Translated

ANQA Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures

ANQA, 2012

Table of Contents

1. IQA Policy Statement

ANQA Internal Quality Assurance Policy Statement

ANQA strives to become an effectively and efficiently managed organization to enable delivery of external quality assurance services to the tertiary level institutions in Armenia that are at the highest level of professionalism and soundness, are objective and credible and allow for gradual improvement and enhancement of the system.

Guided by its principle of transparency, ANQA endeavors to make its internal quality assurance processes visible to the Armenian society and those at international level to ensure accountability.

2. Background and Purpose

After signing the Bologna Declaration in 2005, Armenian tertiary education in general and higher education in particular entered a new phase of reforms and endeavors. One of the first endeavors was establishment of a national center for tertiary education quality assurance, which would meet the ESGs, thus promoting recognition of the qualifications awarded in the Armenian tertiary education system.

ANQA, was thus established in November 2008 and started its functioning in March 2009 after the official election of the Director by the ANQA Board of Trustees. An intensive process of external quality assurance development drawing on ESGs, and its installation has marked the last four years of the ANQA functioning.

Since its establishment ANQA has been working intensively on adopting a model of its internal quality assurance that would drive its effective management. Many strategies have been adopted, put into practice to promote its effective and efficient functioning. Thus, starting 2011 a bottom-up approach to ANQA internal quality assurance has been opted for enabling establishment of a system that works and yields positive outcomes.

AQNA IQA is responsible for providing the executive management with information about the adequacy and effectiveness of the quality of ANQA's operations when compared with established standards. It also provides mechanisms and tools for problem solving and effective decision-making as well as communicates opportunities for improvement, when identified, to the appropriate level of management.

3. Basis

The ANQA internal quality assurance policy stated in this document is based on the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education* (ESGs), Parts 2 and 3 and is congruent with the external quality assurance framework adopted by the RA Government on 30th June, 2011.
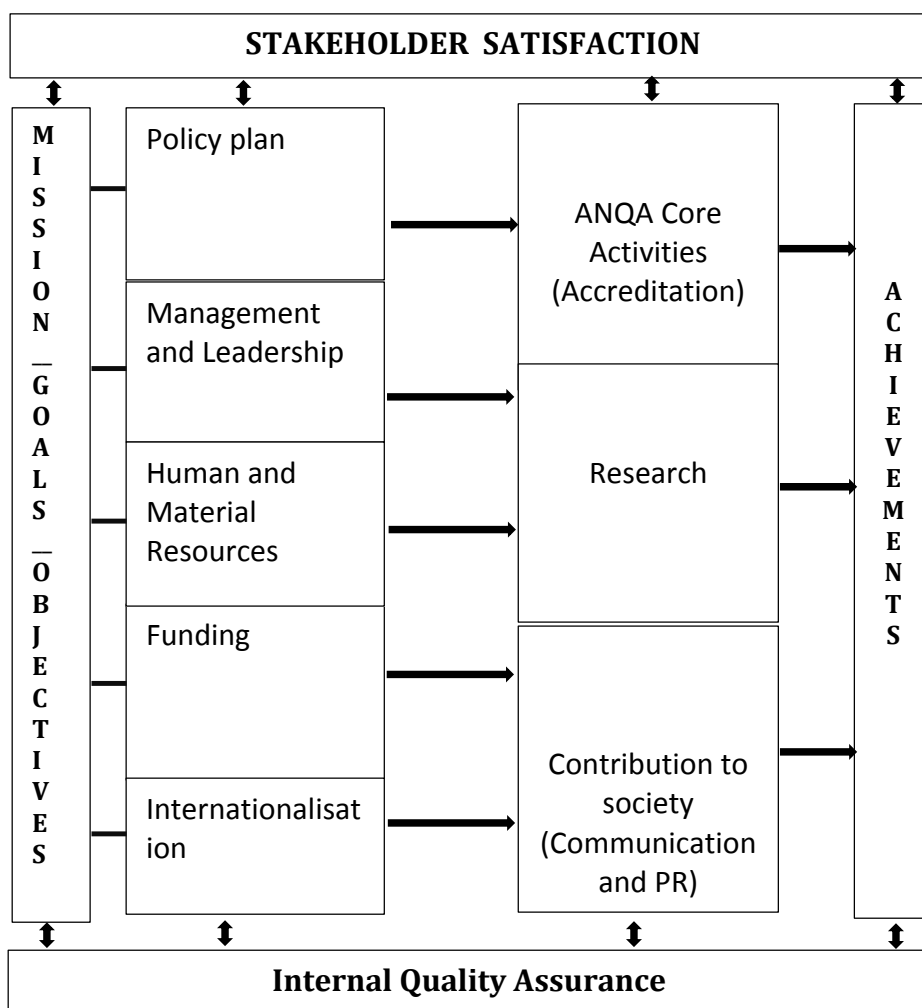
The ANQA IQA system is guided by ANQA's 2010-2015 strategic plan as well as internal rules and regulations of the foundation. ANQA IQA maintains a correlation between the strategic plan and the main and supplementary activities of the organization. This will allow the ANQA to detect whether or not the work is done in conformity with its mission.

4. Scope and Procedures

4.1 ANQA internal quality assurance is its major accountability tool.

4.2 The primary responsibility for all the processes lies with the Director of ANQA.

4.3 ANQA adopts a process- and outcome-based approach to its management and quality assurance.

4.4 The scope of work of AQNA IQA is to determine whether ANQA's management and control processes are adequate and are functioning in a manner to ensure that

- Risks are appropriately identified and managed;
- Significant financial, managerial, and operating information is accurate, reliable, and timely;
- Employees' actions are in compliance with policies, standards, procedures, job descriptions and applicable laws and regulations;
- Resources are acquired economically, used efficiently, and adequately protected and accounted for;
- Programs, plans, goals and objectives are achieved.

4.5 ANQA quality model is described bellow

STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION			
M I S S I O N — G O A L S — O B J E C T I V E S	Policy plan	ANQA Core Activities (Accreditation)	**A C H I E V E M E N T S**
	Management and Leadership	Research	
	Human and Material Resources		
	Funding	Contribution to society (Communication and PR)	
	Internationalisation		
Internal Quality Assurance			

Quality is defined as achieving the formulated mission and goals, assuming that these reflect the requirements of the stakeholders. It will be clear that we only can assess quality if we know what we are planning to achieve. This means that quality assurance and quality assessment will always start with the question as to the mission and goals.

The second column shows how ANQA is planning to achieve the goals:

- Translating the goals into policy documents and policy strategy (ANQA has a clear policy and strategic plan formulated in line with its mission statement);
- The management structure and management style of ANQA (ANQA has a clear management structure in which the decision-making process, competencies and responsibilities have been clearly fixed);

- Human and material resource management: input of staff to achieve the goals (ANQA has high-quality staff members by clearly defining their responsibilities and by evaluating their performance on a regular basis and necessary facilities and working environment to operate productively);
- Financial resources management (the university has adequate funding to achieve its goals and aims);
- Internationalization of ANQA activities (active cooperation with International partners, involvement in ENQA and INQAAHE activities, participation in international projects).

The third column shows the core activities of ANQA:
- Research Activities (to analyze ANQA governance and organization, effectiveness of ANQA activities, conduct system-wide analysis and need assessment),
- The contribution to society and to the support and development of the quality culture (regular meeting with stakeholders, annual and biannual conferences, training of QA staff, round table discussion and guidance on development and revision of QA mechanisms and procedures in HEIs); communication and PR
- Activities regarding 11 Quality Areas (to determine the quality of ANQA activities according to predefined protocols);

All the activities run by ANQA are broken down into 11 quality assurance processes.

- Leadership and management
- Institutional and programme accreditations
- Legal affairs
- Human Resources Management
- Accreditation committee,
- International affairs
- Internal quality assurance
- Secretariat
- Public relations and communication
- Information technologies
- Resources

1. To manage the processes a protocol elaborating on the targets, indicators, activity plans and quality assurance tools is to be operationalized (ANNEX 1).
2. Each protocol is developed for operations in a given year or two and is a subject to cyclical review.
3. For each quality assurance process a Working Group (WG) of 2 to 4 ANQA staff is to be set up.
4. Each WG is to be led by a coordinator.
5. For each process, data are collected on annual basis and the coordinator for each process takes care of the in-depth analysis of the data to feed into the annual report.
6. Each WG draws up an annual quality report concerning its own process, drafts preliminary conclusions on the effectiveness of the given process as well as sets the area for further improvement.
7. Each WG collects data on ANQA performance systematically.
8. The summary results from all the protocols feed into the revisions that are to be made to the operational plans to better achieve the strategic goals.
9. The quality assurance WG is responsible for the coordination of performance appraisal activities.
10. The roles in the WG and their responsibilities for each quality area are clearly defined by the WG coordinator.
11. The WG coordinator of the specific quality area prepares the evaluations.
12. The evaluation of the content and organization of the internal quality assurance proceeds through periodic meetings of the WG lead by the coordinator and ANQA Director.
13. The outcomes and outputs of all the quality assurance processes feed into the annual self-assessment report prepared by ANQA and submitted to the ANQA Board of Trustees.

All these activities have to be analyzed with more specific models for the core activities.

The last column relates to the achievements:
- What has ANQA achieved?
- Are the achievements in line with the formulated mission and goals?
- Does ANQA have means and opportunities to check the achievements are in line with the expected outcomes?

The top-cell of the model considers stakeholders satisfaction and is related to all columns. ANQA has structured methods for obtaining feedback from the stakeholders.

The bottom-cell considers how the agency assure the quality of the various aspects (PCDA approach for all aspects).

In the model below the elements of the Internal Quality Assurance System are described:
- The monitoring and evaluation instruments;
- The QA-processes for specific activities
- Specific QA-instruments.

Internal Quality Assurance elements	
Monitoring and evaluation Instruments	Quantitative data KPI: Number of accredited HEIs 　　　Number of grants 　　　Number of publications 　　　Number of conducted trainings, meetings, workshops 　　　Number of agreements (cooperation, membership) 　　　Number of experts involved in the pool 　　　Staff retention Qualitative data Feedback from HEIs, Experts, Students, Coordinators, Staff on satisfaction and effectiveness of ANQA activities
Special QA Processes	QA of staff (recruitment, performance appraisal, promotion) QA of Facilities
Specific QA Instruments	SWOT analysis Self-assessment of the agency Information system (Doc flow) Quality handbook System-wide analysis
Improvement plan	

Guiding Principles

ANQA internal quality assurance policy and procedures adhere to the following principles:
- **Accountability:** IQA evaluates the organization and its ongoing activities, facilitates the evaluation of results and clearly plans the follow-up and improvement process (according to the PDCA cycle),
- **Openness and Transparency:** IQA ensures transparency through the application of different tools,

- **Compliance with international standards:** IQA provides the basis for the external evaluation efficiency by the adoption of international standards in the development of the internal quality assurance system,
- **Collaboration and coordination:** stimulates involvement of all staff members, as well as guarantees the involvement of all stakeholders.

5. Management Oversight

ANQA internal quality assurance is recognized as being the responsibility of ANQA employees and the contractors.

- The ANQA Board of Trustees considers this policy as one of the tools that drives implementation of ANQA strategic plans and oversees implementation of this policy.
- The ANQA Director is ultimately responsible for the application of this policy and procedures. The ANQA Director will initiate internal quality assurance activities on yearly basis, with independent input, as appropriate.
- The ANQA Director approves the Annual Quality Assurance Plan, monitors its implementation and signs-off the completion of planned QA steps.
- The IQA officer coordinates all the quality assurance processes and is responsible for drafting the annual self-assessment report.
- The coordinators of quality assurance working groups are responsible for preparing QA protocols on yearly or biannual basis and ensuring that all the activities outlined in the protocol are accomplished.
- All staff participating in the WGs shares responsibility for identifying and reporting any quality issues and for recommending corrective actions.
- The WG coordinators oversee and coordinate preparation of the annual reports on each quality process.

6. Implementation

The current IQA policy is implemented through Quality Assurance procedures that are fully integrated into the ANQA annual operational planning and implementation. These procedures are elaborated upon in the ANQA Quality Assurance Protocols for each process.

These operational procedures are supported by publications, guidelines, review procedures, and other operational standards and guidelines as required.

7. External Reviews of ANQA

Each five years ANQA undergoes external evaluation by international experts for recognition at international level.

The self-evaluation report prepared by ANQA is submitted to the ANQA Board of Trustees for approval prior to submission for international recognition.