

THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN QUALITY ASSURANCE OF EDUCATION

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Establishment of an effective quality management system of education is a strategic priority for the national education system. In Kazakhstan, issues of control, accreditation and quality assurance play a key role in enhancing the competitiveness of the country. It must serve the interests of the state, society, students and the academic community. At the state level, the accreditation process in Kazakhstan has been fixed on a legal basis, which consists of *"Amendments to the Law" "On Education"* of 2001, the Law *"On Education"* of 2007 and *"Amendments to the Law" "On Education"* of 2011.

All the positive changes in the transfer of supervisory powers in education became possible by defining the role of the state, the political will of the President of the country, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and the development of a number of key strategic Government documents. They are: Strategic Development Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan till 2020, the State Education Development Program 2011-2020, signed by President of the country in 2010, the Law *"On Education"* on October 24, 2011, with amendments. In all the above stated documents the role of accreditation in ensuring the quality of education was raised to the next level and the emphasis was placed on the independent accreditation.

The core changes in government regulations and legal acts are:

- Transfer of a part of the state authority's power to the non-governmental sector in the light of orders from the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Government to reduce governmental control and supervisory functions (2011);
- The development of public-private partnership in education in different forms and at different levels.

For example, the State Programme of Education Development stipulates that from 2012 onwards, the accreditation will be conducted by non-profit non-governmental organizations. The state transfers part of its supervisory power to the non-governmental sector, but the state will regulate the accreditation of suppliers by their recognition and inclusion in the National Register of accreditation bodies (legislation). At the end of December 2011, the procedure and requirements for the management of the National Register of accreditation bodies was signed by the order of the Ministry, which consists of requirements for local and foreign agencies.

The National Register of Accreditation Agencies clearly states that institutional accreditation will be carried out by Kazakhstani agencies and specialized (academic programme) accreditation can be conducted by any of the agencies that are included in the National Register. Currently, the Registry includes two Kazakhstani and four foreign agencies.

The legal amendments enshrined a transitional period up to 2014-2015, during which national accreditation and state attestation will be carried out in parallel.

As from 2015, state certification will be completely replaced by the national institutional and specialized (academic programme) accreditation of universities and colleges (legislation).

From 2014-2015, in accordance with the law, the state authorization for offering of Bachelor's, Masters' and PhD will only be received by a higher education institution which has passed institutional and programme accreditation by the agencies that are included

in the National Register. Thus, the government will encourage institutions to conduct an independent national accreditation since placement of orders or educational grants will be provided only to accredited educational institutions. Moreover, accredited institutions with accredited educational programmes will have a right to issue their own diplomas that will be recognized by the government.

Currently, the Independent Kazakhstan Quality Assurance Agency for Education (IQAA), which was accepted into the National Register, has developed procedures and standards of independent national accreditation. Best international practices, the experience of American and European Quality Assurance Agencies, the experience of international networks such as ENOA, APON, INOAAHE, CHEA International Quality Group have been taken into account, as well as proposals of Kazakhstani universities.

These non-profit agencies, as part of the general policy of the state in providing autonomy to universities, allows the state system of institutional management to strike a balance between the development of institutions' self-governance and an effective quality assurance system, to increase a powerful system of incentives for universities, seeking to improve the training of professionals, to engage all stakeholders. especially employers in the development process and improvement of education quality.