

FEEDBACK
on the IQAA thematic analysis
‘Analytical review of accreditation results for the professional field “Pedagogy and Psychology”’

The training of specialists in the fields of pedagogy and psychology is of particular social significance, as the quality of such educational programmes determines not only the functioning of schools, colleges and other educational institutions, but also the development of the system of psychological and pedagogical support for learners. In this sense, the IQAA’s analytical review of the ‘Pedagogy and Psychology’ professional field is valuable as a resource that reveals the extent to which higher education institutions are prepared to train specialists working at the intersection of education, upbringing, psychological support and social adaptation.

At the heart of this review lies not merely the question of whether educational programmes comply with accreditation standards, but the broader issue of the professional maturity of the training provided to future educational psychologists. For this field, it is particularly important that the educational programme is linked to the real-world challenges faced by schools, inclusive education, developmental psychology, the prevention of deviant behaviour, counselling, working with parents, and supporting children in challenging educational situations. It is therefore positive that the analysis examines programmes through several interrelated parameters: the objectives of the educational programme, the content of subjects, employer involvement, staff capacity, practical training, student-centred learning and graduate employment.

The material shows that in many higher education institutions, the objectives of educational programmes are formulated in line with legislative requirements, the ‘Teacher’ professional standard and the National Qualifications Framework. This provides the necessary regulatory basis for staff training. At the same time, for the ‘Pedagogy and Psychology’ specialisation, it is important that the programme’s objectives are neither too broad nor too narrow. They must cover the full spectrum of a teacher-psychologist’s future professional activities: assessment, counselling, prevention, remedial and developmental work, support for the educational process, interaction with teachers and parents, as well as participation in creating a safe and supportive educational environment.

The section of the analysis devoted to the development and updating of study programmes is of particular interest. At a number of higher education institutions, employers, students, school representatives and practising psychologists are involved in discussions on the content of study programmes; examples given include the inclusion of subjects such as ‘Psychological Services in Schools’, ‘Educational Management’, ‘Personality Psychology’, ‘Art Therapy in Psychology’ and ‘Psychology of Business Communication’. Such examples are particularly important as they demonstrate a shift from a formal curriculum to more dynamic content that reflects the real needs of educational organisations.

For programmes in this field, practical training is of central rather than ancillary importance. A future educational psychologist must be able to work with children, adolescents, teaching staff and parents not only in theory but also in real educational situations. Therefore, a positive aspect of the analysis is the coverage of collaboration between universities and schools, colleges and other placement venues. Such partnerships enable students to develop professional skills in a natural environment and gain a better understanding of the specifics of their future work.

The review examines staffing capacity in considerable detail. The data provided on full-time teaching staff, academic qualifications, basic education and the age structure of the teaching staff enable an assessment not only of the programme’s formal staffing requirements but also of the stability of the academic team. This is particularly important for ‘Pedagogy and Psychology’, as the quality of training depends directly on the professional experience of the teaching staff, their research activity, practical competence and ability to link theoretical courses with real-life psychological and pedagogical case studies.

An important conclusion of the analysis is that the mere existence of a formally approved programme is not sufficient in itself. Among the weaknesses noted are the narrow formulation of the objectives of individual study programmes, a small proportion of elective modules, insufficient involvement of students and employers in programme development, low academic mobility, limited project and publishing activity among students and lecturers, as well as a lack of public information about individual specialisms. These observations should be viewed not as technical shortcomings, but as indicators of the extent to which a programme is truly flexible, open, modern and geared towards the professional needs of students.

The issue of elective choice deserves special attention. For future educational psychologists, the opportunity to choose subjects must be genuine, not merely formal, as students may pursue different career paths: school psychology, inclusive education, family counselling, educational assessment, psychological prevention, support for gifted children, or working with children with special educational needs. Therefore, the recommendation to increase the number of elective subjects is of fundamental importance for enhancing the individualisation of learning.

Research and project-based activities also play an important role in assessing the quality of such programmes. Educational psychologists must be able to analyse the educational environment, carry out assessments, work with data, and evaluate the effectiveness of remedial and preventative measures. In this regard, the recommendations to encourage project-based, research and publication activities among students and academic staff are entirely justified. They help to strengthen the link between learning, practice and a scientific understanding of the challenges facing modern schools.

Public outreach and work with graduates are presented in the review as a separate resource for programme development. The use of the Platonus, MirasApp and UNIVER 2.0 systems, as well as the 'Alumni', career services and alumni clubs shows that higher education institutions are gradually establishing mechanisms to track graduates' career progression. It is particularly important that such data is not merely published on websites, but is used to update educational programmes, adjust the content of practical placements and assess the demand for graduates' competences.

The prospects for further development, as outlined in the SWOT analysis, appear highly relevant: expanding student participation in research and project work, developing academic mobility, supporting partnerships with schools and colleges, encouraging graduates to continue their studies at master's and doctoral levels, and collaborating with universities and research organisations in Kazakhstan and abroad. At the same time, the analysis rightly highlights the risks associated with insufficient financial resources and reduced interest in pursuing further study at higher levels.

The practical value of this review lies in the fact that it can be used by universities as a benchmark for a subject-specific self-assessment of programmes in pedagogy and psychology. Heads of study programmes and departments can compare their own objectives, curricula, elective course catalogues, staffing, placement facilities, feedback mechanisms, employer involvement and employment data with the generalised conclusions of the external evaluation. This approach helps to move away from preparing for accreditation as a one-off procedure towards the continuous improvement of the content and delivery of the educational programme.

To further strengthen such analytical reviews, it would be useful to include more comparative data on educational levels, employment trends, the quality of practical training, graduates' involvement in programme development, and the actual influence of employers on the content of the educational programme. Brief case studies of higher education institutions where external evaluation recommendations have led to the updating of modules, the expansion of the elective component, the creation of new placement facilities or the enhancement of students' research activities could provide additional value.

Overall, the analytical review of accreditation results for the professional field 'Pedagogy and Psychology' can be regarded as substantive and practically significant material for the higher education system. Its significance lies in the fact that it demonstrates the quality of training for educational psychologists not only through compliance with standards, but also through the actual conditions under which professional competences are developed: programme content, staff capacity, practical training, stakeholder involvement, academic mobility, research activity and graduate support. Such an analysis contributes to the more informed development of educational programmes, on which the quality of psychological and pedagogical support in educational institutions largely depends.

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