Educational institution
‘CASPIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY’

REVIEW
on the Analysis
the results of institutional, programme and initial programme accreditation (2024–2025)

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INTRODUCTION

In the current context of dynamic transformation of the higher education system in the Republic of Kazakhstan, independent external evaluation serves as a key driver for the long-term improvement of the quality and competitiveness of educational programmes. The document submitted for consideration**, 'Analysis of the Results of Institutional, Programme and Initial Programme Accreditation (2024–2025)'**, prepared by the Independent Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (IQAA), is an important source of verified data reflecting the actual state of affairs and systemic challenges in the field of higher and postgraduate education in the country.

A study of this analytical review enables a comprehensive assessment of the gap between the institutional quality standards declared by higher education institutions (for example, the Caspian Public University (hereinafter 'CPU')) and the actual implementation of these standards at the level of specific study programmes (hereinafter 'SPs') and the NAOKO standards. Of particular value for shaping our (university's) future development strategy is the detailed audit of the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes conducted by IQAA experts, as well as the structured stakeholder analysis, which identifies weaknesses in the university's interactions with students, employers and the academic community.

This review has been prepared with the aim of examining in detail the conclusions and recommendations of the external expert groups (hereinafter 'EEGs') presented in the thematic analysis report. Within the framework of this review, we have addressed the following key objectives:

1. We have demonstrated the relevance and practical significance of the analytical material presented, which enables the university to use aggregated data to identify hidden risks during the design phase of educational programmes, to carry out benchmarking, and to address typical resource shortfalls (in terms of staff, material and technical resources, etc.);
2. We analysed key problem areas within the standards 'Academic Staff', 'Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment' and 'Admissions, Learning Outcomes, Recognition and Certification';
3. A set of measures has been drawn up to address typical issues and risks characteristic of the design and launch phase of the educational programme;
4. Systemic management solutions have been proposed, aimed at shifting interaction with stakeholders (students, academic staff, graduates and employers) from a formal, process-driven approach to one of regular, transparent and documented cooperation;
5. Forward-looking proposals have been formulated regarding the topics for future analyses, the conduct of which will enable universities to make more effective use of the results of the agency's targeted thematic studies for the continuous improvement of their internal education quality assurance systems.

The findings of this report are geared towards the practical improvement of internal quality assurance mechanisms, the rapid adaptation of teaching content to the needs of the real economy, and the successful completion of future external independent evaluation procedures.

1 RELEVANCE AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MATERIAL

The analysis presented is highly relevant, owing to the processes of profound transformation and the increasing autonomy of higher education in the Republic of Kazakhstan. In a context where universities have been granted academic freedom, external independent evaluation has become the primary benchmark for verifying quality. The material is relevant in that it does not merely state facts, but reveals a systemic disconnect: regulations and policies declared at the university-wide level are often implemented only in a perfunctory or inconsistent manner at the level of specific study programmes.

The practical significance of the research for the university lies in the following aspects:

- self-assessment and benchmarking tools: the use of aggregated data, compliance matrices and heat maps enables the university to conduct a 'proactive' internal audit, comparing its performance against national trends in higher and postgraduate education;
- Minimising risks when launching new study programmes: a detailed analysis of typical comments on initial programmes (undergraduate programmes — 53.7% of comments relate to student-centred learning; Master's programmes – 56.3% relating to teaching staff) provides a ready-made risk map for academic committees when designing new study programmes;
- An evidence base for managerial decision-making: the analysis clearly identifies vulnerabilities in management — for example, the predominance of a process-oriented (formal) approach in interactions with all stakeholders rather than a results-oriented one. This enables university management to restructure their internal quality assurance systems (hereinafter referred to as IQAS), i.e. to ensure, in a timely manner, the transition from oversight by the Ministry of Education and Science to internal quality control; and, in terms of the very concept of quality, a shift towards establishing the university's own quality assurance system to enable its full and successful development, as opposed to quality being dependent on inspections or oversight by regulatory bodies.

2 ANALYSIS OF KEY PROBLEM AREAS AND VULNERABILITIES

The IQAA analysis clearly demonstrates that the highest concentration of risks and observations by the External Evaluation Group is centred on four key standards:

1. **'Academic staff':** deficiencies critical to the sustainability of the educational programmes have been identified — weak involvement of practitioners, low publication activity in international databases (Scopus/WoS), a lack of funded research projects and low academic mobility, both among academic staff and students. This trend confirms that the human resources capacity of the educational programmes requires a shift from a purely teaching-oriented model to one that is research- and practice-oriented.
2. **'Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment':** the presence of comments in this area (particularly in first-cycle bachelor's degree programmes — 53.7 per cent) indicates a superficial understanding of student-centredness. Universities often restrict the choice of modules (including minors) and apply undifferentiated assessment criteria.
3. **'Student admissions, learning outcomes, recognition and certification':** there are risks of a decline in the competitiveness of certain study programmes due to small student numbers, low employment rates and a weak evidence base for career guidance.
4. Particular attention should be paid to systemic vulnerabilities regarding the **'Public Information'** standard at the institutional level (significant compliance has been noted among a number of large universities in Matrix 1). This indicates that transparency mechanisms are 'falling by the wayside': university websites are not updated in a timely manner, navigation is difficult, and content in three languages is often missing.

3 ASSESSMENT OF ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The stakeholder analysis carried out by the agency deserves high praise, as it reveals a deep-seated problem — **a lack of systematic approach and documentation of processes**.

Positive examples (such as the international employers' forum at MITU or the system for organising work placements at M. Auezov South Kazakhstan University) show that the mechanisms do exist.

However, in 40 per cent of cases, interaction with employers and students is fragmented, and there is no evidence of how exactly stakeholder feedback has influenced the revision of syllabuses and curricula. Universities need to implement end-to-end procedures for 'collecting, analysing and responding' to the demands of the labour market and the student body.

4 PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE IQAA ANALYSES TO IMPROVE UNIVERSITY QUALITY SYSTEMS

To ensure that the results of IQAA's analytical studies bring even greater practical benefit to the academic community, it is proposed to expand the range of thematic analyses and initiate research in the following areas:

1. **'Analysis of the effectiveness of dual learning models and the integration of professional standards into study programmes'**

Rationale: as experts frequently note in the current report that the regulatory framework for dual learning at the educational programme level is insufficiently covered, universities require an analytical review of best practices (best case studies, models for the allocation of academic credits between the university and the enterprise, etc.).

2. **'Study of barriers and drivers for the development of international academic mobility among academic staff and students'**

Rationale: Low mobility is consistently highlighted as a recurring issue. A thematic analysis focusing on financial, linguistic and regulatory barriers across the regions of Kazakhstan would help universities adjust their strategies in the area of 'internationalisation'.

3. **'Digitalisation of the internal quality assurance system in education: from formal reports to data-driven management'**

Rationale: The Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency's report highlights the low level of digitalisation in the educational process. Universities need to benchmark digital tools that automate the collection of feedback from stakeholders, the monitoring of academic performance and the updating of websites.

4. **'Design and launch of interdisciplinary and innovative first-cycle degree programmes: experience, risks, sustainability'**

Rationale: first-cycle degree programmes account for 7.5 per cent of the total. A dedicated study tracking the trajectory of such programmes 2–3 years after their launch would help identify indicators of their viability and market demand.

5. **'Quality Assurance Policy'**

Rationale: Under this VEG standard, key shortcomings have been identified, indicating insufficient staff involvement in the implementation of the quality assurance policy, such as a lack of clear understanding of the mission and quality assurance policy among some staff members. A study by the agency on this issue will enable universities to learn from the experience of successful universities:

- in the effective and proper drafting of procedural, human resources and teaching and learning documents;
- in documented regulations governing the effective and timely monitoring of compliance with quality assurance procedures for the educational services provided;
- in effective methods of integration with the Ministry of Education and Science's Unified Higher Education Platform.

CONCLUSION

This analytical report, prepared by G.T. Zhumadilova, PhD in Chemistry (IQAA), is of a high methodological standard and provides a ready-made roadmap for improving academic management in universities.

The analysis has shown that, overall, universities have established the main institutional mechanisms for quality assurance, but their practical implementation at the level of study programmes remains uneven. The most problematic areas identified are staffing, student-centred learning and student admissions. The analysis noted that engagement with students, employers, graduates and academic staff requires a more systematic, regular and documented approach. Overall, the results of the analysis demonstrate the need to strengthen management decisions at

the programme level. Strengthening internal monitoring, systematising engagement with stakeholders, and implementing institutional decisions at the programme level are key areas for the further improvement of the quality assurance system in universities.

The report's conclusions will be incorporated into the strategic development plan for our educational programmes and internal quality assurance systems.