

# THE POLICY FOR THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY



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# DEFINITION OF THE POLICY OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

- The Policy for internal assurance of quality can be defined as a specific micro-policy of an institution.
- This policy is related to the chosen course of action and key actions aimed at quality assurance processes and procedures within the organization
- The Policy of internal quality assurance in the activities of the NEAA is constructed by the Accreditation Council and its Chairman, considering the opinion of all units of the Agency.

# PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE NEAA

- Objectivity;
- Transparency;
- Accountability for its own activity.

# **Analysis of the main directions of the internal Policy of the quality assurance in the activities of the NEAA**

## **1. System of quality assurance in the activities of NEAA**

The system consists of four subsystems:

- **NORMATIVE SUBSYSTEM**
- **SUBSYSTEM STANDARDS, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS**
- **SUBSYSTEM MANAGEMENT**
- **SUBSYSTEM FACILITIES PROVISION**

# NORMATIVE SUBSYSTEM

- Legislative Acts
- Subordinate normative acts
- Evaluation and Accreditation criteria and procedures
- Other documents and resolutions of NEAA

# **SUBSYSTEM STANDARDS, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS**

- Harmonisation of NEAA's criteria and procedures to the European standards of higher education
- Procedures for:
  - Quality assurance at "the input", "during the process" and at "the output"
  - Collection of feedback information and procedures

# SUBSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

- Management bodies and structures:
  - Specialized Administrations
  - General Administration
  - Human Resources
  - Information technologies
  - Management documentation

# SUBSYSTEM FACILITIES PROVISION

- Long-term tangible assets
- Short-term tangible assets
- Financial status
- Financial recourses
- Financial policy



# Positive features of The System:

- By assuring the quality in its activities NEAA has a direct impact on and stimulates the higher education institutions to optimize their own activities
- Through its established and functioning quality assurance system NEAA legalizes its decisions on the extent of the right of a higher education institution to provide higher education in the education and qualification degrees
- System is institutionalized. This means that its subsystems cover structures, documentation; human resources, information and finance provision

## **2. Commission on quality assurance of NEAA (CQA)**

- CQA is an auxiliary organization with the Accreditation Council, which monitors, maintains and improve the quality of the Agency's work.
- The Commission is established by the Accreditation Council of NEAA in 2008.

# The Commission consists of:

- Chair, member of the Accreditation Council, elected by the Council
- Representatives of the Accreditation Council
- Representatives of the Standing Committees by areas of higher education
- Representatives of the universities, nominated by the Council of the Higher Schools' Rectors.
- Representatives of the students and doctoral students, nominated by the National Union of Students
- Representatives nominated by the Employers Organizations
- One representative of the Ministry of Education
- Representatives of the Higher Ed unions

# The main responsibilities of the Commission are:

- Analysis of the NEAA activities to external quality and discuss the Agency's drafts.
- Periodical review of the practical application of the "System of quality assurance in the activities of the NEAA."
- Analysis of the collected external and internal recommendations for improvement of the quality in NEAA activities through the mechanisms for feedback (surveys, expert opinions)
- Periodical review of the activities by the standing committees, observe the procedures for assessment, accreditation and post-accreditation monitoring and control.
- Periodical review of the necessity to update the regulations of the NEAA

# Some of the positive aspects of the Commission are:

- Broad participation by representatives of all stakeholders concerns with quality performance of NEAA (students, employers, university presidents and unions)
- External expert assessment of the Standing Committees performance.
- Second opinion and feedback in case there is new documentation and new activities of the Agency
- Constant feedback with the representatives of the institutions and organizations connected with higher education.

### **3. Assure the quality in the activities of the standing committees and external experts**

- In order to assure the quality in the activities of the external experts the Accreditation Council pays special attention to equal positioning of external expert coming from different higher schools.
- Their nomination is supported by a set of rules, accepted by the Accreditation Council
- NEAA pursues a consequent policy for attracting students in the evaluation and accreditation procedures.
- The selection of students-experts and members of standing committees is carried out along with the National Union of Students.
- Student participating in expert teams and standing committees have the status of full members.

## 4. “A peer statute”

- an element of the system for internal communication and information in the evaluation process.
- ensure faster internal communication and timely information about the evaluation and accreditation procedures between the Accreditation Council, the standing committees, the expert teams and the evaluated institutions
- The Accreditation Council assigns to its members a peer review on the activities of the standing committees;
- ☐ The standing committees by areas of higher education assign to a member of their teams a peer review on the evaluation and accreditation procedure.

# **Another directions of the internal Policy of the quality assurance in the activities of the NEAA**

- **Preventing conflict of interests**
- **Harmonisation of NEAA's criteria and procedures to the European standards for higher education**
- **Publicity and accountability of the accreditation process**



# Findings and Discussion

*The presented analysis proves the hypothesis that constructing and conducting various directions of the policy to internal quality assurance by NEAA will result in several outcomes, connected with the increase of the effectiveness of its activity:*

- Affirming a quality culture of the NEAA (three essential components: human resources, organizational structure and normative framework).
- Developing mechanisms for quality assurance in the Bulgarian higher education institutions (fostering participation, organization of meetings, fostering internal systems for quality insurance of separate HEI in the process of integral accreditation).

- NEAA will establish its position as an equal member of ENQA and EQAR
- NEAA will be better prepared for the new challenges facing higher education in Bulgaria:
  - exchange of the accreditation model (possible acceptance of the integration model and completion of new criteria and assessment factors);
  - evaluation of transnational and cross-borders education in HEI;
  - evaluation of the ability of HEI to innovation;
  - problem of quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments of the external evaluation process;
  - effective accomplishment of the functions connected to the new “Law for development of the academic staff” (maintenance of the National list for Jury members and arbiters on procedures regarding doctoral defenses and habilitation)



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