

ENQA AGENCY REVIEW

KAZAKHSTAN ASSOCIATION OF MODERN (ELITE) EDUCATION (KAZSEE)

NORA SKABURSKIENE, LUNA LEE SOLHEIM,
ERDAL EMEL, ANN GVRITISHVILI
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This external review report analyses how the Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE meets the expectations of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It is based on an ENQA-coordinated external review conducted between February 2022 to March 2023 with a site visit between 8 and 10 November 2022. The purpose of this review is to provide information to the ENQA Board as the basis for making a decision on KAZSEE's membership in the association and applying for inclusion on EQAR. This was the first review of KAZSEE against the ESG and the panel made recommendations for further improvement of activities in order to fully comply with the ESG.

KAZSEE is a non-profit organisation in the form of an association of legal entities that was established in 2007 as a result of activities of the Tempus QUEECA Project which aimed at the creation and implementation of the quality assurance system of engineering education in Central Asian countries. In 2015, KAZSEE became a member of European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAE) and European Federation of National Engineering Associations (FEANI) and was given a right to award EUR-ACE Label. KAZSEE is the only ENAE representative in Central Asia whose accreditation is recognized by all ENAE member countries.

KAZSEE has been recognized by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MES RK) as an accreditation body since 2017 when it was listed in the National Register No. 1 of the MES RK for a period of five years.

Since 2018 KAZSEE implements regular accreditation activities on the programme as well as institutional level. At the beginning of its activities the agency had a scope of accreditation only for engineering programmes, but since 2021 after the change of the name into "Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education" it broadened its scope into evaluation of all types of study programmes. The Terms of Reference for this review include the following activities of KAZSEE: Institutional accreditation in Kazakhstan, programme accreditation in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and awarding EUR-ACE Label to educational programmes.

Considering the self-evaluation report, additional documents and evidence submitted by KAZSEE and as found on the KAZSEE's website, as well as based on the stakeholder interviews and impressions collected while talking to the KAZSEE staff during the site visit, the panel emphasises that KAZSEE has an established legal basis for its external quality assurance activities, conducts its activities on a regular basis and has sufficient resources for the daily operations.

The panel found KAZSEE to be compliant with the ESG as follows:

- Compliant for the following ESG: 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.7
- Partially compliant with the following ESG: 3.3, 3.4 and 2.6

Thus, the panel concludes that KAZSEE's activities are, overall, in compliance with the ESG.

INTRODUCTION

This report analyses the compliance of Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE, in the state language - Заңды тұлғалар бірлестігі “Қазақстанның Заманауи (Элиталық) Білім Ассоциациясы KAZSEE” “Kazakstannyn Zamanau (Elitalyk) Bilim Assotsiatsiyasy KAZSEE”, with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). It is based on an external review conducted in February 2022 until March 2023.

BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW AND OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

ENQA’s regulations require all member agencies to undergo an external cyclical review, at least once every five years, to verify that they act in compliance with the ESG as adopted at the Yerevan ministerial conference of the Bologna Process in 2015.

As this is KAZSEE’s first external review, the panel is expected to pay particular attention to the policies, procedures, and criteria in place, being aware that full evidence of concrete results in all areas may not be available at this stage.

SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

This review will analyse KAZSEE’s activities that fall within the scope of the ESG. The following activities of KAZSEE that will be addressed in this review are:

- Institutional accreditation in Kazakhstan
- Program accreditation in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan
- Awarding EUR-ACE Label to educational programs.

The following activities of the agency are outside of the scope of the ESG and will not be subject for this external review:

- Institutional accreditation of TVET (colleges)
- Programme accreditation of TVET (colleges)

Furthermore, KAZSEE has other activities that are performed through the KAZSEE International Certification Center LLP and the IGIP Training Centre. The review will also analyse whether these activities are clearly distinguished from the EQA and if there is confusion between these activities.

REVIEW PROCESS

The 2022 external review of KAZSEE was conducted in line with the process described in the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and in accordance with the timeline set out in the Terms of Reference. The panel for the external review of KAZSEE was appointed by ENQA and composed of the following members:

- Nora Skaburskiene (Chair), Director of Academic Affairs Office, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania (ENQA nominee)
- Luna Lee Solheim (Secretary), Senior Adviser, Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), Norway (ENQA nominee)
- Erdal Emel, Prof. Dr. in Industrial Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering, Uludağ University, Bursa, Turkey (EUA nominee)

- Ann Gvritshvilia, PhD student in Economic, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia (ESU nominee - Member of the European Students' Union Quality Assurance Student Experts Pool)

Milja Homan (Project and Reviews Officer), acted as the review coordinator.

The review followed the consistent review process of ENQA, with the agency, KAZSEE, providing a self-assessment report (SAR). The review panel was briefed and prepared by the ENQA review coordinator and provided with all background information, including the SAR which was presented to the review panel on 16 August 2022 and additional information requested by the panel received on 24 and 25 October 2022. The panel briefing was on 28 September 2022 and a preliminary online clarification meeting with the panel and with KAZSEE's resource people was scheduled on 17 October 2022. Online meeting for clarification with KAZSEE took place on 7 November 2022. A site visit was carried out on 8 – 10 November 2022 to interview members of the agency and relevant stakeholders for clarifications and gather additional evidence.

Self-assessment report

KAZSEE's self-assessment report (SAR) was developed under the control of the KAZSEE President. The working group included the President, Vice President, Accountant, Director of Strategic Development and External Relations, Director of Administrative Affairs, and KAZSEE coordinators prepared the initial draft of the self-assessment report in March 2022 and was submitted to the management for discussion and additions. The final version of the SAR was prepared by the end of June 2022.

The SAR contained information on:

- The regulatory documents relating to the work of KAZSEE
- Structure, financing, and development of human resources
- QA in Kazakhstan
- How KAZSEE meet the ESG part II and III
- SWOT analysis
- Key challenges and areas for further development
- Procedure of Accreditation
- Educational Program Assessment Guidelines

The SAR was not always clear in relation to describing how the agency meets the ESG standards, and clarification and additional documentation was needed to support the SAR. KAZSEE provided the additional information that the review panel requested.

The SAR had many links to websites which clearly are important parts of the documentation. These were often not easily accessed as the website is slow and not always compatible with recent versions of web browsers. The English translation also takes time to upload. Important documents to the SAR should be attached to avoid inconvenience.

The KAZSEE SWOT analysis is presented in the SAR p. 57 and 58, where the agency identifies their strengths and opportunities as well as weaknesses and important threats that may impact future activities of the agency. Identified weaknesses are insufficient knowledge of English among agency employees, lack of an electronic document flow control system, poor coverage of reviews from the professional community of employers due to their low interest, and limited possibility of an external visit due to quarantine and COVID-19 pandemic. Identified threats are instability of the financial and

economic situation in the country and the world, emergency situations (epidemics, COVID-19 pandemic, artificial threats, and natural phenomena), growing competition (including unfair competition) in the field of accreditation and insufficient participation of the employer in the educational activities of the EO. The identified weaknesses and threats from the SWOT analysis could have been more visible in the strategy plan identifying the risks and considering activities and plans for managing these risks.

Site visit

The first draft programme for the site visit was sent to KAZSEE on 21 September 2022 after it was discussed with the panel members and ENQA review coordinator. The process for the improvement and for the final programme was made in close cooperation between KAZSEE, namely through the agency contact person and the secretary of the panel. Input from the agency has been discussed with the panel members during the process.

The programme included interview sessions with the President and Vice-president of KAZSEE, the chair and members of the Accreditation Council and the Supervisory Board, the founders, directors and members of the staff. The panel also met various stakeholders, including a representative of the Ministry, heads of higher education institutions, quality managers from different higher education institutions, reviewers, student representatives, and external stakeholders. See Annex I for an overview of the programme for the site visit.

The KAZSEE contact person and the staff of the agency demonstrated significant professionalism during the entire review process and provided excellent assistance to the panel regarding all matters. At the end of the online review, the review panel held an internal meeting with the agency where it presented preliminary findings relating to the standards in part 2 and 3 of the ESG. The secretary of the review panel then drafted the report in cooperation with the rest of the panel. The draft report was submitted to KAZSEE for factual verification on 20 February 2023 and with reference to ENQA guidelines KAZSEE was given two weeks to comment on the factual accuracy of the report.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF THE AGENCY

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Higher education is regulated by the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, with amendments adopted in 2018 “On amendments and additions to certain legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the expansion of the academic and managerial independence of HEIs” (dated July 4, 2018, No. 171.VI.).

The amendments provide the HEIs with expanded academic, managerial and financial independence (SAR, page 7). The HEIs in Kazakhstan got the opportunity to independently develop programmes in accordance with the European Qualification Framework and issue diplomas of their own design. Furthermore, the academic independence of the HEIs/universities has made it possible for student-centred learning involving students to take part in the development of the programmes, design and participate in the QA work through student unions and participate in collegiate management bodies. (SAR page 8)

The general legal framework for the system of higher education in the Republic of Kazakhstan are based on the following legal documents:

- Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated August 30, 1995
- Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education” No. 319-III dated July 27, 2007

- Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On amendments and additions to certain legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the issues of expanding the academic and managerial independence of higher educational institutions” No. 171-VI dated July 4, 2018
- Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Science” No. 407-IV dated February 18, 2011
- Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On State Youth Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan” No. 285-V dated February 9, 2015
- “Strategic Development Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2025”
- The State Program for the Development of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2016-2019 and the State Program for the Development of Education and Science in the Republic of Kazakhstan for the period from 2020 to 2025

There are 129 Higher education institutions (HEI), 41 public and 84 private HEIs in Kazakhstan. There are four institutions with foreign participation (SAR page 7 and 87). These were created based on the Intergovernmental Agreement between Kazakhstan and Turkey, USA, Germany, and Great Britain.

There are more than 575,000 students and the number of faculty members is more than 36,000 people. (SAR page 85).

HE and degree structure in Kazakhstan is as follows:

- Undergraduate programmes with a duration of 4 years
- Graduate programmes master’s at least 2 years and profile training for at least 1 year
- Doctoral programmes with a duration of 3 years

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan establishes the status and powers of the accreditation bodies, including the independence of the educational organisation in choosing the accreditation body. In the Kazakh national context educational organisations refer to higher education institutions. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan has determined the requirements and procedure for the recognition of accreditation bodies, including foreign ones. According to the SAR the status of a non-profit organisation is a prerequisite for the recognition of an accreditation body (Rules for the recognition of accreditation bodies¹) and the formation of registers of recognized accreditation bodies, accredited Educational Organisation (EO) and Educational Programme (EP) (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated November 1, 2016, No. 629). According to the Rules for the recognition of accreditation bodies, including foreign ones, and the formation of registers of recognized accreditation bodies, accredited educational organisations, and educational programs, three Registers have been formed:

- Register 1 - List of recognized accreditation bodies,
- Register 2 - List of accredited educational organisations that have been accredited by accreditation bodies from Register 1,
- Register 3 - List of accredited educational programs that have been accredited by accreditation bodies from Register 1.

The laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan establish the status and powers of accreditation bodies, the voluntary nature of accreditation, the independence of HEIs in choosing an accreditation body. The HEI can choose an accreditation agency through the bidding procedure. Only the agencies that are listed in Register No. 1 can file a proposal in the public procurement procedure. The government also requires that only agencies that have acquired full ENQA membership and registered in EQAR can be

¹ <https://adilet.zan.kz/eng/docs/V1600014438>

included in the national register of recognised accreditation bodies (Register I). Currently, the Register No. 1² lists 12 accreditation agencies: 6 national and 6 foreign agencies.

- National agencies: IAAR, IQAA, KAZSEE, ARQA, ECAQA and Independent Kazakhstan Centre of Accreditation.
- Foreign agencies: FIBAA, ASIIN, ABET, MusiQuE, ACQUIN and ACBSP.

In connection with the rebranding in 2021, the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated October 04, 2021, and the change in the regulatory framework for accreditation in Kazakhstan, KAZSEE has widened its activities and will evaluate and accredit HEIs (institutional accreditation, IA) and EPs (programme accreditation, PA) from all study fields (previously it's accreditation was targeted to the Engineering programmes only).

KAZAKHSTAN ASSOCIATION OF MODERN (ELITE) EDUCATION KAZSEE

KAZSEE was established in 2007 as part of the implementation of the European Union TEMPUS project “The quality of engineering education in Central Asia”. TEMPUS QUEECA involved partners from the Central Asian Region as well as partners from the European Union. With the implementation of the TEMPUS QUEECA in Kazakhstan the Kazakhstan Association for Engineering Education KAZSEE was established. At the suggestion of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a partial rebranding of the association was carried out, specialising in engineering, and also widening the scope of activities to other programme areas. It was renamed to Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE in 2021.

Today KAZSEE is a representative and a member of various international organisations such as the International Consortium of Engineering Education Societies IFEES, European Federation of National Engineering Societies FEANI, International Society for Engineering Pedagogy IGIP, International Quality Assurance Network INQAAHE, European network for accreditation in the field of engineering education ENAEE, Observatory for Academic Ranking and Excellence IREG and an affiliate of ENQA. KAZSEE was included in Register I (see above about the three Registers formed according to the Rules for the recognition of accreditation bodies) by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and recognised as an accreditation body in 2017.

The *Charter of the legal entities Association “Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE”* states that KAZSEE is a non-profit organisation:

2.17 The Association management bodies shall carry out their activities on the basis of the following principles:

- strict compliance with the Republic of Kazakhstan laws;
- independence and autonomy of its founders (members);
- transparency and openness;
- the voluntary nature of founding (membership);
- accountability of governing bodies.

[...]

3.1 The aim of the Association is to contribute to the improvement and development of modern education and educational activities in Kazakhstan in all their manifestations related to educational, research, innovative and technological areas, including the processes of teaching as well as educational organizations and educational programs accreditation. Consulting, research, development of new technological solutions, commercialization and technology transfer, providing a wide range of educational services, providing public relations, production and science.

² https://enic-kazakhstan.edu.kz/en/accreditation/accredited_organizations

[...]

- 3.2. (...) conducting institutional accreditation of educational organizations;
- conducting program accreditation of educational programs in the following fields of education:
 - science, mathematics and statistics;
 - information and communication technology;
 - engineering, manufacturing and construction industries;
 - agriculture and bio-resources;
 - pedagogical sciences;
 - arts and humanities;
 - social sciences, journalism and information;
 - business, management and law;
 - veterinary;
 - health care and social welfare (medicine);
 - service sphere.
 - it supports and implements education quality assurance activities; (...)

KAZSEE received the right to award the EUR-ACE Label in 2017 after being assessed and given recognition by ENAEE. KAZSEE is the only ENAEE representative in Central Asia whose accreditation is recognized by all ENAEE member countries.

KAZSEE'S ORGANISATION/STRUCTURE

The Heads of the agency are the President and Vice President who are responsible for the day-to-day operations. The President is appointed by the KAZSEE Founding Members / Association Members for a five-year term. (Source *Charter of the legal entities Association "Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE"*).

The Supervisory Board is approved by KAZSEE's founders for a three-year term and consists of at least five members. Their tasks are to review and approve the annual report on KAZSEE's activities and plans for the following period and it has the right to review relevant KAZSEE documentation and its structural subdivisions to perform functions within its competence and decide on issues taken up for consideration. (Source *Charter of the legal entities Association "Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE."*)

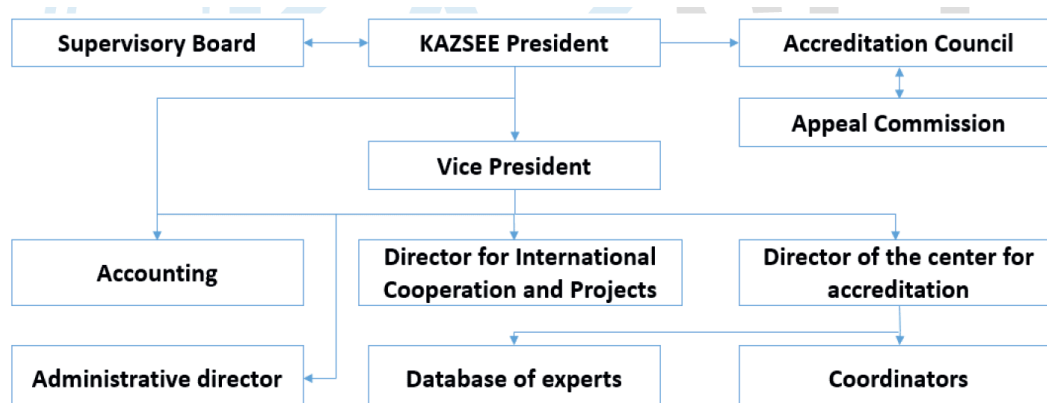


Figure 1: Organisation chart of the structure of KAZSEE

The KAZSEE Accreditation Council (AC KAZSEE) is the decision-making body of the agency and has 14 members. The composition is formed based on recommendations from public or professional associations and state bodies. This includes representatives of the academic fields, foreign academic experts, employer experts, representatives of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs and a student expert. The composition of the Accreditation Council is approved by the order of the President of the agency. The terms of election of the members do not exceed five years for one term, but they can be re-elected for a new term. The Chairman of the Accreditation Council is elected by the AC, while the Secretary is appointed by order of the President of KAZSEE. (SAR page 19 and requested additional documentation).

The Appeals Commission is formed for a period of three years and has three members. They are elected based on proposals from universities, employers and by KAZSEE. The composition and members of the Appeals Commission are approved by the order of the President of KAZSEE. The Chairman is elected by the members of the commission.

KAZSEE plans to introduce a new body - Expert Council for Higher Education (EC), which according to the plan will have 11 members. The EC is in a very early stage and is still in the making. The panel was provided with the regulations on Expert Councils. It is a permanent public body of experts and an information and advisory support for KAZSEE. The purpose of the EC is to coordinate the work of KAZSEE experts. The EC is created by the order of the president of KAZSEE, and the members will be leading specialists from the industry, scientific and educational activities. The EC meetings are planned to be held as needed and at least once a year.

KAZSEE'S FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES, PROCEDURES

The external QA activities of KAZSEE within the scope of ESG concern institutional accreditation in Kazakhstan, programme accreditation in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and awarding EUR-ACE Label to educational programmes. The programme accreditation in Uzbekistan follows the same accreditation methodology, procedure and standards as programme accreditation in Kazakhstan. Since 2018 KAZSEE has carried out several institutional and program accreditations and was awarded the EUR-ACE Label by ENAEE. The mission and aims of ENAEE is to enhance and promote the quality of engineering education and their graduates. This corresponds with KAZSEE's tasks of accreditation and quality assurance of technological and engineering education in Kazakhstan.

Table 1: Number of accreditation 2018 - 2022

Procedure type	Institutional and program accreditation					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Total
Institutional accreditation	0	6	8	1	0	15
Program accreditation	18	113	135	129	60	455
International program accreditation (Uzbekistan)	0	0	0	5	0	5
Awarding of the EUR-ACE® Label*	6	13	13	2	0	34

KAZSEE also conducts institutional and programme accreditation of TVET in Kazakhstan. However, these activities are outside the scope of the ESG. IGIP training Centre and KAZSEE International Certification Centre LLP are under development. The Kazakhstan Training Center IGIP provides advanced courses under the program of the International Society for Engineering Pedagogy IGIP. Upon

completion of the course, the title of "International Teacher of Engineering University (ING-PAED)" is awarded. The KAZSEE International Certification Centre LLP is undergoing accreditation by the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan «Atameken» (NCE Atameken) and is going to award professional certificates of Engineer in cooperation with FEANI. These are side activities outside the scope of the ESG.

Institutional accreditation (IA)

This activity focuses on the organisation and functioning of the entire university. The areas of teaching and learning, research and internal self-government of the university are included in the evaluation procedure. Analysis and evaluation are carried out in terms of decisions-making, institutional structures, resources, strategic management effectiveness, internal quality assurance tools, application of teaching and learning methods, and the direction of the university's research. The *Standards for accreditation of higher education* were approved by the AC on 18 June 2021.

Programme accreditation (PA)

The *Standards for specialized educational programs accreditation of higher education* was approved by the AC on 18 June 2021. KAZSEE carries out programme accreditation of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programmes. The university applies for accreditation (institutional or programme) to KAZSEE. KAZSEE provides the HEIs with guidance for the preparation of the SAR. KAZSEE checks that the submitted SAR is complete and if necessary, requests additional information. KAZSEE organises and coordinates the assessment procedure, and is responsible for appointing the panel of experts, training the expert and for the expert report.

KAZSEE'S FUNDING

KAZSEE is a non-profit organisation whose income is fully directed to the development of the agency. The budget is formed from its own activities, and the main sources of its income are related to external QA activities, such as accreditation of HEI (IA) and programmes (PA). Organising seminars and participation in international projects are also relevant sources of income. The budget in 2020 amounted to 120,569 thousand tenge (243 067 Euro), and in 2021 to 96,632 thousand tenge (194 810 Euro).

The agency employs ten employees in total, including the President, Vice President, Accountant, Director of Strategic Development and External Relations, Director of Administration, coordinators, and technical staff (SAR page 27). Office expenses in 2021 were 41 586 Euro and the salary fund is 53 174 Euro.

Table 2: KAZSEE revenue and expenses

KAZSEE Revenue	2020	2021
1. Accreditation Service Fee	260 937 €	235 911 €
2. Payment for seminars and consultations outside the accreditation procedure	17 437 €	1 059 €
3. International projects	20 564 €	8 576 €
4. Total	298 938 €	245 546 €

KAZSEE Expenses	2020	2021
1. Office expenses	20 001 €	41 586 €
2. Salary fund	38 137 €	53 174 €
3. Business trips	20 090 €	8 888 €
4. Membership fees in international networks	6 571 €	17 765 €
5. Taxes and fees	39 708 €	54 258 €
6. External contracts (including contracts with experts)	56 288 €	45 276 €
7. Purchase of office space	68 573 €	79 274 €
8. Website development	1 279 €	1 279 €

FINDINGS: COMPLIANCE OF KAZSEE WITH THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (ESG)

ESG PART 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

ESG 3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY, AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

Evidence

The purpose of KAZSEE is clearly defined in its charter, and the implementation of all quality assurance procedures in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is based on international standards and the ESG. The stakeholders have been involved in the making of the agency, its charter and legislation.

The *Charter of the legal entities Association “Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE”* which is published on the website states the objectives and mission of the agency. The aim is as described in Section 3.1 “[...] the Association is to contribute to the improvement and development of modern education and educational activities in Kazakhstan [...] related to education, research, innovative and technological areas, including the process of teaching as well as educational organizations and educational programs accreditation.”. The agency’s activities are described in section 3.2 addressing the following objectives:

- contributing to building a system and creating conditions for the training and development of a new generation of highly educated professionals capable of implementing sustainable dynamic economic development and breakthrough development in various fields of practice;
- conducting institutional accreditation of educational organizations;
- conducting program accreditation of educational programs in the following fields of education:
 - information and communication technology;
 - engineering, manufacturing and construction industries;
 - agriculture and bio-resources;
 - pedagogical sciences;
 - arts and humanities;
 - social sciences, journalism and information;
 - business, management and law;
 - veterinary;
 - health care and social welfare (medicine);
 - service sphere.

KAZSEE carries out institutional accreditations in accordance with the *Standards for Accreditation of Higher Education Institution*, approved by KAZSEE AC on 18 June 2021. External reviews of programmes (bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral programmes) are carried out in accordance with the *Standards for*

Specialized Educational Programs Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, approved by KAZSEE AC on 18 June 2021.

KAZSEE received in November 2017 the right to award EUR-ACE Label to engineering programmes. The accreditation procedure is almost the same as the usual accreditation procedure, except that the ENAEE/EUR-ACE learning outcomes for bachelor or master are added to the *Standards for Specialized Educational Programs Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*. (See Appendix A of KAZSEE SAR *Standards for Specialized Educational Programs Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions* for ENAEE standards and EUR-ACE guidelines.)

In 2021 KAZSEE carried out transnational programme accreditation at Yeoju Technical Institute in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It included five programmes. The same procedure, process and methodology as the national PA were followed, and in accordance with standards and requirements for the EUR-ACE Label approved by ENAEE. KAZSEE is aiming for conducting transnational accreditations, and has received applications from Tunisia, Azerbaijan, Jordan and Russia.

The agency regularly conducts external quality assurance activities as defined in ESG Part 2 as presented in the plan for accreditation activities for 2022-2023 in table 3. See also table 1 for the number of accreditations since 2018.

Table 3: Plan for 2022 – 2023 Institutional and programme accreditation

Eos	Type of accreditation	Accreditation deadline
Buketov Karaganda University	8 specialized accreditation	November 2022
Yeoju Technical Institute in Tashkent	3 specialized accreditation	
Zhubanov University	10 specialized accreditation	November 2022
Satpaev University	4 specialized accreditation	November 2022
Caspian University	10 specialized accreditation	December 2022
Baishev University	1 institutional accreditation 10 specialized accreditation	December 2022
Abai Myrzakhmetov Kokshetau University	11 specialized accreditation	December 2022
Caspian University	9 specialized accreditation	April 2023

The Development Strategy for KAZSEE 2021 – 2025 includes the tasks defined in the strategic documents of the state, such as the *National Project Quality Education “Educated Nation”* and takes into account the increasing role and importance of the accreditation institution as a mechanism for ensuring the quality of education. The development strategy of KAZSEE for 2022-2025 which was approved at the meeting of the KAZSEE Supervisory Board defines the mission, vision, strategic goals, objectives, main lines of action, and areas for further development. The Development Strategy is published on the agency webpage.

According to the SAR, KAZSEE's internal QA system is the basis for continuous improvement of the agency's work and supports the translation of the agency's mission into daily activities such as ensuring development and implementation of documented work processes, compliance with laws and regulation and analysis for qualitative and quantitative feedback. Quantitative feedback is described as follows:

- monitoring of infrastructure, running projects, such as collecting activity data to assess how well KAZSEE has achieved its goals. The staff gives feedback on launched projects, for instance if there are internal or external factors causing changes in the planned work.
- standardised electronic questionnaires are used systematically to receive feedback from internal and external stakeholders (universities, experts, committees, and bodies of KAZSEE).

The KAZSEE development strategy and quality control is approved by the Supervisory Board. The President determines the policy for the implementation of strategic objectives for quality control.

There are formal documents for the accreditation activities of KAZSEE approved by the AC in 2021: The procedure for accreditation and KAZSEE standards for IA and PA.

KAZSEE has other activities such as KAZSEE International Certification Centre LLP and the IGIP Training Centre, which are side activities that are not directly related to the activities of KAZSEE and are defined as outside the scope of the ESG. KAZSEE International Certification Centre LLP which was created by the founders of KAZSEE - NAS HSC of Kazakhstan (National Academy of Sciences of Higher School of Kazakhstan) is a certification project for specialists. The Kazakhstan Training Center IGIP conducts advanced courses under the program of the International Society for Engineering Pedagogy IGIP. Upon completion of the course, the title of "International Teacher of Engineering University (ING-PAED)" is awarded. IGIP is a centre at the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Both centres are still under development. (SAR and additional documentation from KAZSEE 17 November 2022).

The key stakeholders of KAZSEE are universities, national and international experts involved in accreditation processes, employers and students (SAR, p. 20). Stakeholders are involved in the governance and work of KAZSEE through their membership in the Accreditation Council, through involvement into the processes of accreditation as experts, development of the accreditation standards, and through participation in surveys and seminars. The AC has 14 members, and includes representatives from the academic field/HEIs, representatives from foreign academic experts and foreign HEIs, employer experts, representatives of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs and a student. The members, including the student member of the AC, are involved in the accreditation decisions, and in developing the accreditation standards and process. The standards for institutional and programme accreditation were approved (2018) and revised (2021) were developed jointly with external stakeholders, such as members of the AC, representatives of universities, employers, and students (SAR page 19). In the preparation for the next re-accreditation by ENAEE, KAZSEE involved student alliances in its work (SAR page 21). The results of the surveys and non-formal discussions with the HEIs and with the academic field, employers and students' experts are taken into consideration in order to improve QA procedures, and these results are discussed with the AC at least once a year (SAR page 20). The participation of external stakeholders is ensured by the conclusions of memorandums of cooperation with professional associations, the Alliance of Students of Kazakhstan (AKS), and with the involvement of representatives of employers and the student community (SAR page 41).

Analysis

KAZSEE conducts regular reviews every year. The process is well organised and the standards for accreditation, procedures and guidelines are formalised and published. KAZSEE has three types of

activities (IA, PA, and award of EUR-ACE Label) within the terms of reference of the KAZSEE review. After analysis of SAR and additional documents as well as after discussions with KAZSEE staff, the panel found that the assessment of the EUR-ACE Label is integrated in the PA reports, as the standards for the EUR-ACE Label are covered with the KAZSEE standards and the ESG.

There is a clear distinction of non-ESG activities: institutional and programme accreditation of TVET in Kazakhstan (it is not linked with the higher education level); activities of IGIP training Centre and KAZSEE International Certification Centre LLP. The panel analysed the activities of IGIP training Centre and Certification Centre LLP and found them under development. Both centres are linked with international networks: IGIP Centre - with the International Society for Engineering Pedagogy IGIP and LLP Centre - with the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan «Atameken». Both activities are targeted towards improvement and certification of professional competences of academic staff. These activities were developed in line with the State programme for development of education and research in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2025. All certificates are going to be listed in the register of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan «Atameken». Both activities are not linked with the accreditation procedures of KAZSEE, evaluation coordinators are not involved in development or implementation of training and certification of professional competences. However, with further development of these activities, KAZSEE should ensure that all processes are clearly documented, published and lead to separation of KAZSEE's accreditation processes and additional services.

The panel found that KAZSEE has a mission, goals and objectives as defined in the charter, the strategy and through the discussions at the site visit. KAZSEE has provided the panel with a strategy plan together with a yearly plan. The planning process is very important for a small agency and requires regular monitoring to adapt to the changes and to secure the high level of procedures and outcomes. During the interviews the panel was told that external monitoring of KAZSEE activities is implemented by the Ministry. Agency provides yearly plans and activity reports to the Ministry every year. Internal monitoring is implemented by the Supervisory Board, which is the main body in development of the Strategy plan and in monitoring its implementation. However, the structure of the Strategy plan does not contain any indicators, and this makes it difficult to assess whether the foreseen strategic goals have been reached. Therefore, the panel encourages the agency to look into this and set up indicators when working with the strategy plan.

The panel supports the results and findings in KAZSEE SWOT analysis (presented in SAR p. 57.), where the agency identifies several important threats that may impact future activities of the agency: instability of the financial and economic situation in the country and the world; emergency situations (epidemics, COVID-19 pandemic, artificial threats and natural phenomena); growing competition (including unfair competition) in the field of accreditation; insufficient participation of the employers in the educational activities of the EO (SAR, p. 58). However, the Strategic plan for 2021-2025 does not identify any risks or activities that should be taken in case the changes happen. It is not clear how KAZSEE will address new key challenges in case of the changes of Law or decline/increase of the numbers of requests by HEIs for external procedures. During the interview the President said that the risks are being discussed in between the management and possible scenarios are developed, but they are not formalised as a document.

Based on the information provided in SAR as well as in additional documentation and gathered during the site visit the panel confirms that KAZSEE carries on regular external quality assurance activities in accordance with predefined standards and procedures that are published on the website of the agency. External QA is the main activity of KAZSEE.

The panel found that KAZSEE is open to involve all stakeholders (academics, researchers, employers, students) in the governance and work of the agency. The KAZSEE AC consists of external stakeholders as members and the students are involved in the decision-making of institutional and programme accreditation as a member of the AC. Furthermore, the students are also involved in the accreditation processes as student experts (70 students in the expert database) and they have been involved in the survey and non-formal discussions with the agency with the purpose to improve QA procedures. The surveys and non-formal discussions were mentioned at the site visit by the academic and student experts, as well as those representing the HEIs. There is no doubt that the stakeholders have been involved in the making of the agency, developing the standards and accreditation procedures, and are in various levels of involvement and participate in discussions of the governance and KAZSEEs work, and that the students are part of the decision-making and accreditation procedure.

The stakeholders (from HEIs and one foreign experts) are represented as members in the Supervisory Board. Though the Kazakh legislation does not require student members, KAZSEE should consider formal involvement of students as members in the Supervisory Board.

There are also examples of projects as a result of such stakeholder's involvement (for example, ERASMUS+ project ACADEMICA: Accessibility and harmonization of higher education in Central Asia through curriculum modernization and development, which aims to promote voluntary convergence with EU experience in engineering research). KAZSEE should however further strengthen a more systematic involvement of the stakeholders, such as in the thematic analysis and feedback for the continuous improvement of KAZSEE's work.

Panel recommendations

1. The strategy plan should reflect the goals and objectives of KAZSEE and the plan for achieving these goals including indicators.
2. Formalise the processes of risk identification and development of possible actions.
3. Strengthen the formal involvement of stakeholders in the work of the agency.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

1. With further development of activities in IGIP Training Centre and KAZSEE International Certification Centre LLP KAZSEE will have to ensure that all processes are clearly documented, published and lead to separation of accreditation processes and the additional services.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS

Standard:

Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.

Evidence

The Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MES RK) issued a decree on 27.09.2017 No. 482 on recognition of KAZSEE as an accreditation body and inclusion in Register No.1

for a period of five years. This allows KAZSEE to engage in accreditation activities. During the site visit of the panel, KAZSEE was in the process of acquiring permission for continuing activities for the next period of five years.

With the new legislation in Kazakhstan KAZSEE must apply membership to ENQA and be registered in EQAR to get a renewal as an accreditation body in Kazakhstan (after the order of acting Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated October 4, 2021, No. 499).

The Part 2 of the agency charter describes the legal status of KAZSEE. In the Charter section 2.9 it is stated that to reach statutory goals and objectives the Association shall cooperate with central and local governments, authorised central executive bodies, research and educational institutions, international and other organisations as well as it may join international non-profit (non-governmental) organisations. In section 2.17 it is further stated that the Association management bodies shall carry out their activities based on principles in strict compliance with the Republic of Kazakhstan laws, independence and autonomy of its founders, transparency and openness, voluntary nature of founding (membership) and accountability of governing bodies.

KAZSEE is a non-profit association of legal entities and was created at a seminar-meeting of rectors in 2007. It was established by the Republican Public Association “National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan”, the association of legal entities “Association Kazakhstan National Monitoring Committee IGIP”, the institution “National Academy of Sciences of Higher School of Kazakhstan”, and the association of legal entities “The Union of Machine Builders of Kazakhstan. These are founding members of KAZSEE. The KAZSEE Charter *Chapter 4 Association Membership* lays out the regulation for the founders (members) of KAZSEE:

4.1 The Association Membership is voluntary, the Association members may be republican, industry, regional (regions, national important cities and capitals) and other associations of private businesses (non-profit organizations), private businesses (commercial organizations) as well as individuals who recognize the Association Charter, share its goals and objectives, who have paid entrance and membership fees, participating in the Association activities.

4.2 The Association Founders shall be its Members. The Association Members shall have equal rights and equal obligations.

4.3 The Association is an open public non-profit organization. The number of its members is unlimited.

KAZSEE is part of a new professional structure in Kazakhstan involved in the process of building a domestic, social, and professional qualification recognition system, integrated in the European area and recognised in the global market of educational services and labour (SAR, page 24).

The agency expanded the geography of its activities and conducted transnational accreditation in Uzbekistan. And from November 2017, KAZSEE was given the rights to award EUR-ACE Label by ENAEE for the engineering educational programmes.

Analysis

The legal basis for KAZSEE's establishment and activities as a quality assurance agency is clearly stated in the binding decision of the government of Kazakhstan in the Ministerial decree of 2017. The KAZSEE Charter further describes the legal status of KAZSEE and the regulation of KAZSEE's structure, management, provision, and activities. Given KAZSEE's rights to award EUR-ACE Label for engineering programmes, the agency has already status as a qualified quality assurance agency. The panel's observation from the meetings with the founders, the Ministry, and other stakeholders, supported the documentation of KAZSEE as a formally recognised quality assurance agency by competent public authorities.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE

Standard:

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

Evidence

Organisational independence

The order of the MES RK No. 499 dated October 4, 2021, and the KAZSEE Charter regulates the legal form of KAZSEE. The independence of agency's activities from the third parties is set in the Charter section 2.12 which states that interference in activities of the agency by state, public and other bodies shall not be allowed, and in section 2.17 that the agency shall carry out their activities independently and autonomously of its founders/members. The legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of education outlines the lines of operational independence by explaining the status and powers of accreditation bodies, the voluntary nature of accreditation, the independence of higher education institutions in choosing the accreditation body.

The President of KAZSEE is appointed by the KAZSEE Founding members for a five-year term. Candidates for the position of the President could be proposed by any founding member. See ESG 3.2 about KAZSEE Founding members. The Charter of the agency does not foresee limitations for renewal of the term or dismissal procedure of the President. The Vice-president is selected and appointed by the President of KAZSEE.

KAZSEE Supervisory Board is appointed for a three-year term and consists of at least five members. The members are professors, presidents, or general directors from different HEIs and other stakeholders. Their tasks are to review and approve the annual report on KAZSEE's activities and plans for the following period. The Charter states under section 10.3 that the Supervisory Board may not include the Association's executive body or its regular employees. The Charter does not foresee the possibility of renewal of the term or dismissal of the members. KAZSEE provided the panel with a list with names of the members of the Supervisory Board.

The President of KAZSEE approves the composition of the KAZSEE Accreditation Council (AC KAZSEE), which is the decision-making body of IA and PA. The 14 members are representatives of the academic fields, foreign academic experts, employer experts, representatives of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs and a student. The candidates are nominated by respective organisations. The composition of the members of AC is updated by one third every three years. The term of election is five years and could be renewed for another five-year term. It is foreseen that the members of AC may resign from the Council based on their own free will or may be expelled from the Council by decision of AC in case of missing more than five meetings in a row. The members of the AC are published on KAZSEE's website.

Operational independence

The Procedure for Accrediting Educational Programs and Procedure for Accreditation of Educational Organizations establish the requirements for the accreditation procedure in this way securing the operational independence. Nomination and appointment of external experts are undertaken

independently from third parties, such as HEIs, government and other stakeholders. In this way KAZSEE secures the independence of its operations.

Independence of formal outcomes

KAZSEE explains that they secure the independence of their outcomes and are responsible for the final outcomes of the QA procedures. Regulations of QA procedures establish that the university under review is asked to identify any factual errors in the report, but neither HEI, nor any other party can influence the conclusions of the expert panel. Final accreditation decision is made by the AC KAZSEE based on the expert report.

Analysis

The formal and legal documents state the independence and the autonomous role of the agency as an organisation, in its operations and outcomes. From these documents the panel finds the organisational independence to be compliant.

Though the Charter does not set limitations for renewal of the term or dismissal procedure of the President, the Founding members ensured that they carefully assess the yearly report presented by the President and in case of unsatisfactory activities they would dismiss the President from his position. Similarly, was said about the members of the Supervisory Board - in case of missing from the meetings, the members could be expelled by the decision of Founding members. Even if there were no cases that would make ground for dismissal procedures, the panel would suggest introduction of a clear procedure of renewal of the term or dismissal of the President/members of the Supervisory Board in the KAZSEE Charter.

The panel's main concern is the operational independence and the independence of the formal outcomes. These concern especially the AC, but also the Supervisory Board.

The President and the Vice-President are both members of the Supervisory Board and the AC, and they have voting rights in the AC. Providing that the AC is the decision-making body for all accreditations, the President and the Vice-president have direct influence on the accreditation decision. Though KAZSEE has a broad participation of 11 qualified members in the AC, and there are quality assurance measures before the decisions are being presented to the AC, and discussed before the voting by the members, the panel believes that the President and Vice-President's representation in the voting weakens the independence of the AC and its accreditation decisions. Though the panel found no indication that this has led to conflict of interest, this mix of roles makes the system vulnerable. The formal and legal documents, the charter and MES RK No 499 (2021), stating the independence and the autonomous role of the agency should be followed in practice as it is important to secure full independence of the AC and the Supervisory Board and fully separate their activities from the organisational activities.

Panel recommendations

4. Ensure the operational independence and the independence of formal outcomes in accordance with the legal documents by giving up the membership of the President and Vice-president in KAZSEE Supervisory Board and the AC so that decisions are made without risks of conflict of interest.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

2. Consider setting the procedure of renewal of the term and dismissal of the President/members of the Supervisory Board in the KAZSEE Charter.

Panel conclusion: partially compliant

ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Standard:

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

Evidence

The thematic analysis policy is described in the SAR page 26. It refers to KAZSEE's participation in international projects:

- TEMPUS QUEECA “Quality of engineering education in Central Asia”
- ACADEMICA – Accessibility and harmonisation of higher education in Central Asia through the modernization and development of curricula
- ENTER – Pedagogical training of teachers of engineering programmes profile
- SMARTCITY – An innovative approach to the master’s program in smart city technologies

The SAR describes the regular seminars for KAZSEE staff and stakeholders, and the agency has provided the panel with some examples of agendas from training seminars for stakeholders.

In its SAR KAZSEE states that it collects empirical data, which is analysed and an annual report on these KAZSEE activities is compiled (SAR, p. 26). In the additional information KAZSEE wrote that they report on the results of the work of the experts who were involved in accreditation, and actively uses the information received in the self-reports, reports of the expert group chair, discussions at the Accreditation Council, and all available information on higher education development trends and changes in the legislation. KAZSEE has concluded that to provide feedback and better influence the policy of the accredited organisations, they should follow the results of each accreditation and conduct a survey and prepare a thematic analysis. However, this procedure has been carried out in the form of informal feedback only.

Analysis

KAZSEE collects data and produces reports on various themes. Most of the reports are related to bigger international and national projects, but not directly with the findings of external quality assurance activities. The agency also has certain mechanisms in place to share their experiences with relevant stakeholders. From the discussion with various stakeholders the panel learned that a clear procedure for a thematic analysis as a structured process is not part of the internal quality system of the agency. The agency is also aware of the importance of collecting and analysing results of their work with IA and PA for development purposes. The panel would advise KAZSEE to take more notice of these so they can be more systematically and formally carried out and analysed for development purposes.

From the interviews, it was revealed that there were development activities in this area and future plans were discussed by the management. There are some efforts made by KAZSEE, such as the survey report of the HEIs and report on the results of the work of experts who were involved in accreditation. But further actions in development of thematic analysis as a comprehensive process is needed. The panel is aware that this is the first agency review and would not expect KAZSEE to demonstrate completed thematic analysis reports but would encourage the agency to analyse more thoroughly what the purpose of producing thematic analysis and develop the comprehensive concept of it. The agency should look at examples from other agencies.

During the site visit some suggestions for topics for thematic analysis were mentioned by the stakeholders (Internal monitoring inside of HEIs are part of IQA or Formulation and implementation of the third mission of HEIs). The panel would advise KAZSEE to discuss themes for thematic analysis with the stakeholders and involve them in future planning. KAZSEE should conduct thematic analyses systematically, share and publish these on the website. Well-developed follow-up activities might also serve as a good source of information for thematic analysis.

Panel recommendations

5. Develop further activities in constructing thematic analysis as a comprehensive process.
6. Make plans for thematic analysis and involve the stakeholders.
7. The thematic analyses should be shared and published.

Panel conclusion: partially compliant

ESG 3.5 RESOURCES

Standard:

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

Evidence

Financial resources

KAZSEE is an independent organisation and does not receive funding or donations from the government, ministries or any third parties' organisations. The income comes primarily from accreditation fees and covers the cost of the agency for the accreditation procedures. The funds received are used only for the purpose of the agency. Other incomes come from international projects and seminars and activities outside the accreditation procedures (IGIP training Centre and KAZSEE International Certification Centre LLP). See KAZSEE revenue and expenses for 2020 and 2021 in Table 2. According to KAZSEE the financial planning and results in recent years are stable and sufficient. KAZSEE monitors the market and has decided to strengthen the agency's market position and has expanded its portfolio. KAZSEE has recently expanded its accreditation activities and is no longer limited to accreditation of engineering programmes. By strengthening the market position of KAZSEE, one can also see this to enhance financial stability. KAZSEE participates in the bidding and submits a proposal when the HEIs search for accreditation agencies.

KAZSEE's plan for 2022-2023 includes one institutional accreditation and more than 40 specialised programme accreditations.

Table 4: Accreditation plan for 2022-2023

Eos	Type of accreditation	Accreditation deadline
Buketov Karaganda University	8 specialized accreditation	November 2022
Yeoju Technical Institute in Tashkent	3 specialized accreditation	
Zhubanov University	10 specialized accreditation	November 2022
Satpaev University	4 specialized accreditation	November 2022
Caspian University	10 specialized accreditation	December 2022
Baishev University	1 institutional accreditation 10 specialized accreditation	December 2022
Abai Myrzakhmetov Kokshetau University	11 specialized accreditation	December 2022
Caspian University	9 specialized accreditation	April 2023

Human resources

KAZSEE has ten employees, including President, Vice-president, Administrative Director, Strategic Development Director and Accountant. There are three coordinators working with IA and PA. Numbers of reviews since 2017:

- Coordinator 1 has coordinated 16 IAs and 457 PAs.
- Coordinator 2 has coordinated 16 IAs and 457 PAs.
- Coordinator 3 has coordinated 5 PAs in Tashkent and participated with other coordinators in all online accreditation procedures.

The same coordinators are also responsible for the EUR-ACE Label, but this process is integrated and part of PA. As the table above shows, the three coordinators are responsible for the coordination of accreditation activities at the eight HEIs that were in process in 2022 and early 2023. KAZSEE has a large pool of experts engaged by KAZSEE on a contractual basis. The experts contribute to important work and support to KAZSEE's accreditation processes. The chair of the expert group takes an important role as they organise the work of the expert group, coordinate and direct the work of the members of the expert group, and they are responsible for coordinating the writing and finalising the report (SAR page 49). Furthermore, if an accreditation consists of many programmes, KAZSEE applies a cluster approach, see ESG 2.2 about cluster approach.

KAZSEE has a human resource development plan and works to regularly improve the employees' and experts' professional skills, for instance they participate in conferences, seminars and forums in education and QA. The KAZSEE management is responsible for planning and the execution of this. Since 2017 the President and employees participate twice a year in the international meetings of organisations such as ENAEE, ENQA, IREG and FEANI. And they are actively contributing within the ENTER and SmartCity projects.

KAZSEE has a Supervisory Board, AC and Appeals and Complaints Commission, which have numerous members and involve many people in the agency's activities. There is also an Expert Council, but this is still in the making. Appointment and participation in the AC are voluntary, and the table of KAZSEE expenses in the SAR does not show any amount of fees for the members of the board and commissions.

The agency has its website <https://kazsee.kz/> which provides information in Kazakh, English and Russian languages.

Analysis

KAZSEE has resources that are sufficient for their activities. The HEI must start the accreditation procedure timely before the expiration of the accreditation period. This means that the HEI must at least a year before starting the bidding process or approach the agency directly. This allows KAZSEE to plan and to allocate the necessary resources at an early stage.

KAZSEE is a rather small organisation with few employees. The three coordinators do commendable work for the agency conducting the accreditation procedures. Though there are few human resources, it was clearly communicated by the HEIs that the coordinators are very professional and devoted to their tasks. They are also available for any questions and solve any problems that come up during the accreditation process. The HEIs also commended the coordinators to be highly proficient and understanding of the programme that was being accredited, especially in the field of engineering. The coordinators are responsible for a huge amount of IAs and PAs. This requires very efficient organising and cooperation between the coordinators. The panel checked the reports in order to understand if this kind of pressure on the coordinators would have a negative effect on the quality of the reports. We found the IA and PA reports thorough and analytical. There are many experts involved and contribute to the evaluations and the reports. The number of experts, 430 experts in the KAZSEE expert database, is an important resource to the agency. Especially the chair's role and help in organising, coordinating, and directing the work of the expert groups during the accreditation process and the site visits, and the chairs's responsibility for finalising the report, is a huge support to the KAZSEE coordinators. This collaboration with the KAZSEE coordinators and support from the chair makes it possible for KAZSEE to be able to manage many accreditation projects. The cluster approach is also a useful and reasonable approach and should not affect the quality of KAZSEE's accreditation. The panel believes that the expert resources contribute to the quality of accreditation processes and the reports, and makes it possible for the agency to deliver according to their contracts.

With the changes and the expansion of KAZSEE's portfolio, it would require the agency to increase its human resources. Aiming for more international accreditations and activities, will also require more KAZSEE staff and experts with proficiency in the English language.

With the increase of competing QA agencies for higher education in Kazakhstan may lead to a problem of acquiring enough and the best staff for accreditation activities. Voluntary participation in the many boards and commissions might also be more challenging in the future.

The panel found that the stakeholders value the process and the quality of accreditation by KAZSEE. The HEIs studied the documents and the information about the agency before choosing KAZSEE. The stakeholders believe that there is a good balance of quality and price.

The KAZSEE website needs to be improved. It seems that there is low capacity and that there is a problem publishing all the reports on the website. The links that were in the SAR do not always open and the English website takes time to upload. This is extremely important with the expansion of KAZSEE's activities in the future.

Panel commendations

1. The panel commends the coordinators' professional work and devotion to the tasks.

Panel recommendations

8. Consider employing more staff, especially coordinators with further expansion of the activities.

9. Increase proficiency of the KAZSEE staff in the English language for international project and accreditation activities.

10. Improve the agency website and ensure the capacity to hold all the reports, speed of connection and active links.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Standard:

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

Evidence

The purpose of KAZSEE's IQA system is to review and improve its work and processes and to ensure compliance with national and international standards. In 2022 KAZSEE made proposals in the development policy of the MES RK on the IQA system in higher education. At the same time (July 2022) KAZSEE's development strategy was approved by the Supervisory Board. The Development strategy reflected issues of the internal quality assurance system. The Development Strategy document describes the HEI and QA of higher education in Kazakhstan, KAZSEE's mission, vision and values, KAZSEE's strategic goals, objectives, direction of activities and areas of development, and KAZSEE's internal quality control.

The SAR further describes two important areas of KAZSEE's IQA work:

- Operational guidelines and policies: Develop and monitor the implementation of documented work processes and results (including document management, internal communications, staff responsibilities and authorities, agency committees and bodies), monitor compliance with laws and regulations, enforce policies and mechanisms.
- Monitoring and reporting: collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data (feedback received from internal and external stakeholders, process measurement and evaluation data) that provide the necessary basis for effective project management, personnel and resources planning and further development quality process.

The IQA ensures that there are clearly defined operational guidelines and policies that are known to all employees, as well as members of agency bodies and committees. This is done through internal training, induction of new employees, committees, and other agency bodies.

After the HEI has applied to the agency for accreditation, the application is subject to an initial review by KAZSEE. The management decides if the application and the SAR are eligible for the accreditation process. If the management does not come to a common decision, the case is sent to the AC. Any

members of the AC that has any affiliation or interest in the case, must leave the meeting to avoid a possible conflict of interest and to ensure an open and honest discussion of the application. The application may be rejected for the following reasons:

- Incorrect filing of the application form
- Absence of an educational programme in the list of specialities classifier
- The university does not have a Licence of the Committee for Supervision in the Sphere of education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Lack of information about the educational program on the university website

The HEI has the right to consider the AC's comments and can resend the application. If the HEI does not agree with the AC's decision, the HEI can send an appeal to the Appeals Commission.

If the application is accepted, KAZSEE starts the process with the HEI for the preparation of the SAR and forms an expert group. In the procedure of accreditation (approved June 18, 2021) there is a description of the composition of experts, and the document KAZSEE Expert Code of Ethics includes objectivity and impartiality of the experts and to exclude conflicts of interest.

There are clear, predefined and published standards for IA and PA (see ESG 2.1. for assessment of the standards), and procedures guidelines. There is also published instruction for the SAR (Instructions for preparing self-assessment) to ensure consistent applications and documentation from the HEIs.

The IQA processes are determined by the agency management and updated based on feedback received from internal and external stakeholders. According to the SAR (page 33) KAZSEE collects feedback from internal and external stakeholders, both qualitative and quantitative data, as part of the procedure.

The KAZSEE organisation plan involves an Expert Council for Higher Education (11 members). The council is not yet fully formed, but The EC will be a permanent body of experts with information and give advisory support to KAZSEE. The panel was provided with the Regulations on Expert Councils. The task of the EC is to examine the state and direction of development of higher education, involve stakeholders to conduct an expert assessment, examine the level of training of specialists in the field of higher education, and develop proposals for improving and developing the activities of HEI. The EC will submit annual reports to the President.

As part of KAZSEE IQA working groups are formed to work with specific issues. The panel was provided with two examples: The ENTER project – Pedagogical training of engineering teachers and PA of Karaganda University named after Buketov and Kazakh National University, al-Farabi. Based on the working group, for example work programmes and a proposal to assign an ENTER Label was developed. As a result of monitoring of the infrastructure and request from the HEI, modern equipment was purchased which made it possible to carry out international projects and accreditation activities during the pandemic.

The agency mission is part of Development plan that is published in the website³ (in Russian). The agency's QA policy is embedded in the Development Strategy of the agency and is published on the website.

³ <https://kazsee.kz/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/15.-%D0%A1%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%8F-KAZSEE.pdf>

Analysis

KAZSEE has developed IQA processes. The panel found that with clear, predefined and published standards, procedure guidelines and instruction for SAR for IA and PA, KAZSEE ensures consistent application and assessment of the HEI and their programmes.

Feedback mechanisms, both internal and external are described, such as in the SAR: *“Monitoring and reporting: collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data (feedback received from internal and external stakeholders, process measurement and evaluation data) that provide the necessary basis for effective project management, personnel and resources planning and further development quality process.”* And to ensure quality, KAZSEE collects quantitative and qualitative feedback (SAR page 33). The panel, however, sees that more systematic and formalised procedures on getting feedback on the accreditation procedures and its players should be developed. Feedback can contribute to development of KAZSEE’s procedures and standards, and summarising the results can be used for continuous improvement of the agency’s quality assurance of its processes and activities.

Based on the reports resulting from monitoring and feedback, areas for improvement of the agency’s quality assurance should be clearly reflected in the strategy plan and yearly planning.

KAZSEE involves and communicates with stakeholders relevant to higher education. The agency ensures that the expert groups have the relevant level of competence and that in the field of HEI and programme, the student body and the industry/employers are represented. The students are given voting rights in the AC and are looked upon as equal members. The panel found that the agency in general, and the experts and the AC are competent and acts professionally and ethically through all the steps of the accreditation process.

KAZSEE checks any issues concerning the conflict of interest through the whole accreditation procedure. The conflict of interest is important and which the agency seems to be aware of from what the panel can observe from the procedure guidelines and the KAZSEE code of ethics.

As the agency has been awarding EUR-ACE Label since November 2017, KAZSEE has established a status in recognition in the field of engineering and technical programmes. KAZSEE is also listed in the MES RK Register No. 1 as a recognised accreditation body in Kazakhstan. KAZSEE has mostly carried out accreditation in engineering and technology, but their portfolio will most possibly expand to a wider scope of programmes in the future. It is of importance that KAZSEE plans and monitors changes in their portfolio, so the agency can easily adapt and secure the quality of their procedures.

The panel found that due to the pandemic, the implementation of the EC was delayed. The activities of the EC were planned, but no members were yet nominated. As such it is too early to present results from their work. As a young agency and with the challenges due to the pandemic when starting the new agency, the panel is aware of the challenges this has caused. During the meeting with KAZSEE management the panel learned that the role and the functions of EC are not fully clear to the agency itself, the discussions about the role of a new body are still going on. The panel would suggest that the agency would carefully review the functions of its bodies in operation and find an appropriate and valuable role to a new body in such a way that it would bring a real added value to the activities of KAZSEE. The agency is a small body and administration of additional bodies besides a big amount of accreditation procedures could be a threat to the quality of work.

KAZSEE Development Strategy includes QA policy which confirms the commitment of the agency to promote quality of higher education and support the development of a culture of quality in Kazakhstan higher education institutions. As the QA policy was embedded and hidden in the development strategy, the QA policy document was not easily found in the documentation provided by KAZSEE or on the KAZSEE website. As it is an important document for the agency’s work in QA, the panel recommends that this should be published on the website as a separate document.

Panel recommendations

11. Develop and implement more formalised and systematic feedback on the accreditation procedures.
12. Publish the QA policy as a separate document on the agency's website.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

3. Carefully consider the role of the EC in order not to create too many bureaucracies without added value to agency activities.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 3.7 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES

Standard:

Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

Evidence

This is KAZSEE's first ENQA review for the assessment of the agency's compliance with the ESG for ENQA membership and for registration in EQAR. The agency has been an affiliate of ENQA since April 2021. The agency has since 2012 been a full member of ENAEE and undergoes a cyclical review every five years. The previous external evaluation was in November 2017, and KAZSEE was granted re-accreditation and was given the rights to award EUR-ACE Label. The ENAEE membership and the rights to award EUR-ACE Label is valid until 31. December 2022 (ENAEE website). During the site visit of the panel, KAZSEE was in the process of extending ENAEE membership and the right to award the label for the next period of five years.

KAZSEE is a registered accreditation body in the MES RK Register No. 1. With the new legislation in Kazakhstan KAZSEE must apply membership to ENQA and be registered in EQAR to get a renewal as an accreditation body in Kazakhstan. All accreditation bodies in Kazakhstan are subject to a national external review.

Analysis

KAZSEE has been subject to cyclical external reviews as a member of ENAEE. With the new legislation in Kazakhstan all accreditation bodies in Kazakhstan are subject to a cyclical review and to be registered as an accreditation body. KAZSEE is undergoing its first periodic external review by ENQA for the assessment of compliance with ESG.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG PART 2: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

Evidence

Quality assurance and accreditation activities by KAZSEE are IA, PA and awarding EUR-ACE Labels in Kazakhstan. KAZSEE has standards for IA (Standards for accreditation of higher education) and PA (Standards for specialized educational programs accreditation of higher education). The same PA standards are applied for PA in Uzbekistan and will therefore not be specifically discussed or considered as there are no differences. For the EUR-ACE Label there are defined standards in the ENAEE document EUR-ACE Framework Standards and Guidelines (November 2021). The learning outcomes for the EUR-ACE Label are also attached to the KAZSEE PA standards, *Standards for specialised educational programs accreditation of higher education institutions*. See Appendix A of KAZSEE PA standards *Baccalaureate program learning outcomes based on the European Network for Quality Assurance in Engineering Education (ENAEE) framework standards and EUR-ACE guidelines* and *Master's program learning outcomes based on the European Network for Quality Assurance in Engineering Education (ENAEE) framework standards and EUR-ACE guidelines*.

KAZSEE's standards for IA covers the following⁴:

- Standard 1 Mission and strategy of the University
- Standard 2 Leadership and management
- Standard 3 Educational programs
- Standard 4 Teaching staff and teaching effectiveness
- Standard 5 Students and student-centred learning
- Standard 6 Research work
- Standard 7 Finance
- Standard 8 Resources: material, technical and informational
- Standard 9 Procedure for making changes and additions

KAZSEE's PA (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) covers the following standards⁵:

- Standard 1 Goals of the educational program
- Standard 2 Program Content
- Standard 3 Students and educational process
- Standard 4 Teaching staff
- Standard 5 Preparation for professional activity
- Standard 6 Material and technical base
- Standard 7 Information support
- Standard 8 Finance and management
- Standard 9 Graduates

EUR-ACE Framework Standards and Guidelines 2021⁶:

- 2.2 Student Workload Requirements
- 2.3 Programme Outcomes Framework
- 2.4 Programme Management
 - 2.4.1 Programmes Aims
 - 2.4.2 Teaching and Learning Process
 - 2.4.3 Resources
 - 2.4.4 Student admission, transfer, progression and graduation
 - 2.4.5 Internal Quality Assurance

⁴ IA Standards KAZSEE [Стандарты-по-инст.-аккред.-ВУЗОВ-АНГ-исправ 2021.pdf \(kazsee.kz\)](#)

⁵ PA Standards KAZSEE [Стандарты-по-спец.-аккред.-ВУЗОВ-АНГ исправ-2021.pdf \(kazsee.kz\)](#)

⁶ EUR-ACE Standards [EAFSG-041|2021-English-I-I.pdf \(enaee.eu\)](#)

KAZSEE has provided a mapping grid (SAR, Annex IV) showing how the external QA activities meet the standards of ESG Part I. In the mapping (Table 5) “Criteria for KAZSEE institutional accreditation standards” will be referred to in the evidence and analysis as IA and “Criteria to the standards of specialized accreditation KAZSEE” will be referred to in the evidence and analysis as PA.

Table 5: Compliance between standards of ESG Part I and KAZSEE and EUR-ACE standards (SAR ANNEX IV)

ESG Part I	Criteria for KAZSEE institutional accreditation standards	Criteria to the standards of specialized accreditation KAZSEE	Criteria for awarding the EUR-ACE® Label
I.1 Policy for quality assurance	<p>Standard 1. Mission and strategy of the HEI: 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 1.2.3; 1.2.4; 1.2.5; 1.2.9</p> <p>Standard 2. Leadership and management: 2.2.1; 2.2.3; 2.2.4; 2.2.5; 2.2.6; 2.2.9; 2.2.10; 2.2.11; 2.2.12; 2.2.13; 2.2.14; 2.2.15; 2.2.16; 2.2.17; 2.2.18; 2.2.22; 2.2.23</p>	<p>Standard 1. Objectives of the educational program: 1.2.4; 1.2.5;</p> <p>Standard 3. Students and learning process: 3.2.5;</p> <p>Standard 4. Teaching staff: 4.2.14;</p> <p>Standard 8. Finance and management: 8.2.6; 8.2.7;</p>	<p>2.4 Programme Management</p> <p>2.4.1 Programme Aims</p> <p>2.4.5 Internal Quality Assurance</p>
I.2 Design and approval of programmes	<p>Standard 2. Leadership and management: 2.2.21;</p> <p>Standard 3. Educational programs: 3.2.1; 3.2.2; 3.2.3; 3.2.6; 3.2.14;</p>	<p>Standard 1. Objectives of the educational program: 1.2.3;</p> <p>Standard 2. Content of the program: 2.2.1; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.8;</p> <p>Standard 3. Students and learning process: 3.2.7;</p>	<p>2.3 Programme Outcomes Framework</p>

<p>1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment</p>	<p>Standard 2. Leadership and management: 2.2.20;</p> <p>Standard 3. Educational programs: 3.2.4; 3.2.5; 3.2.9; 3.2.10; 3.2.11; 3.2.12; 3.2.15; 3.2.16; 3.2.17; 3.2.18; 3.2.19; 3.2.20; 3.2.21; 3.2.22; 3.2.23; 3.2.24;</p> <p>Standard 5. Students and student-centered learning: 5.2.1; 5.2.4; 5.2.5; 5.2.7; 5.2.9; 5.2.10;</p>	<p>Standard 2. Content of the program: 2.8.2; 2.8.3;</p> <p>Standard 3. Students and learning process: 3.2.3; 3.2.5; 3.2.6; 3.2.8; 3.2.9; 3.2.10; 3.2.11; 3.2.12; 3.2.13; 3.2.14;</p> <p>Standard 4. Teaching staff: 4.2.12;</p>	<p>2.2 Student Workload Requirements</p>
<p>1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification</p>	<p>Standard 5. Students and student-centered learning: 5.2.2; 5.2.3; 5.2.6; 5.2.8; 5.2.13; 5.2.14;</p> <p>Standard 6. Research work: 6.2.2; 6.2.3; 6.2.5;</p>	<p>Standard 3. Students and learning process: 3.2.1; 3.2.2; 3.2.4;</p> <p>Standard 2. Content of the program: 2.9;</p> <p>Standard 5. Preparation for professional activity: 5.2.1 - 5.2.14;</p> <p>Standard 9. Graduates: 9.2.6;</p>	<p>2.4.2 Teaching and Learning Process</p> <p>2.4.4 Student admission, transfer, progression and graduation</p>

<p>I.5 Teaching staff</p>	<p>Standard 2. Leadership and management: 2.2.8; 2.2.19;</p> <p>Standard 4. Teaching Staff and Teaching Effectiveness: 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 4.2.4; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 4.2.7; 4.2.8; 4.2.9; 4.2.10; 4.2.12; 4.2.13; 4.2.15; 4.2.16; 4.2.18; 4.2.19</p> <p>Standard 6. Research work: 6.2.5;</p> <p>Standard 8. Resources: material and technical and information: 8.2.13;</p>	<p>Standard 2. Content of the program: 2.3;</p> <p>Standard 4. Teaching staff: 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 4.2.4; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 4.2.7; 4.2.8; 4.2.9; 4.2.10; 4.2.11; 4.2.17;</p> <p>Standard 8. Finance and management: 8.2.3; 8.2.11;</p> <p>Standard 7. Information support: 7.2.7;</p>	<p>2.4.2 Teaching and Learning Process</p>
<p>I.6 Learning resources and student support</p>	<p>Standard 2. Leadership and management: 2.2.2; 2.2.7;</p> <p>Standard 7. Finance: 7.2.1; 7.2.2; 7.2.3; 7.2.4;</p> <p>Standard 8. Resources: material and technical and information: 8.2.1; 8.2.6; 8.2.7; 8.2.8; 8.2.9; 8.2.10; 8.2.11; 8.2.12;</p>	<p>Standard 6. Material and technical resources: 6.2.1 – 6.2.15;</p> <p>Standard 8. Finance and management: 8.2.1; 8.2.2; 8.2.4; 8.2.5;</p>	<p>2.4.3 Resources</p>
<p>I.7 Information management</p>	<p>Standard 3. Educational programs: 3.2.13;</p> <p>Standard 5. Students and student-centered learning: 5.2.1; 5.2.11; 5.2.12; 5.2.15; 5.2.16; 5.2.17</p>	<p>Standard 7. Information support: 7.2.3; 7.2.4; 7.2.5;</p>	

1.8 Public information	Standard 8. Resources: material and technical and information: 8.2.14; 8.2.15; 8.2.16; 8.2.17	Standard 7. Information support: 7.2.7; 7.2.8; Standard 9. Graduates: 9.2.3;	
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Standard 3. Educational programs: 3.2.1 – 3.2.24	Standard 1. Objectives of the educational program: 1.2.1; 1.2.2; Standard 8. Finance and management: 8.2.8; Standard 9. Graduates: 9.2.2; 9.2.5;	
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	Standard 1. Mission and strategy of the HEI: 1.2.7; 1.2.8;	Standard 3. Students and learning process: 3.2.5; Standard 8. Finance and management: 8.2.2; Standard 9. Graduates: 9.2.1;	

The ESG part I is addressed in the KAZSEE standards including the EUR-ACE standards as follows:

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Requirements that the HEIs have a quality assurance policy are reflected in KAZSEE IA, Standard 1 Mission and strategy of the university and standard 2 Leadership and management. The standards address the vision, mission, and strategy management of the institution (evaluation criteria 1.2.1), and that these are implemented by the institution management system following their own quality assurance policy and quality assurance system, including design, management of education processes and the individual educational program and monitoring of intra-university processes (evaluation criteria 2.2.11, 2.2.12 and 2.2.16). The main responsibility for implementing and developing the policy for quality assurance lies with the leadership and the different levels of the management structure and it should ensure the compliance of the organisational, functional and staff structure with the development strategy of the HEI. (Standard 2, 2.1.1, evaluation criteria 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4 and 2.2.6). The HEI should also have supporting documents and written guidelines on the organisational structure and the management of the HEI (such as charter, regulations, decision-making procedures, and job descriptions) (evaluation criteria 2.2.22 and 2.2.23). The HEI carries out the process of strategic and operational planning and resource allocation in accordance with the mission (evaluation criteria 1.2.2). It is further required that HEIs have a system for monitoring, collecting, and analysing information

about their activities for continuous development and implementation of developing plans for areas of activity, procedures and managing the daily work processes etc. (evaluation criteria 1.2.5, 1.2.7, 1.2.9, 2.2.1 and 2.2.5). The standards reflect processes involving internal stakeholder groups such as students, teaching staff and external groups such as employers in the formation of a mission, vision, and strategy and management processes in the HEIs (evaluation criteria 1.2.3 and 2.2.15) and that the mission and strategy are available to all interested parties and that the HEI should show transparency of its management system (evaluation criteria 1.2.4, 1.2.9 and 2.2.14). Other criteria included in the mapping are related to the HEIs information system and information of status and results, database on students, graduates, teaching staff, resources, and cooperation with other HEIs and exchange of experience. (Evaluation criteria 2.2.9, 2.2.10, 2.2.13, 2.2.17 and 2.2.18.)

For PA the mapping refers to Standard 1 Objectives of the educational programme and Standard 3 Students and learning processes, Standard 4 Teaching staff and Standard 8 Finance and management. The standards address objectives for ensuring quality of the programmes. The present standards for PA are applied to the HEI to conduct specialised self-evaluation of educational programmes. The HEI should develop an effective mechanism to ensure the achievement and adjustment of the goals of educational programs (evaluation criteria 1.2.4), and the goals of the educational programme should be commonly shared by the team of the unit involved in the implementation of the programme, published, and made available to all parties (evaluation criteria 1.2.5). An important factor is the availability of a quality management system in the university / department, certified by independent organisations (evaluation criteria 8.2.6). The university should have an internal quality assurance system. The mission and strategy of the HEI are publicly discussed with representatives of all stakeholders (evaluation criteria 8.2.7).

The EUR-ACE refers to Standard 2.4 Programme Management that specifies 5 key areas of programme management that must be evaluated by the accreditation agency. It is stated that the aims of the programme should take into account employment opportunities for graduates, potential developments in technology, the needs of employers, the wide range of applications of engineering, postgraduates' opportunities for graduates, the mission of the university and the interest of students (standard 2.4.1 Programme aims) and that the programme have quality assurance procedure that are consistent with the HEI quality assurance policy (standard 2.4.5 Internal Quality Assurance).

1.2 Design and approval of programmes

For IA the mapping refers to Standard 2 Leadership and management and Standard 3 Educational programmes. It is required that HEIs should have a mechanism for interaction with the public, according to which any interested person can make innovative proposals on the improvement of the activities of the HEIs to the management and governing bodies. The HEI should analyse these proposals and implement them (evaluation criteria 2.2.21). The HEI ensures the participation of the teaching staff and employers in the development and management of academic educational programs, ensuring their quality (evaluation criteria 3.2.1). The content of the academic disciplines should correspond to and cover all levels of study (bachelor's, master's, doctoral studies) and the proposed learning outcomes, and that HEIs should determine the content, volume, logic of building an individual educational trajectory of students, the influence of disciplines and professional practices on the formation of professional competence of graduates. For the implementation of the programmes, the HEIs should attract practitioners and determine the proportion of the disciplines they teach. (Evaluation criteria 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.6 and 3.2.14.)

For PA KAZSEE refers to Standard 1 Objectives of the educational programme and Standard 2 Content of the programme and Standard 3 Students and learning process. The requirements for professional practice and the labour market should be reflected and integrated in the development of

the educational program and employment. Learning outcomes should be formulated in the form of planned graduate competencies that meet the requirements of the European, national qualifications frameworks, professional standards, labour market demands. EUR-ACE standards are also included in this criterion (evaluation criteria 1.2.3). Training on the program should be concluded with a final qualification work, containing elements of scientific research or experimental and design activity. The PA standards evaluation criteria covers course duration and credit scoring (ECTS), scope of compulsory and elective courses, rationale for the programme during a standard study period, description and assessment of students' workload, integration of latest scientific development into the curriculum, structuring, integration and control of practical stages (or period spent abroad), description of interdisciplinary courses, effective system of support of students, mechanisms for making courses accessible to students with special needs, ensuring that all graduates of the programme achieve their learning outcomes. (Evaluation criteria 2.2.1, 2.4, 2.5 and 3.2.7.) And that the module of disciplines provides fundamental training in addition to basic and advanced courses, and modules of general professional and special disciplines provides completeness of training necessary for professional activity in accordance with the objectives of the educational program. (Evaluation criteria 2.6 and 2.8).

EUR-ACE Standard 2.3 describes the programme outcomes framework. Programme outcomes describe the knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities which an accredited engineering degree programme must enable a graduate to demonstrate. The programme outcomes are described for bachelor's and master's degree programmes referring to 8 learning areas:

1. Knowledge and understanding;
2. Engineering Analysis;
3. Engineering Design;
4. Investigations;
5. Engineering Practice;
6. Making Judgements;
7. Communication and Team-working;
8. Lifelong Learning

1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment are referred to in IA Standard 2 Leadership and management, Standard 3 Educational programmes and standard 5 Student and student-centred learning. Student-centred learning is reflected at management level that the HEIs should be open and accessible to students (evaluation criteria 2.2.20) and provide equal opportunities for students, regardless of the language of instruction, in the formation of individual educational trajectories aimed at the formation of professional competence (evaluation criteria 3.2.9). The criteria cover the curricula, curricula development and the revision of the curricula, learning outcomes, financial resources, equipment, classrooms, software, research result, student support, teaching aid and materials, system for professional practice and other issues of importance to promote student-centred learning and teaching. Standard 5 further elaborates even more on the students and their learning environment. HEI is required to ensure the development of educational programs that motivate students to play an active role in co-creation of the learning process, and this approach should be reflected in student performance assessment (evaluation criteria 5.2.1). Standard 5 has 17 criteria focusing mainly on students and student-centred learning.

PA standards refers to Standard 2 Content of the programme, Standard 3 Students and learning process and Standard 4 Teaching staff. Design training should foster students' creative thinking and skills to solve problems using the knowledge gained and the original approach. The obligatory elements of design should be the definition of goals and criteria, analysis, synthesis, construction, testing and

evaluation (evaluation criteria 2.8.2). Standard 3 covers different issues related to students' learning outcomes. The criteria includes that there should be a mechanism to ensure continuous monitoring of the curriculum and feedback for improvement of the programme, ensuring mobility, involving students and trainees in the IQA of the programmes, ensure that the examination and assessment of achieved learning outcomes are consistent with the planned learning outcomes, create conditions for effective promotion of the student on an individual educational trajectory, including consultations of advisers, provide opportunities for students to communicate with each other through the creation of various student organisations, forums, online communities, and create a mechanism for monitoring student satisfaction with the activities of the university in general and with individual services in particular. And lastly to organise special mechanisms for dealing with student complaints. (Evaluation criteria 3.2.3, 3.2.5, 3.2.6, 3.2.8, 3.2.9, 3.2.10, 3.2.11, 3.2.12, 3.2.13 and 3.2.14.) Though General provisions 3.1.1, 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 was not included in the mapping, the focus of Standard 3 is clearly related to student-centred learning: "Introducing student-centred learning into its programs, the university should be guided to the maximum extent by the individual characteristics of the students and their specific personal understanding of the world. The methods through which the programs are implemented should stimulate students to take an active role in the joint construction of the educational process." (3.1.1) and that "The university should ensure that educational programs are developed to motivate students to take an active role in co-creating the learning process, and students' assessments should reflect this approach." (3.1.2) and that the "The program should be developed in accordance with the planned learning outcomes, and the teaching and learning approaches used should be adequate to achieve these outcomes" (3.1.3).

EUR-ACE Standard refers to 2.2. Student Workload requirements. The criteria describe the workload requirements using ECTS for programme outcomes for bachelor's and master's degree programmes. It was not included in the mapping, but the requirement in 2.4 Programme management refers to students and that the HEIs provide a teaching and learning process that enables students to demonstrate achievement of Programme Outcomes.

1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

For IA the mapping refers to Standard 5 Students and student-centred learning and Standard 6 Research work. The criteria covers that the HEIs should have a policy for student formation and transparency of procedures, that they have published rules covering all stages of student life (such as admission, training and graduation), provide opportunity for internships, involve the students in research and development, monitor employment and professional activities of graduates and create good conditions for the student's welfare and provide services for them (such as service centre, dormitory, canteen, computer centre, library, medical centre, etc.). (Evaluation criteria 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.6, 5.2.8, 5.2.13 and 5.2.14.) The HEI should also create conditions for the development of scientific potential of young scientists and students, develop research teams, research laboratories, science schools etc. and involve students in the research activities, ensure participation of faculty and students in scientific conferences and hire leading scientists and practitioners. HEIs should stimulate research activities of the teaching staff and students through various forms of motivation. (Evaluation criteria 6.2.2, 6.2.3 and 6.2.5).

For PA this is covered by Standard 3 Student and learning process, Standard 2 Content of the programme and Standard 5 Preparation for professional activity and Standard 9 Graduates. The criteria cover admission requirements, that students should have sufficient level of knowledge to master the educational program and provide a system for ensuring that all students that enter the programme can achieve the same level of knowledge. Furthermore, HEIs should provide opportunities for students to practise their specialty in scientific laboratories and enterprises and monitor the satisfaction of students, heads of enterprises at the place of practice and employers. And that the training on the

program should be concluded with a final qualification work, containing elements of scientific research or experimental and design activity (specifying that learning outcomes should meet professional standards and EUR-ACE requirements). Finally, the university should provide diplomas to the graduates confirming the qualifications obtained, as well as detailed annexes to the diplomas in three languages. (Evaluation criteria 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.4., 2.9. and 9.2.6.) Standard 5, 5.2.1 to 5.2.14 are requirements of the learning outcomes that the students should achieve upon completion of the programme.

EUR-ACE Standard 2.4.2 Teaching and learning process and 2.4.4. Student admission, transfer, progression, and graduation. Standard 2.4 refers to the programme content and ensuring that teaching methodology and the learning process enables the student to achieve the programme learning outcomes. And that there is an independent and external scrutiny of the assessment of students. Standard 2.4.4 is about entry and student admission, monitoring the progress of students through the programme and their performance, the assessment leading to the graduation of the students.

1.5 Teaching staff

Teaching staff is covered by IA Standard 2 Leadership and Management, Standard 4 Teaching staff and teaching effectiveness, Standard 6 Research work and Standard 8 Resources: material, technical and informational. HEI and their management are required to have in place systems for communication, measurement and a supportive environment in order to ensure that the staff's concerns are heard. There should be criteria and transparency of all personnel procedures (such as recruiting systems when hiring and appointing teaching staff). That the HEIs hire staff in accordance with their skills, competencies, and relevance to the programmes, and attract experienced specialists in the relevant industry, as well as famous scientists, public and political figures. The HEI should stimulate the research activities of the teaching staff and students through various forms of motivation. (Evaluation criteria 2.2.8, 2.2.19, 2.4, 4.2.5, 4.2.13, 4.2.15, 4.2.18 and 6.2.5.)

Furthermore, the HEIs should ensure the monitoring of the teaching staff, provide a systematic assessment of the competence of teachers and a comprehensive assessment of the quality of teaching. They should organise various mechanisms for assessing the quality of teaching, such as questioning students about the quality of teaching at the university, attending teaching staff classes and questioning the teaching staff about evaluating the activities of colleagues. The teacher's workload should include educational and methodological, scientific work, organising and participating in various events, as well as professional development. The HEIs should ensure the completeness and adequacy of the individual planning of the teaching staff for all types of activities, monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of individual plans. (Evaluation criteria 2.4.6 4.2.7 and 4.2.8.)

The HEI should provide a teacher development training programme, professional and personal improvement of teaching staff and administrative and managerial personnel, and support and have a specific plan for the development of young teachers. The university should ensure that there is a system of incentives for the professional and personal development of teachers and staff. The university should organise various competitions among the teaching staff to determine the best, and the university should introduce a bonus system for the best teaching staff. (Evaluation criteria 4.2.9, 4.2.10 and 4.2.12.)

The faculty should actively use information and communication technologies in the educational process (such as e-learning). The HEI should determine the degree of implementation of information technology in the educational process, to monitor the use of innovative learning technologies. (Evaluation criteria 4.2.14 and 8.2.13.)

Information about the teaching staff should be available to the public, and the professors' questionnaires should be posted on the university website (evaluation criteria 4.2.4). The HEI should create conditions for the faculty to participate in public life, to make their contribution to the development of science, culture of the region (evaluation criteria 8.2.13).

For PA this is covered under Standard 2 Content of the programme, Standard 4 Teaching staff, standard 7 Information support and Standard 8 Finance and management. The teaching staff should be represented by specialists in all fields of knowledge covered by the educational program. Each teacher should know and be able to justify the place of their discipline in the curriculum, its relationship to previous and subsequent disciplines, and understand the role of the discipline in the formation of a specialist. (Evaluation criteria 4.2.1 and 4.2.1.)

The university should ensure the monitoring of the teaching staff, a systematic assessment of the competence of teachers, and a comprehensive assessment of the quality of teaching. Also, the university should organise various mechanisms for assessing the quality of teaching, evaluating the activities of colleagues. The teacher's workload should include educational and methodological, scientific work, organising and participating in various events, as well as professional development. The university should have a transparent system of remuneration of teaching staff. The HEI should ensure the completeness and adequacy of individual planning of the work of the teaching staff in all types of activities, monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of individual plans. The HEI should ensure the monitoring of the satisfaction of the teaching staff, and the HEI management should respond to the requests of the teaching staff on various issues. (Evaluation criteria 4.2.3, 4.3.4, 4.2.5, 4.2.8, 8.2.3 and 8.2.11.)

The HEI should demonstrate the existence of a system of advanced training, professional and personal development of teaching staff and administrative and managerial personnel, and support and have a defined plan for the development of young faculty. The resource policy of the university/department should be aimed at maintaining and ensuring continuous professional growth of the teaching staff. The HEI should develop academic mobility of the teaching staff, attract the best foreign and domestic faculty, and conduct joint research. (Evaluation criteria 4.2.6, 4.2.7, 4.2.10 and 8.2.3.)

The teaching staff should actively use information and communication technologies in the educational process (such as e-learning) (evaluation criteria 4.2.9).

The university should demonstrate the availability of a web resource in three languages, reflecting the mission, goals, and objectives of the university, where all information about the activities of the university, complete information about the teaching staff, the rector's personal email, and a virtual book of complaints are placed. Information about the teaching staff should be available to the public. The university should create conditions for the teaching staff to participate in public life, to make their contribution to the development of science, culture of the region. (Evaluation criteria 4.2.2, 4.2.11 and 7.2.7.)

For the EUR-ACE the mapping refers to Standard 2.4.2 Teaching and learning process. The standard relates that the teaching and learning process must enable engineering graduates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities specified in the programme outcomes. The curriculum of the programme must specify how this is achieved. It covers the methodology of teaching and learning. Standard 2.4.3 Resources (not included in the mapping) is relevant "The number, qualification and experience of the teaching staff should be adequate to teach the programme to the standard specified in the Programme Outcomes".

1.6 Learning resources and student support

Learning resources and student support are referred to IA Standard 2 Leadership and Management, Standard 7 Finance, Standard 8 Resources: material and technical and information. The HEI should ensure the compliance of the organisational, functional and staff structure with the development strategy of the university, and must correspond to its mission, goals and objectives. The financial policy and financial management of the HEI should be consistent with the development strategy of the HEI. The financial management system should include financial planning, accounting, control, financial analysis and performance audit, financial procedures, and financial incentives. The HEI should demonstrate budget planning and have coherent financial management including all cash transfers, cash flows, and changes in equity should be reflected in appropriate reports. (Evaluation criteria 2.2.2, 7.2.2, 7.2.3 and 7.2.4.)

The criteria in Standard 8 refers to physical resources (such as auditoriums, laboratories, training sites, library, IT infrastructure etc.), learning materials and support service. (Evaluation criteria 8.2.1, 8.2.6, 8.2.7, 8.2.8, 8.2.9, 8.2.10 and 8.2.11.) The HEI should ensure the availability and effective functioning of a system of information and feedback focused on students, employees, and stakeholders (evaluation criterion 2.2.7). And the HEI should ensure the safety of the implementation of educational standards. There should be an appropriate security system and security control system in place on the campus (evaluation criterion 8.2.12).

For PA relevant references are found in Standard 6 Material and technical resources and Standard 8 Finance and management. Standard 6 refers to evaluation criteria 6.2.1 to 6.2.15. The standard has only 11 criteria, and not 15 as indicated in the mapping. The criteria cover the requirements for classrooms, laboratories, library, education materials, and modern equipment that is adequate for the goals of the programme and that needed material and equipment are available to all students. The HEI should also continually update, improve, and expand its facilities, and provide support of information and communication technology. (Evaluation criteria 6.2.1, 6.2.3, 6.2.4, 6.2.5, 6.2.6, 6.2.7 and 6,2,8.)

The HEI should determine the degree of implementation of information technologies in the educational process, monitor the use and development of innovative learning technologies of the teaching staff. And create conditions for employees, teaching staff and students for mastering and using ICTs in the educational processes and university activities. University Academic Council and other collegial bodies should also make use of the effectiveness of the ICT in meetings. (Evaluation criteria 6.2.8, 6.2.9 and 6.2.10.)

The HEI should create the most favourable conditions for extracurricular activities of students, such as student service centre, canteen, dormitory, computer centre, library, reading rooms, gyms, stadium, medical centre, etc. (evaluation criteria 6.2.11).

The financial support of the program should not be lower than the licensing indicators, and the financial and administrative policies of the HEI or department should be aimed at improving the quality of the educational program. Furthermore, the academic support staff and administrative activities of the HEI or department should meet the needs of the educational program. (Evaluation criteria 8.2.1, 8.2.2, 8.2.4.)

Though it is not included in the mapping, student support is covered in Standard 8, 8.1.2 and Standard 3, 3.2.7. The HEI must have adequate funding for teaching and learning activities and adequate and accessible educational resources and student support services, and that there should be an effective system of support for students.

EUR-ACE Standard 2.4.3 Resources. The standard requires that the programme is supported adequately so that the programme outcomes can be achieved. In this context it concerns the study facilities, equipment, library, and use of updated new technology. There should be a student support service and other information resources accessible to students. There also should be an adequate budget to support the programme, and that programmes that are delivered online have the supporting resources and technology needed.

1.7 Information management

This is reflected in the IA Standard 3 Educational Programs and Standard 5 Resources: material and technical and information. The HEI should create a mechanism for monitoring student satisfaction with HEI activities in general and individual services, and demonstrate the functioning of feedback, including the prompt provision of information on the results of students' knowledge assessment (evaluation criteria 5.2.16 and 5.2.17). The HEI should demonstrate the effectiveness of regular analysis of the sufficiency and modernity of the resources available to implement educational programs, such as classrooms, laboratories, computer equipment and software, financial resources, access to international databases of research results, a system of professional practice and employment, teaching aids and materials, etc. (evaluation criteria 3.2.13).

Career paths for graduates include that the HEI should take maximum efforts to ensure graduates employment and maintain communication with graduates and create an alumni community (evaluation criteria 5.2.12).

The mapping references 5.2.1, 5.2.11 and 5.2.15 do not cover information management.

Though it was not included in the mapping, Standard 1 Mission and strategy of the university and Standard 2 Leadership and Management are relevant criteria. It is stated that the HEI should systematically collect, accumulate, and analyse information about its activities and assess its strengths and weaknesses, based on which the management determines the quality assurance policy, develops strategic and operational plans (evaluation criteria 1.2.7 and 2.1.3). Regarding the collection of data, evaluation criterion 2.2.7 states that the HEI should ensure the availability and effective functioning of a system of information and feedback focused on students, employees, and stakeholders. And Standard 5 Students and student-centred learning 5.2.17 that the HEI should demonstrate the functioning of the feedback system, including the prompt provision of information on the results of students' knowledge assessment.

For PA the mapping has included Standard 7 Information support refers to three criteria concerning information management. Three evaluation criteria are included in the mapping. The HEI/department should constantly update, improve, and expand the information base and that they should have its own personalised interactive resource. Lastly, that free Wi-Fi should be available throughout the university. (Evaluation criteria 7.2.3, 7.2.4 and 7.2.5.)

Other criteria concerning information management which was not included in the mapping are found in Standard 3 Students and educational process that the HEI should create a mechanism for monitoring student satisfaction with the activities of the university in general and with individual services and demonstrate the functioning of the feedback system, including the prompt provision of information on the results of the assessment of students' knowledge. (Evaluation criteria 3.2.14 and 3.2.15.)

Graduates are mentioned specifically under Standard 9. It states that the HEI/department should have a system for studying employment, demand, career support and continuous professional development of university graduates and that data obtained on the employment of graduates should be used to further improve educational programs. (General provision 9.1.3 and evaluation criterion 9.2.2.)

There is no reference to EUR-ACE standards in the mapping, but EUR-ACE standard 2.4.5 Internal Quality Assurance states that it would be expected that there is a defined and documented procedure for reviewing the programme at regular intervals *using all relevant data*, including an evaluation of student achievement against the stated programme aim.

1.8 Public information

The mapping refers to IA Standard 8 evaluation criteria 8.2.13 to 8.2.17. The HEI should demonstrate the availability of a web resource in three languages, reflecting the mission, goals, and objectives of the HEI, where all information about HEI activities, complete information about teaching staff, personal email of the rector, virtual book of complaints, etc. is posted (evaluation criterion 8.2.14). Evaluation criteria 8.2.13, 8.2.15, 8.2.16 and 8.2.17 are about implementation of information technology in the educational process in order to monitor the use of new learning technologies, copyright, use of ICT in the different bodies at the HEI and the teaching staff's, students and other employees mastering of ICT. They are not specifically about public information, but there are two relevant criteria under standard 2 Leadership and management that are not included in the mapping. It states that the HEI should have a developed and publicly available system of informing about the status and results of its activities, and that they should have its own information system and database, its own portal or website containing information reflecting the planning processes and the results of evaluating its effectiveness for students, employees, and the public. (Evaluation criteria 2.2.9 and 2.2.13).

For PA the mapping refers to Standard 7 Information support and Standard 9 Graduates. The HEI should demonstrate the availability of a web resource in three languages, reflecting the mission, goals and objectives of the university, where all information about the activities of the university, complete information about the teaching staff, the rector's personal email, a virtual book of complaints, etc. are placed and provide students with open access to information about university activities and available grants and scholarships. (Evaluation criteria 7.2.7 and 7.2.8.) The mapping also includes standard 9 Graduates with the criteria that the HEI should keep in touch with graduates and support the various endeavours of its graduate students.

There is no reference in the mapping to EUR-ACE standards. However, the EUR-ACE standard 2.4.5 Internal Quality Assurance states that information about all aspects of the programme, including the quality assurance procedures, should be publicly available.

1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

The mapping refers to IA Standard 3 Educational programmes, evaluation criteria 3.2.1 to 3.2.24. The criteria are specific requirements to a higher education programme such as the content, level of education, learning outcomes, facilities, and equipment, teaching and teaching methods, assessment, students' independent work, counselling students on the educational process, mobility, and joint programmes with other HEIs, and that they will be subject for on-going monitoring and for periodic review of the programme. The HEI should provide a mechanism for internal quality assessment and examination of educational programmes, as well as feedback for improvement. They should provide an annual revision of the content of curricula and training programmes, update educational programmes, and should ensure the participation of the teaching staff and employers in the development and management of the educational programme to ensure their quality. They should also consider students' and teachers' wishes, and the interests of employers, the professional field and the market. (Evaluation criteria 3.2.1, 3.2.10, 3.2.11, 3.2.13 and 3.2.16.)

It is also stated in the general provisions for Standard 3 3.1.1 (not included in the mapping) that HEIs should have procedures for developing and approving their programs. Programs should be designed to meet the stated objectives. The goal of the educational program implementation is the formation

of the professional competence of future specialists in accordance with the qualification requirements and the satisfaction of the country's labour market needs.

The mapping refers to PA Standard I Objectives of the educational programme, Standard 8 Finance and management and Standard 9 Graduates. The mapping relates to the fact that KAZSEEs evaluation method should focus on the learning outcomes of the program, and that the learning outcomes must be clearly aligned with the goals of the program and that the concept of program structure should be built in a combination of individual modules, considering the formulated goals, forms of learning and teaching (evaluation criteria 1.2.1 and 1.2.2). The mapping also relates to funding, that it should be results-oriented, and that the HEI should have a mechanism for assessing the adequacy of funding for educational programs (evaluation criterion 8.2.8). The mapping also refers to graduates that the data obtained on the employment of graduates should be used to further improve educational programmes, and that monitoring of employment and professional activities of graduates is an important factor for information (evaluation criteria 9.2.2 and 9.2.5).

It is not included in the mapping but the general provisions of Standard I Objectives of the educational program 1.1.2. states that HEIs should have procedures for developing and approving their programs.

There is no reference in the mapping to EUR-ACE standards, but according to EUR-ACE standard 2.4.5 Internal Quality Assurance the programmes must be supported by effective quality assurance policies and procedures.

1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

The mapping refers to IA Standard I Mission and strategy of the HEI 1.2.7: The university systematically collects, accumulates and analyses information about its activities and conducts self-assessment in all areas, based on the development and implementation of measurement processes, analysis to assess the success of the university's strategy implementation through such indicators as "performance" and "efficiency", develops and revises vision, mission and strategy, and that based on the strategy, the HEI develops documents for individual areas of its activities, including academic policy, codes, implementation plans, plans for areas of activity, regulations and procedures.

PA standards that are referred to in the mapping are about mobility of students (evaluation criterion 3.2.5), a general reference to that the financial and administrative policies of the HEI should be aimed at improving the quality of the education program (evaluation criterion 8.2.2) and lastly that the qualification that is obtained by the graduates meet all the requirement of the national qualification system. However, there is a reference to external evaluation processes under Principles of specialised education of educational programs 5.1 that external assessment is carried out objectively, transparently, and independently of the intervention of third parties (government agencies, universities and public organisations). The information from the SAR and from the site visit HEIs must undergo external quality assurance to be included in the Ministry Register 2 (Ministry register of accredited HEI) or Register 3 (Ministry register of accredited programmes). For renewal of the accreditation period the HEI must apply and undergo a new external review to be included in the register. Thus, the HEIs are subject to an external review process of either after 3, 4, 5 or 7 years. See ESG 2.5 about periods of accreditation decisions.

There is no reference in the mapping to EUR-ACE standards. However, standard 2.4 Programme management states that the engineering degree program should comply with internal quality assurance procedures, and that accredited engineering degree programmes must be supportive by effective QA policies and procedures.

Analysis

The panel could identify IA, PA, and EUR-ACE standards with ESG part I with the help of the table provided by KAZSEE. The panel has checked how these are reflected and assessed in the accreditation reports.

The panel questions whether ESG I.1 *Policy for quality assurance* is sufficiently fulfilled. The IA standard 2.1.1 is related to the policy of quality assurance “[...] *Educational organizations should have their own quality assurance policy, reflecting the institutional vision and strategy and, thus, related to the strategic management of the university*”. In PA indirect relation could be found in criteria 8.2.6 “*An important factor is the availability of a quality management system in the university / department, certified by independent organizations*” and 8.2.7 “*The university should have an internal quality assurance system*”. The criteria in the institutional or programme standards is dealing with the development of the policy and involvement of external stakeholders in this process. Programme accreditation criteria do not require the analysis of policy for quality assurance. Respectively, the accreditation reports do not analyse this as well. The panel’s recommendation is to analyse the policy more systematically for quality assurance in PA.

ESG I.2 about design and approval of programmes is well covered by both IA, PA and EUR-ACE standards.

ESG I.3 about student-centred learning is well covered both by IA, PA, and EUR-ACE standards. The many evaluation criteria in the mapping under IA Standard 3 ensures that the HEIs develop and deliver programmes that aim to provide a student-centred learning with active and innovative teaching methods. The criteria for PA Standard 2 and Standard 3 are very specific and cover many different issues relating to student learning.

ESG I.4 student admission, progression and certification is adequately covered.

ESG I.5 about teaching staff is well covered in many aspects concerning teaching and teaching staff for IA, PA, and EUR-ACE. It is covered with a detailed set of criteria both for IA Standard 4 Teaching staff and teaching effectiveness (referring to 16 evaluation criteria Standard 4) and PA Standard 4 Teaching staff (referring to 12 evaluation criteria Standard 4).

ESG I.6 Learning resources and student support are well covered and addressed in many relevant criteria. Especially in IA standards where it refers to three standards and 13 criteria.

Some of the criteria that are referred to in the mapping do not always correspond to the ESG standards, see ESG I.7, I.8, I.9 and I.10. However, the panel easily found information in the provided documents (IA, PA, and EUR-ACE standards). The panel concludes that ESG part I is mostly sufficiently covered in the standards and in the reports.

The panel found that the evaluation criteria often are too detailed and some may seem to overlap. The panel suggests further improvement to reflect on the criteria and reduce the level of details. It is also advised that such a process should involve discussions with the HEIs, the expert groups and other relevant stakeholders.

Panel recommendations

13. Systematically analyse the policy for quality assurance in PA.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

4. Reflect on the criteria and reduce the level of details, and to involve the stakeholders in this process.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE

Standard:

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

Evidence

Amendments to the Law of Kazakhstan "On Education" and the introduction of new provisions (2018), emphasising the importance of interaction with employers and the need to consider the "Professional Standards" developed by NCE Atameken, had an impact on the activities of KAZSEE. New changes were embedded in Standards for IA and PA developed by KAZSEE in 2018. The standards are developed with the involvement of interested parties (experts, recommendations of state bodies, public organisations). To ensure quality and disseminate the best European practices, KAZSEE standards are harmonised with ESG (2015) and EA FSG (ENAE) standards. This is in line with the KAZSEE mission as outlined in the Charter. KAZSEE conducts an external evaluation in accordance with the developed methodologies.

The increase of participation of external stakeholders is ensured by the conclusion of memorandums of cooperation with professional associations, the Alliance of Students of Kazakhstan (AKS), the involvement of representatives of employers and the student community, as well as representatives of foreign universities as members of KAZSEE collegial bodies.

The procedure for PA and EUR-ACE Label accreditation evaluates the objectives of the qualification, the concept of the program and its implementation, including quality assurance processes. The focus in PA and EUR-ACE labels are on the details of the programme, while the focus in IA is management of the institution and its programmes.

KAZSEE has a flexible policy regarding the definition of costs associated with accreditation. The cost of the procedure consists of actual expenses due to the review and analysis of the self-assessment report, travel expenses (travel, accommodation, meals, per diems) of Kazakhstan and foreign specialists, salaries of KAZSEE personnel, communication services, administrative expenses, including holding an AC meeting, and expenses for expendable materials.

The starting process for accreditation was explained during the site visit. HEI publishes its intentions to buy the services of accreditation in the newspapers for accreditation agencies. KAZSEE participates in the bidding and submits a proposal. The HEI decides which agency they want to sign an agreement/contract with. This process will usually take six months, for the licence of the programme or institution, it must meet the ministerial standard. The HEI includes the terms and the necessary prerequisites. The agreement is valid for two/three years. The contract and the fee are for the accreditation process. When the contract is signed, the agency can start the procedure. The conditions and any force majeure are included. It is stipulated in the contract how much time is required to conclude the accreditation process.

The expert group is formed regardless of the type of accreditation in accordance with the rules for the external assessment procedure in the process of IA and PA. For example, in the case of IA, the expert group includes a chairman, a national expert, a foreign expert, an employer, a student, and a KAZSEE coordinator.

KAZSEE applies a cluster approach to the external evaluation of programme (PA), as well as a structured form of a SAR with recommendations for the wider use of information and communication technologies in its preparation and application.

KAZSEE, based on the updating of the national educational policy and the results of the internal audit of its accreditation activities, constantly updates the external evaluation methodology. The main means of informing the public are the KAZSEE website, traditional media, newsletters, and the Internet.

In its SAR the agency states that the stakeholders are involved in drafting methodologies through formal and informal meetings, weekly meetings and through questionnaires after the accreditation procedures are completed. In addition, stakeholders may provide informal feedback through face-to-face communication.

Analysis

The methodology for IA, PA including the EUR-ACE Label are defined. There are procedure guidelines, and instructions for the self-assessment. They are made public on the KAZSEE website together with the standards for IA and PA. The standards and the methodology follow national and international standards such as the ESG and standards for EUR-ACE Label.

The cluster approach for PA was explained to the panel during the site visit. It is a practical grouping or organising of the programmes that will be assessed. For instance, if there are 30 programmes, it may be broken down to three clusters. The clusters could be formed within a group of a certain field of programme. The coordinators with the advice of the experts put together the clusters. The coordinators work in parallel with the cluster groups and can support each other in the process. The experts write the assessment, and the chair of the expert group has the overall responsibility of the report. Even if the programmes are grouped in clusters, the object of the accreditation is a single programme, and the accreditation decision is made for each programme under assessment.

The methodology should allow institutions to demonstrate improvement, and the published reports of KAZSEE IA and PA include such recommendations. However, the panel could not find information about the follow-up. It was explained during the site visit that other agencies require a fee for the follow-up, while KAZSEE does not require additional fees. It is included in the accreditation contract that KAZSEE must finalise and conclude their report following the recommendations. The accreditation decisions are given for certain years, so the HEIs must come back for a renewal before the accreditation expires. The Ministry requires that all accreditation reports are made public and that these recommendations must be followed. The HEI can go to another agency, but information from the former report and the recommendations follows the HEI. During the site-visit it became clear that there is a follow-up procedure that HEIs follow, but KAZSEE has not included the follow-up procedure into the methodology. More consideration of follow-up is provided in ESG 2.3.

During the interviews with external stakeholders the panel was not provided with any details on how they were involved in developing accreditation documents or how they were consulted. The panel understood that only those stakeholders which are represented in internal bodies of KAZSEE were able to contribute to the development of methodologies and other documents. Wider consultation would have been welcomed. The panel recommends KAZSEE to include a wider consultation and consider a larger group of stakeholders and even more formalise the process of stakeholder involvement.

The panel commends KAZSEE for their work of developing methodologies for QA. Though being a new agency, KAZSEE has managed to develop a mature system in our view.

Panel commendation

2. The panel commends KAZSEE for their work of developing methodologies for QA.

Panel recommendations

14. Apply more wider structured consultations which would ensure involvement of all stakeholder groups into the design of accreditation documents.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES

Standard:

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent
- an external assessment normally including a site visit
- a report resulting from the external assessment
- a consistent follow-up

Evidence

The accreditation process is carried out in accordance with the standards and regulations of KAZSEE. KAZSEE accreditation procedures are continuous, logical, interconnected and cover the full cycle, starting with the application of the HEI. The application of the HEI is accepted if it meets the established requirements specified in the procedure for accreditation which was approved by the AC on 18 June 2021.

The HEI applying for accreditation must write a self-assessment report (SAR). The SAR must comply with the requirements of KAZSEE standards and guidelines and be of an analytical nature. The accuracy and reliability of the self-assessment report is ensured by supporting documentation.

KAZSEE offers practical guidance to the HEIs on the development and preparation of the SAR. They have template structure of the SAR within the standards and guidelines for each type of activity. The SARs are subject to preliminary review by the KAZSEE coordinators. If the SAR does not meet the guidelines that the HEIs need to follow, the KAZSEE coordinators will request additional information and documentation. The HEIs are recommended to finalise the SAR before the site visit. After the SAR is submitted and the expert group (see ESG 2.4. about the peer-review experts) is formed. This is followed by three stages of procedure:

1. Preparation for the site visit
 - Study the materials (SAR and additional documentation)
 - Coordination for the site visit
2. Site visit by the panel
 - The tasks of the expert group and the chair are clearly described
 - Conducting the meetings and the interviews
 - Preparation of the draft report, and conclusion of the members of the expert group
 - The expert group recommends accreditation decision and the length of accreditation
 - KAZSEE checks the report
3. Evaluation report

- Each member of the expert group signs the report
- KAZSEE sends the report to the HEI for factual corrections, and within two weeks the HEI may send comments to the AC on the report or on the violation of the procedure
- The AC makes the final decision

The procedure guidelines (IA and PA) have detailed descriptions of the three stages.

The report contains detailed conclusions on the compliance or non-compliance, indicating the strengths and weaknesses in relation to each standard. If the programmes under assessment are grouped into clusters, there could be several reports at the end of programme accreditation in certain HEI. There will be a separate report for each cluster. Each of such reports contains detailed analyses of each involved programme. The HEI receives the final report with the recommendations together with the AC's accreditation decision. The follow-up after the decision is made by the AC is not included in the methodology and in the procedure guidelines (IA and PA, including EUR-ACE). In the additional information from KAZSEE it was addressed that post-accreditation monitoring and related procedures in Kazakhstan have been a subject for controversy. Some agencies charge extra for this monitoring. KAZSEE has decided not to increase the financial burden on the HEIs, and such follow-up does not require an extra fee. It is a requirement to publish all reports, and accredited HEIs and programmes are listed in register 2 and 3 of MES RK.

Analysis

KAZSEE has published standards and procedure guidelines, instructions for the SAR and report templates to ensure transparent and reliable requirements and consistency in the different steps in the process and the assessment in the reports and the decisions. The KAZSEE coordinators follow the process closely in all the steps, and thus ensure consistency in the whole accreditation process.

The procedure includes site-visit and is described under stage 3 in the procedure guidelines. The panel found that there is a big workload for the coordinators and the experts. For more efficient use of time when planning the site visit with meetings with staff, students, employers, alumni, including visits to laboratories, classrooms, departments, the experts are divided into groups/clusters. The different groups of experts write their parts of the report, and the chair has the overall responsibility of the whole report. The KAZSEE coordinators work closely guiding and supporting the experts during the accreditation process and check the consistency of the reports.

Follow-up of the recommendations in the reports is not included in the methodology or in the procedure guidelines (IA and PA). During the site visit it was explained that all recommendations in the reports follow the accredited HEI and programmes and are subject for follow-up for renewal of the accreditation period. During the meetings the panel has learned that KAZSEE has started to implement follow-up procedures already since 2019, but not all HEIs are aware of them. Follow-up activities are also included in the contract with experts. There is clearly a follow-up of accreditation recommendations, though it should be made visible in the methodology and procedure guidelines.

Panel recommendations

15. Include the follow-up procedure in the methodology as well as the procedure guidelines. The procedure should be clearly communicated to HEIs.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS

Standard:

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

Evidence

The database of KAZSEE experts includes representatives of the university community, foreign specialists, employers, and students. For each category of experts, there are certain selection criteria. The KAZSEE expert base consists of more than 430 specialists including more than 215 national experts, 65 international experts, 75 employers, and more than 70 students (SAR page 50).

The expert database is subject to constant monitoring. Since 2017, KAZSEE has maintained an electronic database of certified national and foreign specialists in accordance with the *Regulations on the training, retraining and advanced training of KAZSEE external experts*. The electronic database allows users to add a record of each expert after visiting the university and track the validity of expert certificates. KAZSEE is responsible for the expert base which holds a selection of national and international experts, employers, students, and other stakeholders.

A candidate for KAZSEE experts can apply through the website in the “Experts” section or can be invited on the recommendation of a partner agency or public organisation at the request of KAZSEE. When selecting foreign specialists, preference is given to knowledge of Kazakh, Russian and English.

With the expansion of cross-border opportunities, and the creation of branches of foreign universities working according to their own standards, it becomes relevant for KAZSEE to expand the base of national specialists with knowledge of English and Russian languages.

KAZSEE involves students and they are expert members in all IA and PA. This was also evident in the published reports.

Members of the expert group for all accreditation procedures include a chairman, a national expert, a foreign expert, an employer, and a student. A KAZSEE Coordinator is assigned to each expert group to coordinate the accreditation process.

Criteria for the selection of academic experts by KAZSEE is as follows (information from the website):

“IA - academic degree and academic title; the experience of administrative and management work at the university for at least five years; understanding of the specifics of an accredited university; experience of participation in the work on accreditation.

PA - teaching experience in the educational program under consideration for at least three years; knowledge of regulatory legal acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan and other documents regulating accreditation issues; academic degree and academic title.”

The chairman organises the work of the expert group in accordance with the program of the site visit, directs and coordinates the work of the members of the Commission. The chairman is responsible for the final report from the expert group and recommendations for improving the quality of the HEI and / or the programme. The chairman also presents the results of the visit to the HEI at the AC meeting.

If the accreditation consists of many programmes, KAZSEE may apply a cluster approach (see explanation in ESG 2.2). The experts may advise how to put together the clusters, and the experts

will be grouped accordingly. The experts write the assessment, and the chair of the expert group will have the overall responsibility.

To ensure the quality and professional behaviour of experts, KAZSEE conducts training seminars. Training and certification of specialists is carried out in accordance with the *Regulations on the training, retraining and advanced training of external experts of KAZSEE*. Upon completion of training, a certificate is issued confirming the status of a KAZSEE expert, and they are entered into the database of experts.

The KAZSEE Expert's Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement and KAZSEE Expert Code of Ethics are available on the KAZSEE website. If there is a conflict of interest, the university informs KAZSEE about the reasons for the objections to this expert, based on which he/she is replaced. In case of non-compliance with the Code, the behaviour of an expert is considered by the AC and may lead to his/her exclusion from the database of KAZSEE experts.

To determine the degree of satisfaction and evaluate the activities of KAZSEE experts, after each visit of the expert group, an analysis of the results of the work of the expert group, interviews with the top management of the accredited HEI and / or education programme, and a survey of the coordinator are carried out. At the end of the accreditation process, the KAZSEE coordinator uses this survey to evaluate the work of experts in terms of compliance with KAZSEE guidelines and regulations, deadlines, and code of experts for reasoned and impartial evaluation and their ability to work in a team.

Analysis

The panel found KAZSEE's regulation, code of ethics, the procedures and practice of the selection of experts, independence, and training compliant with the ESG concerning peer-review experts.

The experts are provided with training and are in close contact with and receive guidance by the KAZSEE coordinator during the whole accreditation process.

KAZSEE's strength is involvement of experts having not only academic, but practical experience in the field of engineering and the focus on accreditation of engineering study programmes.

The panel found that the students are involved in the expert groups. However, the agency should spread information about accreditation procedures to students at the HEIs to make students more aware about quality assurance of higher education and institutions and about the possibility to be involved as experts. The agency should consider making a guide and instruction for new student experts as well as student's member of the AC and to guide them more closely in the accreditation process.

Panel recommendations

16. Spread information about the possibility for students to be involved as experts in KAZSEE accreditation processes.

17. Consider a guide and instruction to new student experts as well as student's member of the AC.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES

Standard:

Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

Evidence

KAZSEE has developed standards and criteria:

- Standards for specialized educational programs accreditation of higher education (this incorporates EUR-ACE standards as well)
- Standards for accreditation of higher education institution

They have developed procedure guidelines for accreditation, and instruction for the SAR for IA and for PA. The standards and criteria for IA and PA, procedure guidelines, and instructions for the SAR for IA and PA are published on the website. The procedure includes processes to ensure that the quality of the SAR and the report are consistent.

The panel was provided with the former and the new report templates for the expert group to use for writing their assessment. Two examples of accreditation report together with KAZSEE's feedback and comments to the expert group's draft report were received on 7 November 2022.

The SAR and the experts' report are the basis for the AC's decisions on accreditation. The AC decision does not have to coincide with the recommendations of the expert group. They might for example decide to give more or fewer years for the accreditation period. It was clarified during the site visit that there had not been any refusal, and that the length of accreditation given in the decisions relates to the numbers of recommendations. No HEI was given accreditation for a period of seven years as KAZSEE provides accreditation for a period of accreditation for seven years only in case of re-accreditation if the EP was previously accredited for a period of five years. So far, no re-accreditation processes were carried on applying the new methodology that was developed in 2021.

In *The procedure for accreditation of educational programs in the Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE, June 18, 2021*, the following options for accreditation decisions are possible:

Full term (5 years) accreditation

- in the case of full compliance of the program with the requirements of each criterion if all criteria are assessed as "meet". At the same time, the expert commission can give suggestions for improving some parameters of the educational program.

Accredit for a part-time period (3 years)

- in the case of accreditation of an educational program without graduates⁷

- in the case when according to one or several standards the assessments "comply with recommendations" are given, and recommendations are given to eliminate weaknesses.

Accredit for a shorter period (1 year)

⁷ These are institutions that has ongoing programmes but does not yet have any graduates (for example after the HEI has had conceptual education for one year, they can apply and may be issued certification for three years)

- in the case conceptual accreditation⁸ of the educational program is carried out
- if according to one or several standards, the assessments are “consistent with comments”, but improvements can be achieved within a reasonable period of time (no more than 1 year). At the same time, the expert commission gives a description of the detected systemic deficiencies.

Refrain from accreditation

- if at least one criterion is not fully met, i.e. if the rating “does not correspond”.

In case of re-accreditation of the educational program in the same agency, the certificate can be issued for seven years (SAR, p. 105).

KAZSEE always informs the HEI about the decision. The AC makes the final decision, and their results as well as the report are published.

Accredited institutions and programmes are included in the registers 2 and 3 of the MES RK. The recommendations of the reports follow the HEIs and are important follow-up for the renewal of the accreditation period.

Analysis

KAZSEE standard and criteria, reports and the decision of the AC are published, and there are available procedure guidelines and instructions for the SAR to help the HEIs in writing the SAR and ensure the quality and consistency of the documentation provided from the HEIs. KAZSEE has seminars with the HEI for the preparation of the SAR and for the understanding of the standards and criteria for accreditation. The coordinators check that the SAR and all the needed documentation are in place.

KAZSEE has described this stage in the procedure guidelines. When the experts make their assessment, the chair of the expert group ensures the quality and is responsible to put together the expert assessments. The coordinator checks the consistency of the assessment during the process involving and checking with the chair, the HEI and during the decision process with the AC.

The panel finds all the steps from the starting point of the accreditation process until the final decision by the KAZSEE AC well described in the procedure guidelines. During the site visit, the procedure was further explained confirming the many steps of ensuring the quality and consistency of the assessments in the reports. The coordinators have an important role for ensuring the consistency of the assessments leading to compliance or noncompliance of the standards and criteria. When the expert groups’ reports are sent to the AC and the chair of the expert group gives a presentation with recommendations to AC, the reports are also scrutinised by the AC before it is sent to the HEI for comments. The report on the assessment of IA/PA together with the comments from the HEIs are considered by the AC, and the AC makes the final decision on the accreditation.

The main outcomes of the agency’s work are the accreditation reports. The panel found that the HEIs are satisfied to receive reports that provide clear recommendations that they could quickly turn into the actions of improvements.

Panel conclusion: compliant

⁸ Conceptual accreditation of the programme is accreditation when HEI has received a licence, but there are no students, ex-ante (SAR page 105)

ESG 2.6 REPORTING

Standard:

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

Evidence

KAZSEE provides the experts with a report template and has materials with guidelines and detailed instruction for the experts. The panel was provided with an old and new version of the report template (Additional documentation appendix I I EEG report and EEG report new).

All the IA and PA reports are published on the KAZSEE website. The reports are written in Kazakh and Russian. The reports published on the website were mainly in Russian. KAZSEE publishes a short version in English for ENAEE when issuing the EUR-ACE Label.

The content of the report serves as a guide for the institution's follow-up actions depending on the result of the evaluation. The AC as the decision-making body of KAZSEE base their decision on these reports, so the reports should provide sufficient information on the compliance of the IA and PA standards. The reports should also serve as a source of reliable and transparent information for the stakeholders.

The reports are written by the experts, and the chairman of the expert group has the overall responsibility for the whole report. At the end of the site-visit a draft report is sent to KAZSEE, and the coordinators check the draft report to ensure that the report is in accordance with the requirements of KAZSEE. The panel was provided with two examples of PA reports with the coordinators' feedback to the reports: D. Serikbayev East Kazakhstan State Technical University - Automation and control (Bachelor and Master) and al-Farabi Kazakh National University - Computer Science (Bachelor and Master).

If the cluster approach (see explanation in ESG 2.2.) is applied, there could be several reports at the end of programme accreditation in certain HEI. There will be a separate report for each cluster. Each of such reports contains detailed analyses of each involved programme.

The site-visit and the main structure of the report is described in the procedure guideline (see stage 2 The procedure for Accreditation).

The report has a general description of the HEI and programme. The main part of the report is the assessment and contains detailed conclusions on the compliance / non-compliance with the KAZSEE standards, indicating the strengths and weaknesses or shortcomings in relation to each standard.

There are four possible final scores for each standard:

- "corresponds"
- "complies with the recommendations"
- "corresponds with remarks"
- "does not match".

For each of the final assessments of "consistent with recommendations", and "consistent with remarks", it is necessary to:

- point out the weaknesses or shortcomings of the program

- give recommendations to eliminate weaknesses and / or shortcomings and note whether the university has a system of measures aimed at eliminating them.

The general assessment of the degree of fulfilment of the standard is made as a result of the discussion by the experts of the assessments given by each expert. If the experts do not come to a consensus on the assessment of a specific standard, it should be indicated separately by the opinions of experts with a note "Dissenting opinion".

The assessment for the EUR-ACE Label is integrated in the PA report.

After the draft report has been revised by the chair of the expert group, the agency sends the draft report to the HEI for factual check. After the factual check, the expert group members finalise the report. KAZSEE is responsible for the accuracy of the final report from the expert group.

The final reports include information of the composition of the expert groups, the plan for the site visit, evidence from the SAR and collected information, an analysis of the compliance with the standards (IA, PA and EUR-ACE). The expert group submits to the AC recommendations for accreditation. Duration period of accreditation (1, 3, 5 or 7 years) is applied for all types of KAZSEE activities, including institutional accreditation in Kazakhstan, programme accreditation in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, awarding of the EUR-ACE Label (see assessment ESG 2.5). The report should also contain examples of best practices. The accreditation reports are published on the KAZSEE website to ensure transparency and documented results of external QA. This allows stakeholders to acquire information about the quality assessment results.

Analysis

KAZSEE has guidelines and material with detailed instruction for the experts. There is a report template which ensures the consistency and quality of the report. Though the feedback mechanism seems to be informal, the experts' experiences have contributed to the development of the instruction materials for the experts.

The panel was provided with a new report template. The new version includes a summary of strengths and best practices and provides an overview of recommendations. Additionally, there is a new annex with a table of compliance with KAZSEE standards. The panel noticed that decisions from previous accreditation procedures or the recommendations are not included in the new template. Though all the accreditation reports are published, as it is a requirement from the Ministry and in line with the ESG, the panel advice KAZSEE to include recommendations from the last report in the new reports. This will make it easier for the follow-up procedure.

Referring to the two last reports that were provided to the panel on 7 November, KAZSEE's feedback to the expert group to the draft report has the quality that is expected from a quality assurance agency. The panel found the reports well founded and analytical. The provided report examples with feedback to the experts from KAZSEE and gives the HEIs recommendations to use for improvement.

KAZSEE has a database accessible from the website with the IA and the PA reports. There has been a concern that the website did not show all the reports. It was however explained during the site visit that the website is under development as the agency needed to develop a system that can manage a larger amount of information and publications. It should be ensured that all accreditation reports are publicly available.

There are 15 reports where the EUR-ACE Label has been issued. From the very beginning of its activities KAZSEE was directed in the right way considering the best practices of ENAEE and highlighting EUR-ACE standards. The Award of EUR-ACE Label was highlighted by the HEIs as one of

the added values of KAZSEE's activities and procedures. Furthermore, as the award of the label is important for the stakeholders, KAZSEE should promote and highlight these reports.

The database of reports for IA and PA are published and are accessible on the website under a separate section "External review reports". The panel found that it requires efforts to find decisions made by the Accreditation Council, as accreditation decisions are published separately from the reports. AC decisions could be found in the protocols of AC and the link to this section with protocols is placed at the very end of the page which is dedicated to the Accreditation Council. The panel is concerned with the importance of publishing all accreditation reports together with the accreditation decisions of the AC that shows the accreditation period. It is important that these are made more accessible on the KAZSEE website.

Panel recommendations

18. Publish AC decisions together with the reports on the agency's website.
19. Promote and highlight the reports and the Award of EUR-ACE Label.
20. Ensure that all reports from KAZSEE accreditation procedures would be publicly available.
21. Include the information about former decisions and the fulfilment of previous recommendations in the new report template.

Panel conclusion: partially compliant

ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Standard:

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

Evidence

The Appeals Commissions is clearly placed in the organisation chart of KAZSEE, see figure I in this report.

According to the new version of the *Regulations on the Commission for the consideration of appeals and complaints of KAZSEE*, KAZSEE has an appeals and complaints procedure that allows to identify violations, monitor, and evaluate the effectiveness of procedures, maintain openness and responsibility of the agency's employees in accordance with the internal quality system. The KAZSEE operates in accordance with the principles of openness and accountability set forth in the Charter of KAZSEE. This implies that there are clear and published procedures for responding to appeals and complaints from HEI. The *Regulations on the Commission for the consideration of appeals and complaints of KAZSEE* is posted in the public domain on the KAZSEE website.

The agency has a separate complaints procedure (SAR). According to the SAR complaint is understood as an expression of dissatisfaction with the quality of services or actions of the agency coordinators, or members of the KAZSEE expert group. This could for instance be a situation that has happened during site visits. During the site visit, it was explained to the panel that if they receive any complaints, the KAZSEE coordinators will have a dialogue with the HEI to identify and solve the problem as soon as possible.

Regulations on the Appeals Commission (from the website) include the following:

Section 3 Grounds for an appeal

3.2 The Board of Appeal accepts the organization's appeal education for the following claims:

- *violation of the accreditation procedure.*
- *"factual errors" - this means that the information, submitted by the educational organization was used by an external expert group and the Accreditation Council incorrectly, which led to a negative decision.*

Section 4 documents for the appeal commission

Section 5 Appeal procedure

Section 6 Procedure for the decision on appeal, and

Section 7 Enforcement of decision on appeal

The commission is formed for a period of three years. There are three members elected based on proposals from universities, employers and by KAZSEE, and approved by the order of the President of KAZSEE. The chairman is elected by voting from the members of the Commission. The decision of the Appeal Commission is considered adopted when more than half of those present members at the meeting voted. The decision is sent to the President of KAZSEE, who will send the decision to the HEI for review. If the appeal is accepted, the Appeal Commission may recommend the Accreditation Council to change the decision, or new additional experts are appointed and will submit their assessment to the Accreditation Council for reconsideration. If the appeal is denied, the HEI does not have the right to re-appeal. To enforce the decision of the Appeal Commission, the President of KAZSEE prepares the document "Execution of the Appeals decision" which is sent to the HEI on behalf of the Appeals Commission.

The Appeals Commission is assembled as needed, but KAZSEE has yet to receive formal complaints and appeals. The panel found during the site visit that the HEIs are well informed about complaints and appeals procedure.

Analysis

The regulation on the Appeals Commission and its regulation for appeals and complaints contains sections describing the purpose, the grounds for appeals and the documentation that is needed, the procedure and the decision-making. There is a separate procedure for complaints. The process is defined as part of the external QA. This is communicated to the HEIs, and information is easily accessible on the KAZSEE website.

The panel agrees with the practical approach of solving problems that may arise during the process, and where the roles of the coordinators are important to solve problems through dialogue with the HEI. The panel understands that the HEIs support and appreciate this dialogue with the coordinators and with KAZSEE to avoid conflicts and a formal complaint or appeal. Though a dialogue is a preferred approach, it was also confirmed by HEIs that they were aware that they can send a formal complaint and appeal to the agency.

The Appeals Commission has yet to receive complaints and appeals and has as such not yet proven how the system works. The panel was unclear about the involvement of a student member in the Appeals Committee. The panel recommends ensuring student participation in the Appeals Commission.

Panel recommendations

22. Ensure participation of the students in the Appeals Commission.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

The expert panel believes that KAZSEE is in the right way of developing its activities. Participation in TEMPUS QUEECA project laid down a good basis for the structured procedures of accreditation. The agency took a good notion of experience from ENAEE members and EUR-ACE standards. This allowed gaining the reputation of an agency that works professionally in the field of engineering.

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS

ESG 3.5 Resources

1. The panel commends the coordinators' professional work and devotion to the tasks.

ESG 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

2. The panel commends KAZSEE for their work of developing methodologies for QA.

OVERVIEW OF JUDGEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ESG 3.1 Activities, policy, and processes for quality assurance

Panel recommendations:

1. The strategy plan should reflect the goals and objectives of KAZSEE and the plan for achieving these goals including indicators.
2. Formalise the processes of risk identification and development of possible actions.
3. Strengthen the formal involvement of stakeholders in the work of the agency.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 3.2 Official status

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 3.3 Independence

Panel recommendation:

4. Ensure the operational independence and the independence of formal outcomes in accordance with the legal documents by giving up the membership of the President and Vice-president in KAZSEE Supervisory Board and the AC so that decisions are made without risks of conflict of interest.

Panel conclusion: partially compliant

ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis

Panel recommendations:

5. Develop further activities in constructing thematic analysis as a comprehensive process.
6. Make plans for thematic analysis and involve the stakeholders.
7. The thematic analyses should be shared and published.

Panel conclusion: partially compliant

ESG 3.5 Resources

Panel recommendations:

8. Consider employing more staff, especially coordinators with further expansion of the activities.

9. Increase proficiency of the KAZSEE staff in the English language for international project and accreditation activities.

10. Improve the agency website and ensure the capacity to hold all the reports, speed of connection and active links.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

Panel recommendations:

11. Develop and implement more formalised and systematic feedback on the accreditation procedures.

12. Publish the QA policy as a separate document on the agency's website.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

Panel recommendation:

13. Systematically analyse the policy for quality assurance in PA.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

Panel recommendation:

14. Apply more wider structured consultations which would ensure involvement of all stakeholder groups into the design of accreditation documents.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 2.3 Implementing processes

Panel recommendation:

15. Include the follow-up procedure in the methodology as well as the procedure guidelines. The procedure should be clearly communicated to HEIs.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 2.4 Peer-review experts

Panel recommendations:

16. Spread information about the possibility for students to be involved as experts in KAZSEE accreditation processes.

17. Consider a guide and instruction to new student experts as well as student's member of the AC.

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 2.5 Criteria for outcomes

Panel conclusion: compliant

ESG 2.6 Reporting

Panel recommendations:

18. Publish AC decisions together with the reports on the agency's website.
19. Promote and highlight the reports and the Award of EUR-ACE Label.
20. Ensure that all reports from KAZSEE accreditation procedures would be publicly available.
21. Include the information about former decisions and the fulfilment of previous recommendations in the new report template.

Panel conclusion: partially compliant

ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals

Panel recommendation:

22. Ensure participation of the students in the Appeals Commission.

Panel conclusion: compliant

In light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the review panel is satisfied that, in the performance of its functions, KAZSEE is in compliance with the ESG.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

ESG 3.1 Activities, Policy and Processes for Quality Assurance

1. With further development of activities in IGIP Training Centre and KAZSEE International Certification Centre LLP KAZSEE will have to ensure that all processes are clearly documented, published and lead to separation of accreditation processes and the additional services.

ESG 3.3 Independence

2. Consider setting the procedure of renewal of the term and dismissal of the President/members of the Supervisory Board in the KAZSEE Charter.

ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

3. Carefully consider the role of EC in order not to create too many bureaucracies without added value to agency activities.

ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

4. Reflect on the criteria and reduce the level of details, and to involve the stakeholders in this process.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

SESSION NO.	TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW
17 October 2022 - Online meeting			
1	8.00-9.45 (CEST)	Review panel's kick-off meeting and preparations for site visit	
2	10.00-11.00 (CEST)	An online clarification meeting with KAZSEE regarding the specific national/legal context in which an agency operates, specific quality assurance system to which it belongs and key characteristics of the agency's external QA activities	<i>KAZSEE Vice-president</i> <i>KAZSEE Administrative Director</i> <i>Contact person for the review</i>
7 November 2022			
3	16.00 – 18.00	Review panel's pre-visit meeting and preparations for day 1	
4	Online	A pre-visit meeting with the agency to clarify any remaining questions after the online clarifications meeting	<i>Contact person for the review</i> <i>KAZSEE Administrative director</i>
8 November 2022			
	8.30 – 9.00	Review panel's private meeting	
5	9.00 – 10.00	Meeting with the President, Vice President	<i>KAZSEE President</i> <i>KAZSEE Vice-President</i>
	15 min	Review panel's private discussion	
6	10.15 – 11.00	Meeting with the team responsible for preparation of the self-assessment report	<i>KAZSEE Administrative director</i> <i>KAZSEE Strategic Development Director</i> <i>KAZSEE Accountant</i>

SESSION NO.	TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW
			<i>KAZSEE Contact person for the review</i>
	15 min	Review panel's private discussion	
7	11.15 – 12.15	Meeting with the Founders and KAZSEE Association Members	<i>President of National Academy of Sciences of the Higher School of Kazakhstan</i> <i>Chief Academic Secretary of National Academy of Sciences of the Higher School of Kazakhstan</i>
	15 min	Review panel's private discussion	
8	12.30 – 13.00	Meeting with the Ministry	<i>Chairman of the Committee for Quality Assurance in Education and Science of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan</i> online
	13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break	
9	14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with the directors	<i>KAZSEE Administrative director.</i> <i>KAZSEE Strategic Development Director</i>
	15 min	Review panel's private discussion	
10	15.15 -16.15	Meeting with staff in charge of external QA activities	<i>KAZSEE Coordinator</i> <i>KAZSEE Coordinator</i> <i>KAZSEE Coordinator</i>
	15 min	Review panel's private discussion	
11	16.30 – 17.30	Meeting with Supervisory Board department	<i>Chairman of the KAZSEE Advisory Board</i> <i>Member of the KAZSEE Advisory Board</i> <i>Member of the KAZSEE Advisory Board</i>
	15 min	Review panel's private discussion	

SESSION NO.	TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW
12	17.45 – 18.45	Meeting with members of the Accreditation Council and members of the Appeals Commission	<p>Chairman of AC KAZSEE</p> <p>Member of AC KAZSEE</p> <p>(Foreign expert) Member of AC KAZSEE online</p> <p>Chairman of the Audit Commission, NCE Atameken online</p> <p>Student, Seifullin Agrotechnical University online</p> <p>Chairman of the Appeal Commission</p>
13	18.45 – 19.45	Wrap-up meeting among panel members and preparations for day 2	
9 November 2022			
	8.30 – 9.30	Review panel's private meeting	
14	09.30 – 10.30	Meeting with heads of some reviewed HEIs/ HEI representatives	<p>Chairman of the Board of Directors at Serikbaev East Kazakhstan Technical University</p> <p>First Vice-Rector of Kazakh National Pedagogical University</p> <p>Rector of the Rudny Industrial Institute online</p>
	15 min	Review panel's private discussion	
15	10.45 – 11.45	Meeting with quality assurance officers of HEIs	<p>Director of International Relations Department, Kazakh National Agrarian Research University</p> <p>Head of Institutional Effectiveness Office, Kazakh National Pedagogical University</p>

SESSION NO.	TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW
			<p><i>Leading Specialist, Institutional Effectiveness Office, Kazakh National Pedagogical University</i></p> <p><i>Vice-rector for Academic and Scientific Work, Rudny Industrial Institute online</i></p> <p><i>Head of Strategic Planning and Quality Management Department, Serikbaev East Kazakhstan Technical University online</i></p>
	15 min	Review panel's private discussion	
16	12.00 – 13.00	Meeting with representatives from the reviewers' pool, including student experts	<p><i>Head of the Department of Finance and Accounting, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University</i></p> <p><i>Vice-Rector for Research Buketov Karaganda University online</i></p> <p><i>Department of Transport Engineering and Logistics, Toraigyrov University online</i></p> <p><i>Student, Seifullin Agrotechnical University online</i></p> <p><i>Student, Al Farabi Kazakh National University</i></p>
	13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break	

SESSION NO.	TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW
17	14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with stakeholders, such as students from evaluated HEIs, student unions	<i>Student, Rudny Industrial Institute online</i> <i>Student, Kazakh National Agrarian Research University</i> <i>Student, Kazakh National Pedagogical University</i>
	15 min	Review panel's private discussion	
18	15.15 – 16.15	Meeting with stakeholders, such as employers, local community, other social partners	<i>CEO, National Center for Complex Processing of Mineral Raw Materials of the Republic of Kazakhstan</i> <i>Director of the Almaty College of Economics, Doctor of Technical Sciences, Professor, Academician of the National Academy of Mechanical Engineering and Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan</i>
19	16.15 – 17.15	Wrap-up meeting among panel members: preparation for day 3 and provisional conclusions	
10 November 2022			
20	9.00 – 10.00	Meeting among panel members to agree on final issues to clarify	
21	10.00 – 11.00	Meeting with President to clarify any pending issues Meeting with KAZSEE staff upon request	<i>KAZSEE President</i> <i>KAZSEE Vice-President</i>
22	11.00 – 12.30	Private meeting between panel members to agree on the main findings	
	12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break	

SESSION NO.	TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW
23	13.30 – 14.00	Final de-briefing meeting with staff and Board members of the agency to inform about preliminary findings	<p><i>KAZSEE President</i></p> <p><i>KAZSEE Vice-President</i></p> <p><i>Chairman of AC KAZSEE</i></p> <p><i>President of National Academy of Sciences of the Higher School of Kazakhstan</i></p> <p><i>KAZSEE Administrative director</i></p> <p><i>KAZSEE Strategic Development Director</i></p> <p><i>KAZSEE Coordinator</i></p>

ANNEX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW

External review of the Kazakhstan Association for Modern (Elite) Education (KAZSEE) by ENQA

Annex I:

TRIPARTITE TERMS OF REFERENCE BETWEEN KAZSEE, ENQA AND EQAR

February 2022

I. Background and context

Associations of legal entities "Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE" (hereinafter "KAZSEE") is a public non-profit organization in the form of an association of legal entities. KAZSEE was established in 2007 as an independent public and professional structure affiliated with the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAE) as part of the implementation of the European Union project 530326-TEMPUS-I-2012-I-IT-TEMPUS-SMGR "The quality of engineering education in Central Asia". Mission of KAZSEE: Promoting the improvement of the activities of educational institutions, increasing competitiveness at the national and international levels, through the provision of educational services, technology transfer, public relations, trade unions and integration into the international educational space. KAZSEE conducts institutional and program accreditation of higher education institutions in Kazakhstan and abroad, organizes training seminars, round tables and conferences on quality assurance in higher education.

KAZSEE activities:

- organizing and conducting institutional and program accreditation of universities, colleges, institutions, etc.;
- provides support and implementation of activities in the field of ensuring the quality of education;
- conducts advanced training, certification and certification to confirm qualifications;
- develops and constantly updates the doctrine of modern education, participates in the development of educational standards;
- creates a system of support at a socially significant level of quality of modern education;
- promotes new educational technologies for the training of higher education personnel from various countries of the world;
- participates, organizes and conducts scientific-methodical and scientific-practical conferences, symposiums, seminars, creative discussions, academic readings on the problems of modern education;
- participates in the legislative activities of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan in terms of the development of regulatory documents for the accreditation of educational institutions and educational programs.

KAZSEE has been an affiliate of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since 2021 and is applying for ENQA membership.

KAZSEE is applying for inclusion on EQAR.

2. Purpose and scope of the review

This review will evaluate the extent to which KAZSEE (the agency) complies with each of the standards of Parts 2 and 3 of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)* and support the agency in its efforts to continually review and enhance its work. Such an external review is a requirement for agencies wishing to apply for ENQA membership and/or for EQAR registration.

2.1 Activities of the agency within the scope of the ESG

To apply for ENQA membership and EQAR registration, this review will analyse all of the agency's activities that fall within the scope of the ESG, e.g., reviews, audits, evaluations or accreditations of higher education institutions or programmes that relate to teaching and learning (and their relevant links to research and innovation). All activities are reviewed irrespective of geographic scope (within or outside the EHEA) or whether they are obligatory or voluntary in nature.

The following activities of the agency must be addressed in the external review:

- Institutional accreditation in Kazakhstan;
- Program accreditation in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan;
- Awarding EUR-ACE Label to educational programs.

The following activities of the agency are outside of the scope of the ESG and are not relevant for the application for inclusion on EQAR:

- Institutional accreditation of TVET (colleges)
- Programme accreditation of TVET (colleges)

The panel should pay attention whether KAZSEE's side activities performed through the KAZSEE International Certification Center LLP and the IGIP Training Center are clearly distinguished from the EQA and whether the agency prevents confusion between them⁹. Taking in consideration that the agency is still developing some of the side activities, it is expected that EQAR will be informed if anything changes between now and the review, including introduction and changes in the activities within and outside of the scope of the ESG.

3. The review process

The review will be conducted following the methodology of ENQA Agency Reviews. The process is designed in line with the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and the requirements of the *EQAR Procedures for Applications*.

The review procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of, and agreement on the Terms of Reference for the review between KAZSEE, ENQA and EQAR (including publishing of the Terms of Reference on ENQA's website¹⁰);
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel by ENQA;

⁹ Including prevention of conflict of interest as described in Annex 2 of the Use and Interpretation of the ESG for the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies, available at:

https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2020/09/RC_12_1_UseAndInterpretationOfTheESG_v3_0.pdf

¹⁰ The agency is encouraged to publish the ToR on its website as well.

- Notification of EQAR about the appointed panel;
- Self-assessment by the agency, including the preparation and publication of a self-assessment report;
- A site visit of the agency by the review panel;
- Preparation and completion of the final review report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final review report by ENQA's Agency Review Committee;
- Publication of the final review report;
- A decision from the EQAR Register Committee on the agency's registration on EQAR;
- A decision from the ENQA Board on ENQA membership;
- Follow-up on the panel's recommendations to the agency, including a voluntary progress visit.

3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review panel

The review panel consists of four members: one or two quality assurance experts (at least one of which is currently employed by an ENQA member agency), an academic employed by a higher education institution, a student member, and potentially a labour market representative (if requested). One of the members serves as the chair of the review panel, and another member as a review secretary. For ENQA Agency Reviews at least one of the reviewers is an ENQA nominee (most often the QA professional[s]). At least one of the reviewers is appointed from the nominees of either the European University Association (EUA) or the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), and the student member is always selected from among the ESU-nominated reviewers. If requested, the labour market representative may come from the Business Europe nominees or from ENQA. An additional panel member may be included in the panel at the request of the agency. In this case, an additional fee is charged to cover the reviewer's fee and travel expenses.

The panel will be supported by the ENQA Review Coordinator (an ENQA staff member) who will monitor the integrity of the process and ensure that ENQA's requirements are met throughout the process. The Review Coordinator will not be the secretary of the review and will not participate in the discussions during the site visit interviews.

Current members of the ENQA Board are not eligible to serve as reviewers.

ENQA will provide the agency with the proposed panel composition and the curricula vitae of the panel members to establish that there are no known conflicts of interest. The reviewers will have to agree to a non-conflict of interest statement that is incorporated in their contract for the review of this agency.

3.2 Self-assessment by the agency, including the preparation of a self-assessment report

The agency is responsible for the execution and organisation of its own self-assessment process and must adhere to the following guidance:

- Self-assessment is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- The self-assessment report is expected to contain:
 - a brief description of the HE and QA system;
 - the history, profile, and activities of the agency;
 - a presentation of how the agency addresses each individual standard of Parts 2 and 3 of the ESG for each of the agency's external QA activities, with a brief, critical reflection on the presented facts;
 - opinions of stakeholders;
 - the instances of partial compliance noted in the most recent EQAR Register Committee decision of inclusion/renewal and any other aspects that may have been raised by the EQAR Register Committee in subsequent change report decisions (if relevant);

- reference to the recommendations provided in the previous review and actions taken to meet those recommendations;
- a SWOT analysis;
- reflections on the agency's key challenges and areas for future development.
- All the agency's external QA activities (as defined under section 2.1) are described and their compliance with the ESG is analysed in the SAR.
- The report is well-structured, concise, and comprehensive. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which the agency performs its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the ESG.

The self-assessment report is submitted to the ENQA Secretariat, which has two weeks to carry out a screening. The purpose of a screening is to ensure that the self-assessment report is satisfactory for the consideration of the panel. The Secretariat will not judge the content of information itself but rather whether or not the necessary information, as outlined in the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews*, is present. If the self-assessment report does not contain the necessary information and fails to respect the requested form and content, the ENQA Secretariat reserves the right to ask for a revised version within two weeks.

The final version of the agency's self-assessment report is then submitted to the review panel a minimum of eight weeks prior to the site visit. The agency publishes the completed SAR on its website and sends the link to ENQA. ENQA will publish this link on its website as well.

3.3 A site visit by the review panel

The review panel will draft a proposal of the site visit schedule which must be submitted to the agency at least six weeks before the planned dates of the visit. The schedule is to include an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises to be undertaken by the review panel during the site visit, the duration of which is usually 2,5 days. The approved schedule must be given to the agency at least one month before the site visit to properly organise the requested interviews.

In advance of the site visit (ideally at least two weeks before the site visit), the panel will organise an obligatory online meeting with the agency. This meeting is held to ensure that the panel reaches a sufficient understanding of:

- The specific national/legal context in which the agency operates;
- The specific quality assurance system to which the agency belongs;
- The key characteristics of the agency's external QA activities.

The review panel will be assisted by the ENQA Review Coordinator during the site visit. The review coordinator will act as the panel's chief liaison with the agency, monitor the integrity of the review process and its consistency, and ensure that ENQA's overall expectations of the review are considered and met.

The site visit will close with a final debriefing meeting in which the panel outlines its general impressions and provides an overview of the judgement on the agency's ESG compliance. The panel will not comment on whether or not the agency would be granted/reconfirmed membership with ENQA or registration on EQAR.

3.4 Preparation and completion of the final review report

Based on the review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report in consultation with the review panel. The report will follow the purpose and scope of the review as defined under sections 2 and 2.1. It will also provide a clear rationale for the panel's findings concerning each standard of Parts 2 and 3 of the ESG. When preparing the report, the review panel should also bear in mind EQAR's

*Policy on Use and Interpretation of the ESG for the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies*¹¹ to ensure that the report contains sufficient information for the Register Committee to consider the agency's application for registration on EQAR.

A draft will first be submitted to the ENQA Review Coordinator who will check the report for consistency, clarity, and language, and it will then be submitted to the agency – usually within 10 weeks of the site visit – for comment on factual accuracy and grave misunderstandings only. The agency will be given two weeks to do this and should not submit any additional material or documentation at this stage. Thereafter, the review panel will take into account the agency's feedback on possible factual errors and finalise and submit the review report to ENQA.

The report should be finalised within three months of the site visit and will normally not exceed 40-50 pages in length.

3.5. Publication of the report and a follow-up process

The agency will receive the review panel's report and publish it on its website once the Agency Review Committee has validated the report. The report will also be published on the ENQA website together with the statement of the Agency Review Committee validating external review reports by assessing the integrity of the review process and checking the quality and consistency of the reports. Importantly, during this process, and prior to final validation of the report, the Agency Review Committee has the option to request additional (documentary) evidence or clarification from the review panel, review coordinator or the agency if needed. The review report will be published on ENQA website regardless of the review outcome.

As part of the review's follow-up activities, the agency commits to react on the review recommendations and submit a follow-up report to ENQA within two years of the validation of the final external review report. The follow-up report will be published on the ENQA website.

The follow-up report may be complemented by an optional progress visit to the agency performed by two members of the original panel (whenever possible). The visit, which normally takes place 2-3 years after the verification of the final external review report (and after submission of the follow-up report), aims to offer an enhancement-oriented and strategically driven dialogue that ordinarily might be difficult to truly integrate in the compliance-focused site visit. The progress visit thus does not have the objective of checking the agency's ESG compliance or how the agency has followed up on the recommendations, but rather provides an arena for strategic conversations that allow the agency to reflect on its key challenges, opportunities, and priorities. Should the agency not wish to take advantage of this opportunity, it may opt out by informing the ENQA Review Coordinator about this.

4. Use of the report

ENQA will retain ownership of the report. The intellectual property of all works created by the review panel in connection with the review contract, including specifically any written reports, will be vested in ENQA.

The report is used as a basis for the Register Committee's decision on the agency's registration on EQAR. In the case of an unsuccessful application to EQAR, the report may also be used by the ENQA Board to reach a conclusion on whether the agency can be admitted/reconfirmed as a member of ENQA. The review process is thus designed to serve two purposes. In any case, the review report should only be considered final after validation by the Agency Review Committee. After submission

¹¹ Available at: <https://www.eqar.eu/about/official-documents/#use-and-interpretation-of-the-esg>

to ENQA but before validation by the ARC, the report may not be used or relied upon by the agency, the panel, or any third party and may not be disclosed without ENQA's prior written consent. The approval of the report is independent of the decision on EQAR registration or ENQA membership.

For the purposes of EQAR registration, the agency will submit the review report (once validated by the Agency Review Committee) to EQAR via email. The agency should also include its self-assessment report (in a PDF format), a Declaration of Honour, and any other documents that may be relevant for the application (i.e., annexes, statement to the review report, updates). EQAR is expected to consider the review report and the agency's application at its Register Committee meeting as stipulated in the indicative review schedule below and before the decision on ENQA membership by the ENQA Board.

To apply for ENQA membership, the agency is also requested to provide a letter addressed to the ENQA Board outlining its motivation for applying for membership and the ways in which the agency expects to contribute to the work and objectives of ENQA during its membership. This letter will be considered by the Board together with the confirmation of EQAR listing when deciding on the agency's membership. Should the agency not be granted the registration in EQAR or the registration is not renewed, the decision on ENQA membership will be taken based on the final review report, the application letter, and the statement from the Agency Review Committee. The decision on membership will be published on ENQA's website.

5. Indicative schedule of the review

Agreement on Terms of Reference	January 2022
Appointment of review panel members	May 2022
Self-assessment completed	30 June 2022
Screening of SAR by ENQA Review Coordinator	July 2022
Preparation of the site visit schedule and indicative timetable	September 2022
Briefing of review panel members	October 2022
Review panel site visit	November 2022
Draft of review report and its submission to ENQA Review Coordinator for verification of its compliance with the Guidelines	December 2022
Draft of review report to be sent for a factual check to the agency	January 2023
Agency statement on the draft report to the review panel (if necessary)	February 2023
Submission of the final report to ENQA	March 2023
Validation of the review report by the Agency Review Committee	June 2023
Publication of report	June/July 2023
EQAR Register Committee meeting and initial consideration	Autumn 2023
Decision on ENQA membership by the ENQA Board	Autumn 2023 / February 2024 (depending on EQAR RC meeting)

ANNEX 3: GLOSSARY

AC	KAZSEE Accreditation Council
EC	Expert Council
EEG	External Expert Group
ENAAE	European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EO	Educational organisation (HEI)
ESG	<i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015</i>
EP	Educational programme
EQA	External Quality Assurance
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
FEANI	European Federation of National Engineering Associations
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
IA	Institutional accreditation
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
MESRK	Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan
PA	Programme accreditation
QA	Quality Assurance
SAR	Self-assessment Report

ANNEX 4. DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE REVIEW

DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY KAZSEE

Self-assessment Report

Charter of the legal entities Association “Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE” (Approved 8 June 2021)

Procedure for Accreditation of Educational Programmes in the Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE (Approved June 18, 2021)

Development Strategy 2021-2025 (July 2022)

KAZSEE Standards Institutional Accreditation

KAZSEE Standards Programme Accreditation

Instructions for preparing a self-assessment IA

Instructions for preparing a self-assessment PA

Regulations on the Appeals Commission

The documents below are additional information submitted on 3, 7 and 8 November 2022:

- MES RK No 482 27 September 2017 On recognition of an accreditation body and inclusion in the register of recognized accreditation bodies (register I) for a period of five years
- MES RK #499 October 4, 2021, Regulation of the accreditation agencies
- MES RK 2018-2020 and MES RK 2021 Annual analytical reports
- Regulation on Expert Council
- Regulation on External Experts
- Composition of the Supervisory Board
- KAZSEE Activity Report (ppt presentation)
- EUR-ACE Accreditation Process
- EUR-ACE FSG (Framework, Standard and Guidelines)
- EUR-ACE General Information
- EUR-ACE SAR Guidelines
- Instructions (current and new) for compiling the SAR (changes of methodology after amendments in the law, reports of the experts and with the participation of stakeholders)
- EEG Report (template)
- EEG Report new (template)
- Report PA awarded EUR-ACE Label: D. Serikbayev East Kazakhstan State Technical University Automation and control (Bachelor and Master) and al-Farabi Kazakh National University: Computer Science (Bachelor and Master)
- Training seminar for stakeholders December 7, 2021, Webinar (orientation accreditation and other KAZSEE activities)
- Regulation on the training, retraining and advanced training of experts.
- examples of agenda of expert training seminar

OTHER SOURCES USED BY THE REVIEW PANEL

KAZSEE website

ENAAE website

ENQA AGENCY REVIEW 2023

THIS REPORT presents findings of the ENQA Agency Review of the Kazakhstan Association for Modern (Elite) Education (KAZSEE), undertaken in 2022.

enqa.

European Association for
Quality Assurance in Higher Education