



The Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development
(AQA)

Strategic Development Plan

2009 – 2012

Adopted by the Advisory Council
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Moscow
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Chief executive's Foreword

Nowadays Russian higher education system is becoming a part of the world education community and the quality issues are more crucial than ever. The realization of a knowledge economy and society is impossible without possessing qualitative education. In addition higher education is increasingly global in 21st century that is why quality assurance in higher education is not only a national matter but becomes a global issue.

Russian education community has recognized the challenges of present economic environment and set ambitious targets for the sector, including achieving world-class quality in higher education. International competitiveness is based on an institution's autonomy to capitalize on areas of competitive advantage and retain the flexibility to adapt programs to market demands.

The competitiveness relies on the public's confidence in the capacity of these institutions to provide quality education outcomes. The means of achieving its competitiveness is continuous quality improvement.

Since 2005 AQA has been contributing to the quality of higher education by organizing an external quality assurance review of Russian universities and elaborating quality enhancement.

This Strategic Development Plan 2009-2012 provides an overview of the strategic objectives over this period with illustration how these objectives will be taken forward.

I look forward to working in partnership with all of our stakeholders to provide Russian higher education sector to be more competitive.



Sincerely yours,
Aleksey Belokopytov

Background

Established in 2005, AQA is the first Russian independent evaluation and accreditation agency in the sphere of higher education. Since that time the Agency has been realizing the task of forming independent quality evaluation system in the Russian higher education area. For this period the Agency has obtained certain recognition in education community, conducted periodic evaluation procedures which helped universities to become more competitive. The outcomes of the Agency's activities are the confidence of different group of stakeholders in efficient and competitive Russian higher education institutions. Though the Agency has done a lot for establishing the basis of independent quality evaluation system in Russia further development of this system is nevertheless needed. This Strategic Development Plan 2009-2012 outlines the steps the Agency will take in 2009-2012 to support Russian higher education institutions.

Mission

The mission of AQA is to support independently on a regular basis Russian public and non-public higher education institutions in the development of educational quality to meet the best national and international quality assurance practices and standards. The Agency contributes to the increase of quality awareness among higher education stakeholders and stimulates the competitiveness of Russian higher education institutions on the international scale.

The Agency performs its mission by:

- fulfilling a pioneering role in the development of quality assurance and accreditation systems in Russian HEA taking into account its national and historical peculiarities;
- evaluating quality systems set by higher education institutions according to the requirements of Russian Ministry of Education and Science in its regulations, ENQA regulations and criteria stipulated by the AQA;
- accrediting and certifying higher education institution at the institutional level and at the level of degrees and programs promoting innovativeness in the teaching process and high quality education culture;
- elaborating and implementing quality assurance approaches based on research findings;
- consulting authorities of higher education institutions in establishing and improving quality assurance systems;
- monitoring the constant higher education institutions feedback;
- facilitating the dialogue between higher education institutions, authorities, students and employers;
- contributing to the public debate on the development in higher education within scope of the AQA's mission.

Values

Our most important values are:

- enhancing quality in Russian higher education institutions;
- respect for the diversity and autonomy of the Russian higher education institutions;
- fostering social partnerships;
- integrity and independence;
- efficiency and efficacy;
- accountability.

Enhancing quality in Russian higher education institutions

The Agency is regularly engaged in quality evaluation reviews using independent experts and applying approaches comparable with European standards.

Respect for the diversity and autonomy of the Russian higher education institutions

The Agency pays attention to the diversity of higher education institutions, together with their complete freedom to organize and run themselves under their self-governing capability.

Fostering social partnerships

The Agency facilitates the engagement of a broad range of stakeholders in quality evaluation procedures: students, university community; research funders; employers; authorities; the general public.

Integrity and Independence

The Agency provides its evaluation procedures taking into account independence, impartiality and flexibility and its decisions are evidence-based.

Efficiency and efficacy

AQA achieves its objectives through available human, technical and financial means and resources

Accountability

AQA acts with transparency providing accessible, comprehensible and useful data on its activity and methodology.

High-level strategic direction 2009-2012

AQA's strategy has four interrelated dimensions for a period of 2009-2012 namely the further development of independent quality assurance system; the improvement

of accreditation and evaluation procedures; communication; people and organization; international and regional relations. For each dimension there are given activities that will be undertaken over the period.

Further Development of independent quality assurance system in Russian Federation

The Agency is the first Russian independent quality assurance body. It has undertaken a great deal of activities to establish this system. But certainly independent quality assurance needs to be further developed in the Russian Federation.

Strategic Objectives

1. To develop the independent quality assurance system adopted by AQA in the Russian higher education area.
2. To maintain a platform for cooperation between higher education institutions and different group of stakeholders.

Accreditation and Evaluation Procedures

Now the Agency has developed accreditation and evaluation procedures for the cyclical review, monitoring and follow-up procedures of the higher education institutions at program and institutional level. The Agency applies international standards and has elaborated its own standards in this sphere.

Strategic Objectives

1. To foster institutional and program reviews on a cyclical basis using a recognized methodology, with an emphasis on internal quality assurance systems and the impact of outcomes.
2. To improve the model for the evaluation, monitoring and accreditation of degree programs in accordance with international benchmarks with a recognized methodology.
3. To disseminate the outcomes of internal and external quality activities

Communication

The Agency provides information on quality of education and related services in Russian higher education institutions to support public confidence in higher education increase the international competitiveness of the sector and facilitate broader engagement in quality-related activities.

Objectives

1. To provide clear and accessible information on the quality of education and related services at Russian universities to all stakeholders: students,

- education community, employers and employees, government, research funders and general public.
2. To implement an engagement strategy for students to enhance understanding of quality activities.
 3. To inform stakeholders of key national and international developments, including support for promotion on innovative practices in Russian higher education institutions.
 4. To achieve a better understanding by society of quality concept in the university system and the work of the Agency in its commitment to enhance it.

People and organization

The Agency is an organization with staff which is competent, motivated and committed to carrying out their functions in a proper way.

AQA is a flexible and participative organization. We make good use of technological resources, plan our activities well and have one of a kind nationally acknowledged internal quality assurance system.

Objectives

1. To have available comprehensive plan for human resources.
2. To obtain the system for the comprehensive management of external international collaborators.
3. To improve the motivation system of the Agency's staff.
4. To implement the periodic career progression programs to the Agency's staff.
5. To invite international experts for the quality evaluation procedures.

International and regional relations

We have a noteworthy presence in the sphere of quality assurance and the continuous enhancement of quality in higher education at national, regional and international levels.

Objectives

1. To stimulate the exchange of experience and best practices at national, regional and international levels.
2. To collaborate with regional and international quality assurance associations and organizations.
3. To extend and systemize the participation in international meetings and review activities.
4. To promote world-wide dialogues with international quality assurance associations and networks, regional associations and foreign accreditation agencies.

5. To enhance the organization's national and international recognition to a level similar to that of European agencies of high ranking.
6. To be granted the Candidate and then Full Membership with ENQA.
7. To become a member of ECA and initiate cooperation with other members of ECA.
8. To be registered in EQAR.

Demonstrating our success

Indicators showing that we are successfully achieving our mission and vision are:

1. Stakeholders have a greater confidence in quality assurance processes in Russia.
2. Stakeholders have greater access to clear information on quality in Russian higher education institutions.
3. A majority of feedback from institutions and external reviewers on the institutional review process is positive.
4. Stakeholders' satisfaction with the Agency's activities increases.
5. Recognition in international, regional quality assurance associations.