

Rejection of the Application by Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development (AKKORK) for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

Register Committee
22 June 2020

Ref. RC27/A81
Ver. 1.0
Date 01/07/2020
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Application of:	11/12/2018
Agency registered since:	17/11/2015
External review report of:	19/09/2019
Review coordinated by:	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)
Review panel members:	Heli Mattisen (chair), Tatjana Volkova (academic), Hermann Blum (student), Paul Zevenbergen
Decision of:	22/06/2020
Registration until:	31/10/2019
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Not applicable
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation of Eligibility, 07/01/2019 2. External Review Report, 19/09/2019 3. AKKORK's further information to the review report, 04/02/2020 4. AKKORK's Additional Representation [deferral answer], 25/05/2020 5. AKKORK's Change Report, 22/05/2020

1. The application of 11/12/2018 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 07/01/2019.
3. The Register Committee considered the external review report of 19/09/2019 on the compliance of AKKORK with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).
4. The Register Committee further considered AKKORK's further information on the review report, 04/02/2020.
5. On 15/03/2020 the Register Committee invited AKKORK to make additional representation on the grounds for possible rejection.

6. The Register Committee considered AKKORK's additional representation of 25/05/2020 and AKKORK's Change Report of 22/05/2020.

1. Analysis:

7. In considering AKKORK's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account the following activities and their revision in light of the substantive changes reported by AKKORK on 22/05/2020:

- *Independent evaluation of education quality (on programme or institutional level)* → changed into *AKKORK's international accreditation of educational programmes* (institutional evaluation discontinued).
- *Independent evaluation of education quality for professional-public programme accreditation* → renamed to *professional-public accreditation of educational programmes in accordance with AKKORK's basic principles of work* (methodology under development).
- *International accreditation of education programmes or institutions* → renamed to *Joint accreditation at the programme and institutional levels together with foreign partner agencies* (updated criteria, methodology the same).

8. The Register Committee noted that according to the agency's website, AKKORK also offers *quality assurance of educational programmes of higher education*. The Register Committee underlined that no procedure or methodology could be confirmed for this activity, and thus could not confirm whether the activity has predefined processes and criteria and on the activity's compliance with ESG Part 2.

9. The Register Committee further underlined that the agency has the responsibility to ensure that the name and presentation of its activities do not cause ambiguity or possible confusion in its offering of external quality assurance activities.

10. Following AKKORK's change report of 22/05/2020, the Register Committee also noted that the agency has discontinued the following activities, and thus did not consider them within the current decision:

- *International e-learning accreditation.*
- *Internal quality assurance system audit and certification (IQAS).*

11. The *reviews of non-higher education providers* are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the application for renewal of inclusion on the Register.

12. The Register Committee found that the report and subsequent documentations provides sufficient evidence and analysis on AKKORK's level of compliance with the ESG.

13. With regard to the specific European Standards and Guidelines, the Register Committee considered the following:

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1.1 ESG 2.1 – Consideration of internal quality assurance

14. Reviewing each of the agency's procedures individually the review panel showed that the *independent evaluation procedure (international accreditation of educational programmes)* does not sufficiently cover aspects related to ESG Part 1, concerning student- centred learning and teaching, the system for consideration of students' appeals and complaints.

15. In its additional representation the agency stated that new indicators have been added covering these matters and provided a full self-assessment with the mapping of its criteria to the ESG. The Register Committee took note of these changes.

16. In case of *professional-public accreditations* the panel was not able to gather conclusive evidence about what criteria are checked by the expert panel in these reviews. Following the analysis of AKKORK's own standards and their correlation with ESG (according to the agency's additional information) the Register Committee took note of the mapping and revisions, but could not conclude whether all concerns of the panel have been addressed. The Committee further underlined that the revised criteria still had to be officially approved, tested and implemented by AKKORK in its professional-public accreditation procedures.

17. The Register Committee noted from the panels reviewed documentation that experts do not have clear guidelines on what they are expected to evaluate and how to refer back to the agency's own criteria. In its additional representation AKKORK provided its revised guidelines (as of 30/01/2020) describing its procedures and the assessment criteria that experts are expected to follow. The Register Committee welcomed the revised version of the guidelines, but noted that its use and implementation has yet to be reviewed by an external review panel.

18. While the Register Committee noted that some steps have been made, the Committee considered that AKKORK has only introduced these changes recently and that their actual implementation has to be considered in an external review.

19. The Committee therefore concurred with the panel's conclusion that AKKORK complies only partially with the standard.

1.2 ESG 2.2 – Designing methodologies fit for purpose

20. Considering the design of AKKORK's methodology of external QA procedures, the panel noted that the aims of the different activities were not clearly differentiated and that there were inconsistencies between the different language versions of the AKKORK 's website (English and Russian).

21. In its additional representation the agency responded that it has made revisions to the information on its website. While the Register Committee could verify the publication of the procedures, the Committee further noted that the agency also has 'on offer' the activity *quality assurance of educational programs on the level of higher education* (see also point 8) and

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remains to demonstrate that the activity has been defined and designed to achieve the objectives set for it, as required by the standard.

22. The panel further commented on the lack of involvement of external stakeholders, apart from the representatives from its own bodies, in the design and continuous improvement of the offered procedures. The agency commented in its additional representation that it has developed a Regulation on collaboration with partners designed to be implemented in AKKORK's daily routine.

23. The Register Committee welcomed the thorough work in the development of a cooperation regulation with stakeholders, but could not confirm that the Regulation is already in effect as no evidence of the stakeholders' engagement was provided for in the recent substantive changes introduced by the agency [i.e. the design and review of criteria and methodologies for *professional-public accreditation of educational programmes in accordance with AKKORK's basic principles of work and Joint accreditation at the programme and institutional levels together with foreign partner agencies*].

24. **The Register Committee welcomed the additional documentation provided by the agency, but the Committee underlined that it could not verify the changes and the implementation of the agency's methodologies or the involvement of stakeholders in their design. The Committee therefore concluded that AKKORK complies only partially with standard ESG 2.2.**

1.3 ESG 2.3 – Implementing processes

25. In its decision of inclusion, the Register Committee noted that AKKORK's follow-up procedures were not consistently implemented for all off the agency's external quality assurance activities and therefore flagged this matter for future attention.

26. In its 2019 review report, the panel showed that AKKORK had taken steps to address its flag by including follow-up processes as part of its contracts with higher education institutions. The panel found that - while follow-ups are not part of all contracts signed with the reviewed institutions, that they are nevertheless carried out after a conditional accreditation.

27. The panel further underlined a number of shortcomings related to AKKORK's *independent accreditation reviews at institutional level* and AKKORK's *IQAS procedures*. Since these procedures are no longer on offer by AKKORK, the Register Committee found that the panel's concerns were therefore addressed. The Committee thus could not follow the panel's judgement of partial compliance and concluded that AKKORK now complies with ESG 2.3.

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1.4 ESG 2.4 – Peer-review experts

28. The Register Committee flagged AKKORK’s involvement of students in its previous decision of inclusion.

29. The panel received confirmations during its multiple interviews that all of AKKORK’s peer review expert groups now included a student member. The panel’s findings nevertheless show inconsistencies in the number of experts, listed by AKKORK in its published reports and the number of experts expected to be involved according to AKKORK’s own methodology. In particular, the review panel expressed concerns about the use of single experts for *professional-public accreditations*, although it was told that not all panel members were in fact listed in the prepared reports. The panel therefore concluded that while the formal procedure in the composition of review panel was met on paper, the practice differed.

30. The Register Committee noted from AKKORK’s additional representation that its procedures are published, but noted that the above raised concerns were not addressed and remain unresolved.

31. The Register Committee noted from the statement by the agency - in its further information on the report and additional representation - that the links have been checked and all review panel members are now listed in the published reports. Following a check of the agency’s website, the Register Committee found that a number of reports still have broken links (see the agency’s Register of programmes, under the Russian version of its website). The Committee could thus not conclude that the flag concerning the systematic involvement of students has been addressed.

32. The Register Committee was therefore unable to concur with the panel's conclusion that AKKORK complies with the standard, but found that AKKORK complies only partially with ESG 2.4.

1.5 ESG 2.5 – Criteria for outcomes

33. In its decision of inclusion, the Register Committee flagged AKKORK’s publication of detailed criteria for all its procedures. In its additional representation AKKORK stated that the detailed procedures and criteria for decisions have now been published. The Register Committee could verify that that the criteria are now published.

34. The panel learned that in many cases experts relied on their personal review experience, rather than following AKKORK’s guidelines and methodology, and that AKKORK’s criteria were not applied consistently in the agency’s decision making. According to AKKORK’s revised Guidelines for Reviewers on Conducting External Evaluation of Education Quality and Quality Assurance at Programme level (adopted as of 30/01/2020), experts are expected to follow a clear methodology in their evaluation, and not their personal review experience.

35. In its additional information to the review report, AKKORK stated that its decision-making criteria had been checked for consistency following its

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external review. The agency further provided a mapping of the scale for its decision making on programme accreditation (annexed to the additional information).

36. The Register Committee welcomed the clarification provided within the additional documentation and the steps taken to address its shortcomings and considered this sufficient to prove that the agency is at least partially compliant with the standard. The Committee however further underlined that the consistent application of the criteria cannot be confirmed and has to be externally reviewed by a panel.

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1.6 ESG 2.6 – Reporting

37. In its previous decision of inclusion, the Register Committee flagged AKKORK's practice of ensuring the consistent publication of all external evaluation reports.

38. In its additional information and additional representation to the review report the agency claimed that all its review reports and decisions were now published on its website, including the reports from its *professional-public accreditation* activity. The Register Committee could verify that with a few exceptions all of these reports are now published by the agency on its website i.e. links included under the Russian version of its agency's website under Register of programmes.

39. The Committee thus concluded that the agency has not addressed the flag fully, as it did not managed to demonstrate a practice of publishing the full results for all its reviews.

40. The Register Committee however could not follow the panel's conclusion of non-compliance (since the agency has since its external review published most of its reports) and therefore found that the agency complies only partially with ESG 2.6.

1.7 ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals

41. The Register Committee noted that appeals procedures are published together with every procedure on the agency's website, except the *independent accreditation at the institutional level*. To date AKKORK has only received a complaint, but no appeals.

42. The panel's analysis show that AKKORK's Appeals Committee involves members of the International Accreditation Council, the same body that is involved in the accreditation decision-making process in addition to the members of its Supervisory Board. The Register Committee underlined that in such cases the impartiality of the decision making in considering appeals is not ensured.

43. In its further information to the review report, AKKORK stated that its regulation on appeals have been updated and that its new appeals body, appointed by AKKORK's Supervisory Board, includes members from the

agency's partner organisations. In its additional representation the agency has further provided a link to its revised regulation on appeals.

44. Having considered the revised procedure that ensures that members of the Appeals Committee are independent from the decision making body, the Register Committee could follow the panels' conclusion of (substantial) compliance with the standard.

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1.8 ESG 3.1 – Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

45. In its analysis the panel commented that it was unclear which is the body in the agency responsible for developing a strategy, how AKKORK's procedures are developed and what types of activities and services the agency is offering. Furthermore the panel could not find any clear evidence on how the agency's mission is translated into the daily work of the agency. The panel also noted that AKKORK's actual structure and relations between its governing bodies were different to the ones presented in the last version of the statutes, adopted in 2013.

46. While stakeholders are part of AKKORK's multiple bodies, the panel noted that their involvement could be broadened. In particular, the panel recommended that students be involved also in other bodies than the Advisory Council, where only representatives from professional organisations and higher education institutions are present.

47. The Register Committee noted from the additional information that AKKORK has updated its mission statement and detailed its objectives and main activities on its website. The agency further stated that a new Strategic plan 2020-2024 has been approved by the Supervisory Board and that its Financial Plan also have been updated. The Register Committee could also verify that the new Strategic Plan has been adopted by the Supervisory Board at its meeting on December 2019.

48. While the Committee welcomed the steps taken by the agency to address the panel's concerns, the Committee further considers that these changes still have to be fully implemented and externally reviewed by a panel, i.e. showing evidence of a robust yearly work planning, implementation of the strategic plan.

49. The Register Committee therefore concurred with the conclusion that AKKORK complies only partially with standard 3.1.

1.9 ESG 3.4 – Thematic analysis

50. The Register Committee noted that the agency has produced two analyses since its last review in 2014, both written in Russian but only published on the English version of AKKORK's website. According to the panel, the last publication, however, does not meet the requirements of a thematic analysis. In particular, the panel noted the great qualitative difference between the publications, indicating a missing systematic approach to the publication of thematic analysis.

51. The Register Committee underlines the panel’s recommendation that the agency should establish a clear process to address all of its activities in thematic analyses.

52. **The Register Committee therefore concurred with the panel’s conclusion that the agency complies only partially with standard 3.4.**

1.10 ESG 3.6 – Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

53. The Register Committee noted that while the responsibilities in internal quality assurance are defined in the ‘AKKORK Internal Regulations’, the main tool of the agency for internal quality assurance of its activities are the regular staff meetings.

54. The panel’s analysis showed a number of concerns related to the agency’s internal workings, i.e. inconsistencies in the information presented on the agency’s website, the information regarding the publication of the reports or information available on external QA activities on the Russian and English parts of the website; inconsistency in the presentation of the agency’s organizational chart in ‘AKKORK Internal Regulations’ and the structure outlined in the review report, etc.. Considering the above examples, the panel considered that not all outcomes of the agency’s work, especially not the production of documentation, are covered by the existing QA cycles.

55. **The Register Committee therefore concurred with the panel’s conclusion that the agency complies only partially with standard 3.6.**

56. For the remaining standards, the Register Committee was able to concur with the review panel’s analysis and conclusion without further comments.

2. Conclusion:

57. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that AKKORK demonstrated compliance with the ESG (Parts 2 and 3) as follows:

Standard	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Partial compliance	Partial compliance
2.2	Partial compliance	Partial compliance
2.3	Partial compliance	Compliance
2.4	Substantial compliance	Partial compliance
2.5	Non-compliance	Partial compliance
2.6	Non-compliance	Partial compliance
2.7	Substantial compliance	Compliance
3.1	Partial compliance	Partial compliance
3.2	Full compliance	Compliance

3.3	Substantial compliance	Compliance
3.4	Partial compliance	Partial compliance
3.5	Substantial compliance	Compliance
3.6	Partial compliance	Partial compliance
3.7	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

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58. Also after duly considering AKKORK's additional representation, the Register Committee concluded that AKKORK only achieved partial compliance with the majority of standards. While AKKORK has made some progress in many areas, most issues were of a nature that substantial progress could only be verified through a further external review, but not within the limited scope of the additional representation process, being entirely desk-based. Given the number of key requirements of the ESG that are not fully met, in its holistic judgement on the basis of the documentation available and AKKORK's representation, the Register Committee remained unable to conclude that AKKORK complies substantially with the ESG as a whole.

59. The Register Committee therefore rejected the application.

60. AKKORK has the right to appeal this decision of the Register Committee in accordance with the Appeals Procedure (available on the EQAR website at <http://www.eqar.eu/application.html>). Any appeal must reach EQAR within 90 days from receipt of this decision.

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Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development
(AKKORK)

Erika Soboleva

Spartakovskaya str. 14, bldg. 4, office 4207

105082 Moscow

Russia

Brussels, 7 January 2019

Confirmation of Eligibility: Application for Inclusion on the Register

Application no. A81 of 11/12/2018

Dear Erika,

We hereby confirm that the application by AKKORK for renewal of registration is eligible.

Based on the information and draft terms of reference provided, the external review coordinated by ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education fulfils the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

We confirm that the following activities of AKKORK are within the scope of the ESG:

- *Independent evaluation of education quality (on programme or institutional level).*
- *Independent evaluation of education quality for professional-public programme accreditation.*
- *International accreditation (of education programmes or institutions).*
- *International e-learning accreditation.*
- *Internal quality assurance system audit and certification (IQAS).*

We noted that AKKORK might in the future perform reviews of higher education institution institutions/programmes in the context of "state supervision" of compliance with education legislation of the Russian Federation, control of compliance with licensing requirements and conditions, or state control over the education quality.

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As reviews of higher education institutions these activities would be within the scope of the ESG, irrespective of whether based on AKKORK's own standards or the Russian government criteria. Should AKKORK begin to offer or perform such activities before the external review, these should be covered.

Irrespective of the current review, AKKORK is expected to make a Substantive Change Report if and when it begins to offer such activities.

We further remind you that the following issues were flagged when AKKORK was admitted to the Register, and should be addressed in your self-evaluation report and the external review report:

ESG 2.3 – Implementation of follow-up [ESG 2005: standard 2.6]

It should be addressed whether the follow-up procedures were implemented consistently for all of AKKORK's external quality assurance activities.

ESG 2.4 – Consistent involvement of students [ESG 2005: standard 3.7]

It should receive attention whether AKKORK has involved students regularly in its review committees.

ESG 2.5 – Criteria for outcomes [ESG 2005: standard 2.3]

It should be addressed whether AKKORK published the detailed criteria for all its procedure and their explicit use.

ESG 2.6 – Consistent publication of full reports [ESG 2005: standard 2.5]

It should be addressed whether AKKORK has consistently published all external evaluation reports.

We confirm that the following activities are not within the scope of the ESG:

- *Reviews of non-higher education providers*

While these activities are not relevant to your application, it is AKKORK's choice – in agreement with the review coordinator – whether those activities should be commented upon by the review panel.

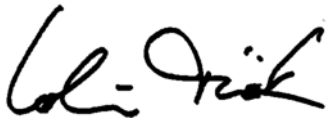
We kindly remind AKKORK that agencies should only use the EQAR label and refer to the ESG in connection with activities within the scope of the ESG, and refrain from statements that might create the impression that other activities were within the scope of the ESG or covered by their registration on EQAR.

We will forward this letter to ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education in its capacity of the coordinator of the external review. At the same time we underline that it is AKKORK's

responsibility to ensure that the coordinator and review panel take account of the present confirmation, so as to ensure that all activities mentioned are analysed by the panel.

This confirmation is made according to the relevant provisions of the EQAR Procedures for Applications. AKKORK has the right to appeal this decision in accordance with the Appeals Procedure; any appeal must reach EQAR within 90 days from receipt of this decision.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Tück'.

Colin Tück
(Director)

Cc: ENQA (coordinator)

Application by Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development (AKKORK) for Renewal of Registration

Minutes of Telephone Conversation

Register Committee

Ref. A81
Date 2018-12-21
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Date of the conversation:	21/12/2018
Representative of AKKORK:	Erika Soboleva
Representative of EQAR:	Colin Tück

1. AKKORK has submitted on 11/12/2018 an application for renewal of registration on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).
2. In order to prepare the deliberations of the Register Committee on the eligibility of the application and AKKORK's activities within the scope of the ESG, EQAR contacted AKKORK to clarify the matters below.
3. AKKORK agreed to clarify the matters by means of a telephone conversation.
4. The "Independent evaluation of education quality" can be at institutional or programme level, depending on what the higher education institution applies for. An institutional evaluation always includes consideration of the institution's programmes.
5. Likewise, in addition to the "International Accreditation of Education Programmes", institutions can also apply for an international institutional accreditation.
6. AKKORK used to offer consulting and methodological projects in the past, but no longer offers any such activities.
7. AKKORK's website notes that the agency might be involved in the "state supervision over compliance with legislation of the Russian Federation on education, control over compliance with licensing requirements and conditions, state control over the education quality". This would entail performing reviews based on the Russian Federation government's standards.
8. AKKORK is currently considering whether to re-apply for being authorised by the government for such reviews.

Approved

By AKKORK Supervisory Board

Minutes № 01 from 25 June 2014

Approved

By AKKORK Supervisory Board

Minutes № 02 from 17 December 2019

APPEALS REGULATION

1. Educational organization, after receiving expert's and/or decision on accreditation, may not agree with the conclusions of the expert team and/or with the decision of the Accrediting organization Accreditation Council. In such cases, an educational organization may submit an appeal to the accrediting organization, in writing and signed by the rector of the educational organization. Appeals in verbal form are not considered. The appeal shall specify exactly, which expert opinions (or conclusion of the Accreditation Council) not accurately reflect the situation in the educational organization. Appeal is sent to the AKKORK Supervisory Board in course of 10 days after the educational organization has been acquainted with results of accreditation.

2. AKKORK Supervisory Board after receiving the appeal, in course of 5 days notify the representatives of the educational organization of the fact that the appeal is received.

3. Appeal is considered by the AKKORK Supervisory Board, which approves the external committee, where are included representatives of AKKORK partner organizations. The committee line-up determined for each specific case by the Chairman of the Supervisory Board. None of the committee members shall have any relation to the assessment been the subject of the dispute. The required support is provided to the committee by the AKKORK employees, not related with the assessment been considered whatsoever.

4. The committee in course of 20 days shall consider:

- procedures, performed by experts,
- conclusions, made by them, and to verify,
- do the experts' conclusions remain correct and clear in the light of the issues, stated in the appeal.

4.1. In regard to the AKKORK experts panel

The committee shall determine whether the experts allowed procedural violations that could open to question the legitimacy of judgments, and, if violations are identified, to assess whether these violations affected the conclusions made by experts.

The committee shall also consider, whether the experts' conclusions are justified and proportionate, as the legitimacy of the experts' findings becomes questionable if the information available to the committee shows that the experts took into account irrelevant facts and did not take into account the important results.

The Committee shall also find out whether the appeal contains materials that were not available to experts until the educational audit completion, and now are forcing experts to revise their results. If such materials are identified, the educational institution representatives shall explain to the Committee why such materials were not provided to the experts during the assessment.

4.2. In regard to the members of the Accreditation Council of Accrediting organization

The committee shall find out, whether any members of the Accreditation Council have interests, associated with competing educational institutions and other aspects that could call into question the legitimacy of decisions made.

5. Having considered all aspects of educational institution disagreement with the Accreditation Council decision, the committee may recommend:

- To confirm the Accreditation Council's decision, Since, firstly, no evidence were found to indicate any significant procedural violations, and secondly, expert opinions were found to be justified and proportionate, and thirdly, it was found that the appeal does not contain materials that could improve the experts' conclusions, but were not available until the end of drafting the report;
- To revise the accreditation decision, if procedural violations were detected, causing doubts about the conclusions validity and/or invalidity and/or disproportion of expert opinions were confirmed.

6. Committee having finished the work, informs the Supervisory Board on its conclusions and recommendations.

Supervisory Board should consider the conclusions and recommendations of the committee and make a decision. The whole appeals procedure from the moment of appeal submission till the moment of Supervisory Board decision should not last longer than 3 months.

Correlation of ESG and AKKORK Criteria

ESG	AKKORK Criteria	AKKORK indicators
1.1 Policy for quality assurance	Criterion 2.1 Strategy, aims and program management	Full Criterion
	Criterion 2.2 Structure and content of the program	6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 20, 24, 25,
	Criterion 2.10 Students' participation in the programme management	Full Criterion
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	Criterion 2.1 Strategy, aims and program management	3, 4, 5
	Criterion 2.2 Structure and content of the program	2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 30-40, 42
	Criterion 2.8 Research work	1-6, 11, 17
	Criterion 2.11 Student services	12, 13
	Criterion 2.4 Techniques and methods of educational activities	3
1.3 Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment	Criterion 1.2 Satisfaction with leaning outcomes	2
	Criterion 2.2 Structure and contents of the program	12, 21, 25,
	Criterion 2.10 Students' participation in the programme management	1, 2, 3, 4-6, 10
	Criterion 2.11 Student services	1,2, 4, 7-9, 10, 11, 14, 15
	Criterion 2.3 Teaching and learning materials	10, 13, 14

1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Criterion 2.2 Structure and contents of the program	12, 43
	Criterion 2.12 Career guidance. Assessment of the quality of preparation of enrolees (for bachelor degree programme)	1, 2, 4
1.5 Teaching staff	Criterion 2.5 Academic teaching staff	Full Criterion
1.6 Learning resources and student support	Criterion 2.11 Student services	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16-23
	Criterion 2.3 Teaching and learning materials	8-12,
	Criterion 2.6 Material and technical and financial resources of the programme	Full Criteria
	Criterion 2.7 Information resources	1-6, 8
	Criterion 2.4 Techniques and methods of educational activities	1-3, 4-11
1.7 Information management	Criterion 1.1. Demand for graduates of programme on federal and regional labour markets	9, 10
	Criterion 2.1 Strategy, aims and program management	2, 3, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14
	Criterion 2.5 Academic teaching staff	2, 5, 6-8, 13, 15, 16,
	Criterion 2.7 Informational resources	7
1.8 Public information	Criterion 2.1 Strategy, aims and program management	6, 18
	Criterion 2.6 Material, technical and financial resources of the program	16
	Criterion 2.7 Informational resources	9
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Criterion 1.1. Demand for graduates of programme on federal and regional labour markets	3, 9, 12

	Criterion 2.1 Strategy, aims and program management	2,3, 11, 13, 14, 19
	Criterion 2.3 Teaching and learning materials	1, 4, 5
	Criterion 2.10 Students' participation in the programme management	1, 3
1.10. Cyclical external quality assurance	Criterion 2.1 Strategy, aims and program management	15

Fulfillment of ENQA panel recommendations

№, ESG Standard	Recommendation	Fulfillment	Date
1. ESG 3.1.	The agency should align its mission statement and connected goals and objectives with its current activities and the strategy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AKKORK mission have been rewritten and confirmed by the Supervisory Board. Also goals and objectives have been updated. By the 07.02.2020 they will be uploaded to the website. 2. Strategic plan 2020-2024 have been approved by the Supervisory Board and will be sent to EQAR by 07.02.2020. It is currently being translated 	07.02.2020
2.ESG 3.1.	The agency should develop a regular process of strategic planning that translates its mission into the comprehensive and targeted plans.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The process of strategic planning is stated by AKKORK Statutes point 4.2.4. 2. Strategic plan 2020-2024 have been approved by the Supervisory Board and will be sent to EQAR by 07.02.2020. It is currently being translated. 	07.02.2020
3.ESG 3.1	The panel learned that no specific strategic or financial plan exists in this regard at the agency. Nevertheless, the agency staff stated that statistics by year do not accurately show the development of projects, which usually lost for more than one year, and that they do not identify a long-term decrease in project numbers. The panel further learned from the detailed budget that the financial goals as set by the agency for 2018 were met (Strategic Plan 2018-2020, Detailed Budget).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic plan 2020-2024 have been approved by the Supervisory Board and will be sent to EQAR by 07.02.2020. It is currently being translated. 2. Financial plan also have been updated and is currently under translation will be sent to EQAR by 07.02.2020. 	07.02.2020
4.ESG 3.1.	The existing cooperation with stakeholder organisations should be used to develop a system of proposing candidates to the AKKORK bodies by the stakeholders themselves.	There has been created a Regulations on the cooperation with partners, it is being translated and will be provided to EQAR by 7.02.2020	07.02.2020

5.ESG 2.2.	If the agency is considering continuing to offer all of its procedures, it should clearly set the aims and objectives for all offered procedures.	As per suggestion of ENQA panel “The agency may reconsider the need for two different external QA procedures on the institutional level” the list of services have been reconsidered. You can find the updated list here http://akkork.ru/e/services/	30.01.2020
6.ESG 3.3.	All reports and other outcomes of AKKORK’s external QA procedures should clearly indicate AKKORK as the conducting agency.	In all reports made after ENQA Board decision, so after September 2019 we indicated AKKORK as the conducting agency. http://akkork.ru/e/projects/ .	30.01.2020
7..ESG 2.6.	AKKORK should publish all of its review reports on its website. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report. All reports for professional-public accreditations should be published in the state system for professional-public accreditation.	All review reports and decisions have been published on AKKORK website http://akkork.ru/e/projects/ - Register of accredited programmes is a list of professional-public accreditation - Registry of programmes with international accreditation is a list of programmes accredited by AKKORK and partner agency	30.01.2020
8.ESG 2.6.	All reports that are the outcome of panel’s work should be referenced by, and approved by, those same panels. The reports should also always list all panel members.	We checked the reports for consistency and currently all the reports list all the panel members http://akkork.ru/e/projects/	30.01.2020
9.ESG 3.4.	All published documents of thematic analysis should clearly indicate the title, author, and date of publication.	The Thematic analysis documents have been updated on AKKORK website http://akkork.ru/e/about/documents/	30.01.2020
10.ESG 3.5.	The agency should establish processes for its financial management and strategic planning to ensure the sustainability of the agency’s operations under the	1. Strategic plan 2020-2024 have been approved by the Supervisory Board and will be sent to EQAR by 07.02.2020. It is currently being translated. 2. Financial plan also have been updated and is	07.02.2020

	declining revenues (2014-2018), to achieve its mission, and to seize opportunities that the agency sees for itself.	currently under translation will be sent to EQAR by 07.02.2020.	
11.ESG 3.6.	The agency should consistently document and/or develop internal QA processes that are formal, explicit and close the loop. These processes should aim for the quality of the process outputs and for monitoring and critical reflection on the agency's activities while avoiding bureaucratic burden.	The first meeting of Projects office this year was carried out in January 2020. The Minutes will be provided to EQAR by 07.02.2020, They are under translation now.	07.02.2020
12.ESG 2.5.	The requirements on how to meet the criteria and how to reach different accreditation decisions based on these criteria should be defined explicitly and clearly for each activity of AKKORK. This should be communicated to HEIs and experts in the same way, as well as published on the agency's website.	The assessment criteria and indicators, the criteria for decisions for every procedure offered by AKKORK is posted on the website http://akkork.ru/e/services/	05.02.2020
13.ESG 2.5.	The agency should establish more effective processes to ensure consistency and transparency in the application of the criteria in the agency's decision-making processes.	AKKORK decision making criteria have been checked for consistency. Please find them attached to this document.	30.01.2020
14.ESG 2.7.	The appeals committee should be a completely independent body and should not include members of any other body of AKKORK.	Appeals regulation have been updated and currently indicate that Supervisory board is appointing the external Appeals committee. Please find the document attached to the this document.	30.01.2020
15.ESG 2.3.	The agency should ensure that there is a structured follow-up mechanism for each of its EQA activities, including those resulting in unconditional accreditation.	Following ENQA panel recommendation starting from the year 2020 we will introduce a new system of follow-up mechanism, that is currently being developed. We will probably set a deadline for the HEI to present the plan for follow up actions and make it a prerequisite for a future application	In projects ending in 2020
16.ESG	The agency should ensure that the entire ESG part 1 are	We have discussed this recommendation with our partners	01.03.2020

2.1.	taken into account for professional-public accreditation.	and currently are waiting for the updated methodologies being approved. Meanwhile AKKORK did a thorough check of it's own standards correlation with ESG and updated it's own criteria bearing in mind that professional public accreditation criteria are linked with AKKORK criteria. Please find updated AKKORK criteria attached. In the form of the self-assessment report you will find direct indication of which indicator corresponds to which ESG standard, in green are highlighted new indicators introduced following recommendation of ENQA panel. Also in the document ESG and AKKORK criteria you will find the correlation with the ESG as a starting point	
17.ESG 2.4.	All experts should be listed on any report that is an outcome of the panel's work.	The check for consistency was made and all the experts are indicated in all reports. http://akkork.ru/e/projects/	30.01.2020
18.ESG 2.3.	The agency should consistently publish the detailed procedures of the external QA processes it is offering.	The detailed procedures for each service are published at http://akkork.ru/e/services/	30.01.2020

Approximate variants of decision making concerning accreditation of the programmes

№	Evaluation of education quality	Evaluation of education quality assurance	Decision on accreditation	Comments	
				Education quality (EQ)	Education Quality Assurance (EQA)
1.	2	3, 4 or 5	To refuse in accreditation	EQ is low. Prospective results of education are not achieved, as there are considerable shortcomings in realization of the programme. EI should remove these shortcomings within 1 year and raise education quality to acceptable level.	Level of EQA securing is acceptable, good or high that allows substantial improving the education quality
2.	3	2	To refuse in accreditation	EQ is acceptable. EI should take within one year urgent measures on essential improvement of education quality and on support and the further improvement of education quality. The reviewers are not sure that EI can perform the specified measures as EQA securing corresponds to low level.	Level of EQA securing is low. EQA does not provide the students with possibilities for achievement of the most part of the provided results of the programme learning. EI should improve securing of education quality assurance to acceptable level within one year.
	4		To refuse in accreditation	EQ is good, but is achieved at the expense of skill of the teachers and enthusiasm of the students. EI should support EQ and undertake measures on the further improvement of EQ within the next two years. However the reviewers are not sure that EI can perform the specified measures as EQA securing corresponds to low level.	

	5		To refuse in accreditation	EQ is good, but is achieved at the expense of skill of the teachers and enthusiasm of the students. EI should support EQ within the nearest two years, measures on the further improvement of EQ are not obligatory. However the reviewers are not sure that EI can support EQ within the next two years as EQA securing corresponds to low level.	
3.	3	3	Accreditation with condition for 1 year	EQ is acceptable. EI should take measures on essential improvement of education quality within one year.	Level of EQA securing is acceptable. EI should essentially improve EQA securing, take measures on support and the further improvement of education quality assurance within next year
		4	Accreditation with condition for 2 years		Level of EQA securing is good. EI is capable to support level of EQA securing and undertake measures on the further improvement of EQA within next two years
		5	Accreditation with a condition for 2 years depending on conditions		Level of EQA securing is high. EI is capable to support level of EQA securing within next two years, measures on improvement of EQA are not obligatory
4.	4	3	Accreditation with a condition for 2 years depending on conditions	EQ is good. EI should support EQ and undertake measures on the further improvement of EQ within the next two years. However the reviewers are not sure that EI can support EQ within the next two years as EQA securing corresponds only to acceptable level.	Level of EQA securing is acceptable. EI should essentially improve EQA securing within the next year.

		4	Full accreditation ¹ – for 4 years, for specialty programme 5 years, training programme 2 years	EQ is good. EI should support EQ and undertake measures on the further improvement of EQ within the next four years. The reviewers are sure that EI can support EQ at good level within the next four years as EQA securing corresponds to good level.	Level of EQA securing is good. EI is capable to support level of EQA securing and undertake measures on the further improvement of EQA within next four years.
		5	Full accreditation ² – for 4 years, for specialty programme 5 years, training programme 2 years	EQ is good. EI should support EQ and undertake measures on the further improvement of EQ within the next four years. The reviewers are sure that EI can support EQ at good level within the next four years as EQA securing corresponds to good level.	Level of EQA securing is high. EI is capable to support level of EQA securing within next four years, measures on improvement of EQA are not obligatory
5.	5	3	Accreditation with a condition: for 4 years ³ , for specialty programme 5 years, training programme 2 years depending on conditions	EQ is high. EI should support EQ and undertake measures on the further improvement of EQ within the next four years. However the reviewers are not sure that EI can support EQ within the next four years as EQA securing corresponds only to acceptable level.	Level of EQA securing is acceptable. EI should essentially improve EQA securing within the next year.

¹ Bachelor, Master, Retraining programme

² Bachelor, Master, Retraining programme

³ Bachelor, Master, Retraining programme

		4	Full accreditation ⁴ – for 4 years, for specialty programme 5 years, training programme 2 years	EQ is high. EI should support EQ during next four years, measures on the further improvement of EQ are not necessary. The reviewers are sure that EI can support EQ at good level within the next four years as EQA securing corresponds to good level.	Level of EQA securing is good. EI is capable to support level of EQA securing and undertake measures on the further improvement of EQA within next four years.
		5	Full accreditation ⁵ – for 6 years	EQ is high. EI should support EQ during next six years, measures on the further improvement of EQ are not necessary. The reviewers are sure that EI can support EQ at high level within the next six years as EQA securing corresponds to high level.	Level of EQA securing is high. EI is capable to support level of EQA securing within next six years.

⁴ Bachelor, Master, Retraining programme

⁵ Bachelor, Master, Retraining programme

EQAR Deferral answer

№, ESG Standard	Register committee analysis	AKKORK Comments
1. ESG 2.1.	Reviewing each of the agency's procedures individually the review panel showed that the independent evaluation procedure (programme and institutional level) do not cover aspects related to student- centred learning and teaching, the system for consideration of students' appeals and complaints.	Please find attached the Self-assessment report for procedure AKKORK international accreditation. There is pointed out which indicator corresponds to which ESG. Also some new indicators were added to the self-assessment report following ENQA panel recommendation. Please find them in green.
2.ESG 2.1	The panel noted that while the e-learning accreditation have a good correspondence with ESG Part 1, that the link to the national qualification framework for higher education institutions (ESG 1.2) and references to admission and certification of students(ESG1.4)are missing.	Following the ENQA review panel recommendation AKKORK does not offer the e-learning accreditation any more. So we kindly ask the Register Committee to concentrate on the three existing procedures that are continued to offer by AKKORK, http://akkork.ru/e/services/
3. ESG 2.1.	Concerning the design of the IQAS methodology the panel noted that the methodology uses a multi-standard approach. While ESG 2005 is fully covered, the integration of ESG 2015 into the evaluation criteria was not evident to the panel.	AKKORK does not offer the IQAS accreditation any more. So we kindly ask the Register Committee to concentrate on the three existing procedures that are continued to offer by AKKORK, http://akkork.ru/e/services/
4.ESG 2.1.	The Register Committee noted from the panels reviewed documentation that experts do not have clear guidelines on what they are expected to evaluate and how to refer back to the agency's own criteria	In AKKORK we have described the procedure and criteria in more details and updated Guidelines for reviewers, please find it attached.
5.ESG 2.2.	Considering the design of AKKORK's methodology of external QA procedures, the panel noted that the aims are not clearly differentiated and that there are inconsistencies between the different language versions of the AKKORK	AKKORK has made revisions to the information on the website. The detailed procedures and criteria for decisions for each activity are published at http://akkork.ru/e/services/

	's website (English and Russian), in particular referring to the presentation of the independent accreditation on the programme level.	
6.ESG 2.2.	The panel further commented on the lack of involvement of external stakeholders, apart from the representatives from its own bodies, in the design and continuous improvement of the offered procedures.	The Regulation on collaboration with partners was designed and will now be implemented by AKKORK in its daily routine, please find it attached.
7.ESG 2.3.	In its analysis of this standard, the panel further underlined that AKKORK's independent accreditation reviews at institutional level is not an external QA activity that can be considered reliable, useful or pre-defined and that AKKORK's IQAS procedures is not implemented in a consistent manner.	AKKORK does not offer the IQAS accreditation and independent accreditation review at institutional level any more. So we kindly ask the Register Committee to concentrate on the three existing procedures that are continued to offer by AKKORK, http://akkork.ru/e/services/
8.ESG 2.4.	The panel received confirmations during its multiple interviews that all AKKORK's panels now include a student member. The panel's findings nevertheless show inconsistencies in the number of experts, listed by AKKORK in its published reports and the number of experts expected to be involved according to AKKORK's methodology. In particular, the review panel expressed concerns about the use of single experts for professional-public accreditations, although it was told that not all panel members were in fact listed in the prepared reports. The panel therefore concluded that while the formal procedure in the composition of review panel is met on paper, in practice this differs.	All the procedures follow AKKORK methodology listed on the website under each procedure http://akkork.ru/e/services
9.ESG 2.4.	The Register Committee noted the statement by the agency (see additional information on the report) that AKKORK has carried out a check for consistency in order to ensure	The links for all reports have been checked on the website once more. More over the decision was made that all the reports for the procedures carried out by AKKORK, including professional-public accreditation

	that all experts are mentioned in its published reports. However, the Committee underlined that following a check of the website, some links to review reports were broken and could not verify whether the concern of the panel and the systematic involvement of students has been addressed.	will be published on AKKORK website.
10.ESG 2.5.	In its decision of inclusion, the Register Committee flagged AKKORK's publication of detailed criteria for all its procedures. The findings of the current review report show that the agency published only the requirements for e-learning accreditation.	The detailed procedures and criteria for decisions are published at http://akkork.ru/e/services/ . Please find them attached, just in case.
11.ESG 2.5.	In case of independent accreditation on the institutional level, the panel's analysis show that AKKORK's experts evaluate the institutions taking into account the second part of the "AKKORK Criteria" only	As per suggestion of ENQA panel AKKORK has deleted independent accreditation on the institutional level procedure from the list of services. You can find the updated list here http://akkork.ru/e/services/
12.ESG 2.5.	Regarding the overall usage of the 'AKKORK Criteria' by the agency's experts, the panel learned that in many cases, the experts rely on their personal review experience, rather than following AKKORK's guidelines and methodology and that AKKORK's criteria are not applied consistently in the agency's decision making.	In AKKORK we have described the procedure and criteria in more details and updated Guidelines for reviewers, please find it attached.
13.ESG 2.5.	While the Register Committee welcomed the new changes, the Register Committee could not verify their implementation. The analysis and findings of the review report, show that the outcomes or judgements made by AKKORK following its external quality assurance activities are not based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently.	As a confirmation for consistent implementation please find below several links to the reviewers' reports. The decision is made by a simple majority of votes of AKKORK International Accreditation Council Members.

		<p>2019 year: http://akkork.ru/general/upload/projects/uurgu2_e.pdf Average mark in this report is: Education Quality 5, Education quality assurance 4, based on the decision for accreditation the university was granted 4 years, see point 5 in the criteria for decisions posted on AKKORK website in AKKORK International Accreditation</p> <p>2017 year: http://akkork.ru/general/upload/projects/spbgu46.pdf Average mark in this report is: Education quality: 5, Education quality assurance 4, based on the decision for accreditation the university was granted 4 years, see point 5 in the criteria for decisions posted on AKKORK website in AKKORK International Accreditation</p>
14. ESG 2.6.	The Register Committee noted within the findings of the panel that AKKORK has not addressed its flag. While the agency publishes some or most of the reports of joint international accreditations, independent accreditation at the programme level and joint international accreditation procedure, the Register Committee found extremely concerning that the agency has not published any of its reports resulting from the professional-public accreditation activity, which constitutes the majority of AKKORK's external QA procedures.	The check for consistency was made and all reports including professional-public accreditation are published at http://akkork.ru/e/projects/
15. ESG 2.6.	As some of the reports are still missing, i.e. broken link or only the decision is published, the Register Committee concluded that the practice of publishing the full results of for all its reviews has not yet been put in place by AKKORK.	The check for consistency was made and all reports are published at http://akkork.ru/e/projects/
16. ESG 2.7.	In its additional information to the review report, AKKORK stated that its regulation on appeals have been	The new appeals regulation have been posted on the website at each service, at the end of the page. For instance:

	updated and that its new appeals body, appointed by AKKORK's Supervisory Board includes members from the agency's partner organisations. The Register Committee welcomed such could not verify the implementation of these changes.	http://www.akkork.ru/e/services/ppepa/
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EQAR Substantive Change Report

Agency #1	Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Career Development
Expiry date #1	31/10/2019
Contact #1	Erika Soboleva
Phone #1	+79037236467
Email #1	esoboleva@akkork.ru
Other organisations?	No
A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed?	No
B. Has the organisational structure changed?	No
C.i. Are there new types of activities?	No
C.ii. Are there changes in existing activities?	Yes
C.iii. Have some or all existing activities been discontinued?	Yes

Description new/changed

Services:

- Independent evaluation of education quality on the programme level at the level of secondary, higher and additional professional education programs and at the institutional level was renamed to AKKORK International accreditation of educational programs. This service is no longer offered on the institutional level.

-Independent evaluation of education quality for professional - public programme accreditation was renamed to Organization, together with employers' associations and professional qualification councils (PQC), professional - public accreditation of educational programs in accordance with AKKORK basic principles of work.

-International accreditation of education programmes was renamed to Joint accreditation at the program and institutional levels together with foreign partner agencies.

No new activities were introduced.

In the activities that remained the following changes in criteria took place.

In service AKKORK International accreditation of educational programs the assessment criteria were updated to better reflect the ESG standards. Please find attached the self-assessment report form with indication in green of the added aspects and indication which indicator exactly reflects which ESG Standard .

In service Organization, together with employers' associations and professional qualification councils (PQC), professional - public accreditation of educational programs in accordance with AKKORK basic principles of work we are still waiting for the methodology to be approved by our partners and this delays in terms of COVID-19 crisis.

Joint accreditation at the program and institutional levels together with foreign partner agencies nothing changed in the methodology.

The following aspects of the above mentioned AKKORK services remain unchanged.

1. purposes and development of the activity, involvement of stakeholders (ESG 2.2)
3. review team composition, selection, appointment and training of reviewers (ESG 2.4)
4. site visits (ESG 2.3)
5. publication of reports (ESG 2.6)
- 6.follow-up (ESG 2.3)
- 7.appeals system (ESG 2.7)
- 8.embedding in thematic analyses and internal quality assurance of the agency (ESG 3.4 & 3.6)

List discontinued

Services:

- The International e-learning accreditation
- Internal quality assurance system audit and accreditation (IQAS)

have been discontinued starting from 30.01.2020 by the decision of the Supervisory Board of AKKORK in December 2019. Please find attached the Minutes of the Supervisory Board.

File #1

[Minutes_2-2019_strategic_plan_2020-2024.pdf \(475k\)](#)

File #2

[Self-assessment_report_AKKORK.pdf \(334k\)](#)
