mandatory courses, led by the professionals (ZPSU2);
- Students' research assignments within the mandatory courses, collaborating

- with cultural institutions to implement cultural and artistic projects (ChSTU);
- Close collaboration with the HEI's Publishing House and industry enterprises, which provides the opportunities to utilise the consumables and resources of both employer enterprises and the HEI (KPI);
- Engaging students in projects commissioned by ministries, international organisations (such as UNFPA, UN, UNICEF, WHO) to address global and regional issues (ID);
- Implementation of dual education (ZPSU2).

The highest quality of **practical training** for students was recognised mainly due to the strong partnerships formed between HEIs and leading companies in relevant industries (KNEU1, KNEU2, KPI, NUBiP, ZPSU2). Examples include the following:

- In the second year, students practice at the HEI's base with representatives from leading IT companies, working on each topic under the guidance of practising specialists (ZPSU2).
- The doctoral study program, conducted within a research institution, has established exemplary cooperation with HEIs across various regions of Ukraine. This collaboration enables doctoral students to select their location for pedagogical practice based on their research and educational interests (ID).

In the context of expanding opportunities for the formation of an **individual educational trajectory** (ChSTU, NaUKMA, ZPSU1, ZPSU2), the following exemplary practices have been identified:

- Consolidation at the institutional level of a flexible approach to forming an individual educational trajectory for doctoral students, which provides wider opportunities for choosing courses provided by the partner HEIs in Ukraine and abroad (NaUKMA);
- Facilitating the creation of a comprehensive educational trajectory that includes mandatory components of the study programme as well as components from other study programmes available at the university and other HEIs in Ukraine, by utilising academic mobility programmes (ChSTU);
- Ensuring the synthetic nature of various types of design and art, with the possibility of variation in the student's choice of a design object by design types within all relevant courses (ChSTU);
- Providing a diverse range of elective subjects to develop social skills and enhance English proficiency for business communication (ZPSU1, ZPSU2).

In the context of students developing their **soft skills**, the following best practices were identified:

- Comprehensive development of a mentoring culture among students achieved

- by following methods: "peer-to-peer mentorship" - horizontal support system between postgraduate students from different courses that contribute to the development of facilitation skills and a culture of academic dialogue; "mentor beyond research" - mentors aid in shaping students' professional identities by guiding participating in grant competitions, opportunities for academic mobility, and enhancing public speaking skills; involvement of postgraduate students in mentoring master's and bachelor's students (NaUKMA);
- Active participation of practitioners within the framework of mandatory professional training courses, aiming at developing soft skills. In particular, these courses focus on essential skills such as crafting compelling pitches for investors and acceleration programmes, negotiating with customers, managing project teams, creating project budgets, assessing risks, and making informed management decisions (ZPSU2).

Therefore, the best practices for ensuring the quality of study programme content primarily involve engaging employers in the development, review, and implementation of its educational components. This collaboration strengthens the connection between study programmes and the needs of the labour market and society, forming a solid foundation for their practice-oriented nature.

Criterion 3. Access to the study programme and recognition of learning outcomes

According to Criterion 3, exemplary compliance was established for one study programme, which is implemented in the speciality 022 Design. The decision was based on exemplary consideration of the study programme's features in the admission criteria (ChSTU).

Criterion 4. Learning and teaching in the study programme

In the context of innovative learning and teaching methods, best practices include the use of interactive learning technologies such as situational analysis, business games, and case studies (ZPSU1). These methods help develop professional competencies, as well as analytical and critical thinking skills. Additionally, involving employers in the organisation and delivery of classes (KNEU1) is beneficial, as it allows the tasks to be based on real-world practices.

The exemplary practices of HEIs in **updating the content of the study programme's educational components** are based on:

- Taking into account modern achievements of the industry through the involvement of experts in a field and practising professionals in updating the

- educational components (ZPSU2);
- Cooperation with professional organisations, in particular, updating the educational components in accordance with the requirements of CIMA and ACCA certifications, taking into account the requirements of the exam for candidates for auditors (ZPSU1);
 - Utilising the results of academic staff members' research and internships (NUBiP, ZPSU1, ZPSU2,), EU projects relevant to the study programme (SumDU), as well as the author's innovative teaching methods (NaUKMA);
 - Reviewing by the academic community and professionals not only the study programme itself, but also its educational components (KNEU2).

The exemplary nature of HEIs' approaches to **internationalisation** was primarily determined by the high participation rates of both teachers and students in international academic mobility programmes, in particular, through the establishment of systematic cooperation with foreign HEIs and the implementation of joint projects (ChSTU, ID, NaUKMA, SumDU, ZPSU1, ZPSU2). Among the best practices, we also observe:

- Involving representatives of foreign partner HEIs (NaUKMA) in teaching of the mandatory courses;
- Introducing international peer review for the research results of doctoral students: before the defence of dissertation research; during open seminars involving international experts; through open peer review of articles, which ensures that the publications of doctoral students meet international standards of quality and academic integrity (ID);
- Stimulating the participation of students in the international CIMA Business Game (ZPSU1);
- Providing free access to over 30 databases: Scopus, Web of Science, Sci Val, Science Direct, Springer Nature, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Publishing, etc. (SumDU), functioning of the institutional repository of scientific materials eKMAIR, which contains 44 databases, over 100 thousand e-journals, e-books, etc., including: Web of Science, Scopus, EBSCO, JStor, ProQuest Dissertations, Springer, Gale, HINARY, ARDI, etc. (NaUKMA).

The effective **integration of teaching and research** in study programmes largely depends on the active involvement of students in various research projects, especially international ones (SumDU), engaging students in the creation of educational research assignments (KPI); and involving them in the development of the "Digital University" IS, which facilitates comprehensive management of the academic, scientific, and administrative activities of the HEI (ZPSU2).

Criterion 5. Control measures, assessment of students and academic integrity

A common practice observed across all analysed study programmes is the involvement of employers in the examination (certification) commission, which allows employer representatives to assess the learning outcomes of students. Moreover, a systematic effort to promote academic integrity within the academic community of the HEI has been emphasised.

For example, the participation of the department responsible for implementing the study programme in the Jean Monnet project "With Academic Integrity to EU Values: Step by Step to a Common Europe" has been recognised as best practice for fostering and sustaining a culture of academic integrity. This initiative aims to enhance the understanding of European culture and share best practices related to integrity and responsible citizenship (SumDU).

Criterion 6. Human resources

The **outstanding staffing** is recognised as the primary requirement for exemplary compliance with Criterion 6 across all analysed study programmes (ChSTU, ID, KNEU1, KNEU2, KPI, NaUKMA, NUBiP, SumDU, ZPSU1, ZPSU2). Among the best practices, the following are highlighted:

- Execution of the study programme by academic staff affiliated with a scientific school recognised by the international scientific community (ID, KNEU2, KPI, NUBiP);
- Significant publication activity of academic staff, in particular in international journals indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science (ChSTU, KNEU1, KNEU2, KPI, NaUKMA, SumDU, ZPSU1, ZPSU2);
- Participation of academic staff in international and national research projects (ChSTU, NaUKMA, SumDU) and international internships (ChSTU, NaUKMA, SumDU, ZPSU1, ZPSU2);
- Integrating research conducted by academic staff with their practical activities in the industry (NaUKMA, NUBiP, SumDU, ZPSU1, ZPSU2), their recognition as leading national and international experts (SumDU), membership in leading global organisations (SumDU, ZPSU1);
- Implementation of research commissioned by employers and conducted by academic staff, as well as scientific consulting of enterprises (KPI).

Among the best practices of **involving practitioners and employers in the educational process**, the following are highlighted:

- Involving leading industry practitioners (NUBiP, ChSTU, ZPSU2), representatives of relevant ministries, the diplomatic corps, and international non-governmental organisations (ID, NaUKMA) in teaching at the study programme;
- Establishing a 'University of social initiatives' and an 'HR university' within the department where the study programme is implemented. These initiatives provides guest lectures and training sessions led by practitioners in various subjects that are part of both the mandatory and elective components of the study programme (KNEU1);
- Involving foreign specialists with unique practical and research experience, as well as high recognition in the professional or academic community (SumDU), or systematically involving representatives of foreign HEIs and practitioners from foreign organisations in teaching at the study programme based on long-term partnership relations (NaUKMA).

Best practices for organising **professional development of academic staff** have also been identified, in particular:

- Systematic implementation of HEI's own professional development programmes (KNEU1, KNEU2, NaUKMA, SumDU, ZPSU1, ZPSU2);
- Functioning of specialised departments of HEIs that ensure the implementation of professional development programmes, for example, the Center for Human Resources Development, which forms personnel policy priorities, develops a system of qualification requirements for all categories of personnel, plans, stimulates and monitors achievements, analytical support for personnel development (SumDU), Profi+, the School for Professional Development of Academic Staff (NaUKMA), the Center for Teaching Excellence (KNEU1, KNEU2);
- Implementation of professional development programmes in collaboration with leading partner employers (KPI, ZPSU2) and international professional organisations (ZPSU1);
- One effective practice for promoting professional development is the competitive approach to budget formation for departments and institutes, which is based on the individual and collective achievements of academic staff members (SumDU). Additionally, HEI may successfully attract resources from graduates and partner charitable organisations to provide financial support for annual competitions aimed at enhancing the skills of academic staff (NaUKMA).

Therefore, the quality of staffing in study programmes is primarily influenced by academic staff's research activity and their cooperation with industry. It also relies on their engagement in the international educational environment and their ongoing professional development.

Criterion 7. Educational environment and material resources

Best practices under Criterion 7 were primarily identified in the context of providing the study programme with **modern educational and research equipment** (ChSTU, KNEU2, KPI, NUBiP, SumDU, ZPSU2, KNEU1), in particular, the use of:

- Modern laboratories accredited by specialised centres, equipment for modelling production processes, specialised software for analysing technological data (NUBiP);
- Laboratory and technical base of the Innovation Hub and Technology and Innovation Support Centre (TISC), where academic staff and students can work on their own projects and research (ZPSU2);
- A unique art laboratory based on the Cherkasy Regional Art Museum (ChSTU);
- A behavioural laboratory that allows conducting research using Eye Tracking and GSR technologies, where students have the opportunity to conduct research as part of their dissertations (SumDU);
- A fund for rare and valuable documents, which is used for practical classes (KPI);
- A video laboratory established under the Erasmus+ project "DEFEP-Distance Education for the Future," where teachers can record video lectures (KNEU2).

In the context of effectively distributing financial resources in HEIs, the innovative practice of using sub-accounts for departments and institutes has been identified. Each department has a sub-account that constitutes 15% of the total budget. These funds are allocated for labour remuneration, departmental needs, travel expenses, academic mobility, and equipment purchases. The innovative approach highlighted that department heads have the autonomy to utilise these funds (SumDU).

Among the good practices, measures to develop the **digital infrastructure** of HEIs were also highlighted, in particular:

- Automation of most processes of organisational and information support for students in the IS "Digital University" (ZPSU1, ZPSU2);
- Functioning of the MIX educational platform, where many services are available to students, in particular, "Individual learning trajectory", "Discipline assessment", "Survey", "Study card", "Study group", "Class schedule", "Electronic catalogue", "Assessment results", "Research publications", etc. (SumDU).

In the context of providing **various forms of support to higher education students**, the following best practices were highlighted:

- Motivational support for students for academic and scientific success in the form of scholarships and grants, which is provided by both HEI and partner

- organisations (NaUKMA);
- Availability and accessibility for students of the "Student Advisor" guide (KNEU1, KNEU2);
 - Diversified support for students provided by the Yukhymenko Family Doctoral School (NaUKMA).

Among the effective practices were identified implementation of the HEI's policy of inclusiveness and barrier-free educational environment (NaUKMA), social projects, in particular, "Library for Barrier-Freeness", "Family-Friendly University", aimed at promoting gender equality and creating equal opportunities for students with children (SumDU), and the activities of the Centre for Social and Psychological Service for Psychological Support of Students with Special Educational Needs (NUBiP) in the HEI.

A best practice recognised is the establishment of a learning space-shelter designed to accommodate approximately 500 people, allowing for uninterrupted studying and working during air raids. This shelter provides a safe educational environment and, due to its multifunctionality and comfort, is used not only during times of threat but also in peacetime as a co-working space and a venue for various events (KPI).

Therefore, exemplary performance under Criterion 7 relies on interactions with external stakeholders, which contributes to providing the study programme with modern, often unique, educational and laboratory equipment and software.

Criterion 8. Internal quality assurance of the study programme

The effective implementation of Criterion 8 requirements in all analysed study programmes was achieved through the proven efficiency of the internal quality assurance system established in HEIs (ChSTU, ID, KNEU1, KNEU2, KPI, NaUKMA, NUBiP, SumDU, ZPSU1, ZPSU2).

Best practices for internal quality assurance procedures include systematic internal audits of study programmes (KNEU1, KNEU2, ZPSU1, ZPSU2) and a comprehensive monitoring system for the quality of educational activities in HEI (NaUKMA).

The practices of including students in quality assurance procedures are noteworthy, particularly the rating of study programmes based on a thorough analysis of student survey results (SumDU), and the participation of students in monitoring and auditing the higher education quality in HEIs, which are conducted by the Centre for Education Quality Assurance (NaUKMA).

To effectively involve employers, graduates, and other external stakeholders in the periodic review and updating of study programmes, the following strategies were implemented: the operation of the Professional Advisory Committee with employer

and graduate representatives (KNEU1, KNEU2); joint initiatives between the HEI and business, e.g. annual business forum "Science-Business-Education: Strategic Partnership" (KNEU1, KNEU2); the integration of the study programme with the activities of leading enterprises in the industry, particularly within the IT sector (ZPSU2), state analytical institutes (ID), and state authorities (NaUKMA).

It was noted as best practice that a research institute (ID) successfully passed the certification for scientific institutions and entered the I classification group, which is recognised for its high level of achieved activity results.

Measures implemented by HEIs to develop a culture of quality in the academic environment were highlighted as exemplary practices. They include the implementation of international projects (OPTIMA, QuaRSU, REHAB), which contribute to improving the quality of education through the implementation of European standards (SumDU), as well as their own professional development programmes, for example, the ongoing training "Accreditation Coaching" for guarantors, members of study programmes' project groups and other academic staff of HEIs (KNEU1, KNEU2), or the project "Accreditation of Educational Programs: Mechanisms for Internal Quality Assurance of Education" (NaUKMA).

Criterion 9. Transparency and publicity

Considering transparency and publicity of the information about the study programmes and HEI's educational activities, the following best practices have been identified: implementation of a self-developed IS "Digital University", which provides for centralised digital coordination and interconnection of all key processes in HEI and access to information (ZPSU1, ZPSU2), use of various platforms and resources to present information about the study programmes (KPI, SumDU).

Criterion 10. Learning through research

For all three analysed doctoral study programmes (ID, NaUKMA, SumDU), exemplary compliance with Criterion 10 was determined. Typical for these study programmes is the participation of research supervisors, academic staff and higher education students in national and international research projects, receiving individual grants for scientific internships. For example, postgraduate students are involved in the implementation of 15 grant (research and consulting) projects, which are being implemented since 2022 jointly with the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena, Central European University, London School of Economics and Political Science, the Verkhovna Rada Apparatus, the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and the Association of Cities of Ukraine (NaUKMA).

The following are also identified as best practices in the context of implementing Criterion 10:

- Invitation to scientific co-supervision of foreign professors (NaUKMA);
- Formation of the potential composition of a one-time specialised academic council for doctoral students at the beginning of their studies (ID, NaUKMA);
- Opportunity for doctoral students and academic staff to publish their research findings free of charge in the HEI's own peer-reviewed journals, which are indexed in international scientometric databases, i.g, Scopus and Web of Science (NaUKMA, SumDU), and to participate in international conferences organised by HEI, indexed in Scopus, and publish abstracts of their presentations at no cost (SumDU).

Consequently, establishing a scientific community within HEIs that encourages and facilitates the planning, execution, and evaluation of research by doctoral students has become a vital prerequisite for achieving exemplary compliance with Criterion 10.

In conclusion, the study programmes accredited by NAQA with the designation "Exemplary" have been developed and continuously improved through close collaboration with employers and state authorities. Working with employers is one of the most effective strategies for addressing the needs of society and the labour market. This partnership ensures that the educational content is practical and relevant while providing the academic community access to modern equipment and software.

Another essential requirement for the successful implementation of these study programmes is establishing strong connections with the international academic and professional community. Active initiatives from HEIs include publication activities and the participation of faculty and students in international academic mobility programmes. These efforts have facilitated the involvement of foreign specialists in the development and review of study programmes, teaching courses, and co-supervision of dissertation research.

In conjunction with effective tools for systematic monitoring of higher education quality, these practices ensure compliance with the ESG-2015 standards and enhance the competitiveness of these HEIs at the national level.