

# Accreditation as a mechanism of state influence on the quality of education in modern conditions

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**Abstract** The reform in the field of education has led to the emergence of the problem of the quality of the knowledge and competencies of students. The solution of this issue is carried out at the level of state control by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Kyrgyz Republic through the accreditation of educational institutions. This article deals with the formation and development of the accreditation process in the educational sphere of Kyrgyzstan. The authors considered the stages of the process of the accreditation of educational institutions and evaluated the activities of accreditation agencies. The authors also described the world experience in accreditation and analyzed the world ranking of universities according to the accreditation.

**Keywords:** accreditation, educational institutions, educational programs, dynamics, accreditation agency, Bologna process, requirements and standards.

## Introduction

With the accession to the Bologna education system, Kyrgyzstan has acquired a good potential for the development of the educational system. In order to ensure compliance of national education with international standards, the accreditation procedure for higher and postgraduate education was introduced in September 2015.

Following the principles of the Bologna system, the quality of education implies: providing a two-stage system of education, strengthening relations with foreign universities, mobility of students and teachers, recognition of an academic degree and a credit transfer system.

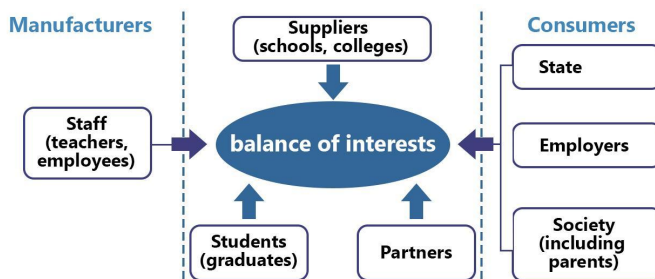
On the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, the process of accreditation in all sectors of the economy, such as medicine, industry, education, etc., was initiated with the adoption of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 67 "On the basics of technical regulation in the Kyrgyz Republic" dated May 22, 2004. In the Educational system, this process was launched with the adoption of the Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic "On approval of acts on independent accreditation in the education system of the Kyrgyz Republic" No. 670 dated September 29, 2015, and the approval of the procedure for accreditation of educational organizations and programs.[1]

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The accreditation procedure is the most effective tool in improving the quality of education, in this regard, today there are 7 institutions and 63 higher educational institutions in 7 regions of the country in the national register of accreditation agencies. [2] The regulatory body for accreditation is the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic represented by the Accreditation Sector. This sector maintains a register of all accreditation agencies and programs that conduct accreditation of universities in the country. At the same time, the educational organization is independent when choosing an accreditation agency and paying for their services. [3]

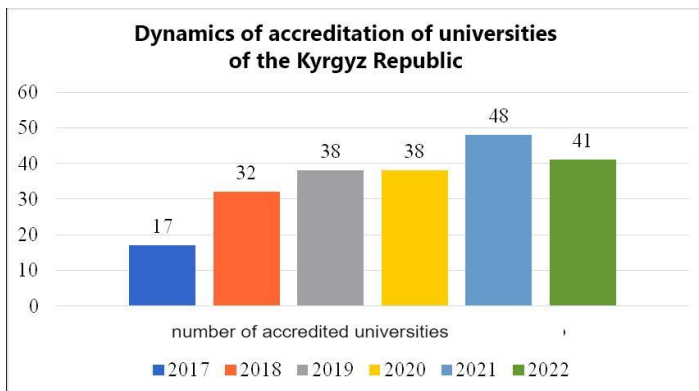
During the accreditation process, the educational institution confirms its compliance with the international ISO standard. The ISO standard defines the criteria to be met by all educational institutions in the field of quality management system. Compliance with this standard provides an educational institution with a strong customer orientation, motivation and involvement of management, a process approach and continuous improvement of activities. One of the advantages of compliance with the ISO standard is the guarantee of the institution in the production of competitive and highly qualified personnel. Such a high level of education is achieved while maintaining a balance of interests of all parties involved. At the same time, the body conducting the accreditation acts as a disinterested party, I guarantee the impartiality and independence of the accreditation.[4]



**Figure 1.** Balance of stakeholders [4]

The advantage of accreditation is to identify the weaknesses of both the educational program and the educational institution as a whole. For educational institutions, this approach is especially important, since with the change of external parameters, the application of new teaching standards, methods and technologies becomes relevant, which contributes to the continuous improvement of the quality of education in the institution. [5]

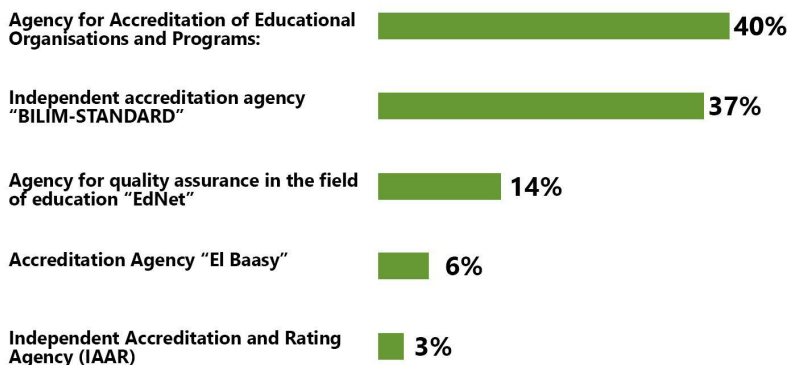
We will consider the increase in the number of universities that have been accredited since 2017 in Fig. 2.



**Figure 2.** Dynamics of accreditation of universities of the Kyrgyz Republic [6]

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, 41 higher educational institutions in 108 different areas of training (bachelor's degree, master's degree, specialty) were accredited in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2022. First of all, such dynamics is connected with the active activity of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic in this area, as well as with the increase in the range of services provided by the country's universities, in particular with the opening of new training areas. According to the diagram, it can be seen that in 2019-2020 the dynamics is stable, since the coronavirus pandemic has introduced its limitations during the accreditation procedure. Educational organizations were partially or completely closed. New rules for the organization of the state accreditation procedure were introduced, which minimized cases of infection with the virus. The experts started working in the format of a videoconference, rather than a face-to-face meeting, for safety and compliance with sanitary standards. The main barriers to online accreditation were: problems with Internet connection, periodic malfunction of webcams, errors of sites requiring page updates, which took n-amount of time, which reduced the number of accredited educational institutions in 2020. [7]

Let's consider the activities of accreditation agencies in Kyrgyzstan.



**Figure 3.** Dynamics of the activity of independent agencies on accreditation of the country's universities in 2022 [6]

The diagram shows that in 2022 35 universities of Kyrgyzstan were accredited by the following agencies:

- In 2022, AAOPO accredited 40% of universities in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Agency is one of the first institutions to accredit universities in the country. A feature of the work of the AAOPO is a well-established regulatory framework, adapted standards for institutional and program accreditation of educational organizations [8].
- The independent accreditation Agency "BILIM-STANDARD" is an international agency and a full member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education. Over the past year, 37% of the country's universities were accredited by this agency [9].
- The Agency for Quality Assurance in the field of education "EdNet" was registered in 2012. The Agency studied the foreign experience of the quality assessment methodology and developed a program based on European standards and requirements. In 2022, the EdNet agency accredited 14% of universities [10].
- 9% of the country's universities during the period under review were accredited by the El Baasy Accreditation Agency (6%) and the Independent Accreditation and Rating Agency (3%)

Despite the small scope of accreditation in the Kyrgyz Republic, the Independent Accreditation and Rating Agency (IAAR) is the leading accreditation agency of the CIS, conducting international accreditation in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia and Kazakhstan and other countries. IAAR has been conducting accreditation of educational programs in Kyrgyz universities since 2017, having entered the register of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. In recent years, IAAR has shown the following activity in the accreditation of universities of the Kyrgyz Republic:

**Table 1** Universities of the Kyrgyz Republic that have been internationally accredited in 2018-2021 by IAAR

<b>year</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY</b>
<b>2018</b>	Osh State University
	Osh Technological University
<b>2019</b>	Kyrgyz-Uzbek University
	International Higher School of Medicine
<b>2021</b>	Ala-Too International University
	International University of Kyrgyzstan
	"M.M.Adyshev Osh Technological University"
	Institution "Kyrgyz State Medical Academy named after I.K. Akhunbayev"
	Adam University
	Bishkek Financial Economic Academy
<b>2022</b>	Tentishev Asian Medical Institute
	Jalal-Abad State University named after Bekmamat Osmonov
	Adam University
	Bishkek Financial Economic Academy

The data presented in the table show that from 2018 to 2021, the number of Kyrgyz universities that have been internationally accredited has increased 2.5 times, so we can observe positive dynamics and an active policy of the agency's activities in relation to universities of the Kyrgyz Republic. [11]

## World experience

Turning to the world practice of assessing the quality of educational programs in the form of accreditation, it is worth noting the experience of the USA. In the second half of the XIX

century in the USA there was a need to ensure the safety of society from unscrupulous educational institutions, in connection with this, the university community was created. On the basis of which the independent agency ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) appeared, which conducts accreditation of educational programs in the field of engineering and technology in the United States. Later, this practice gained popularity in the countries of Western and Central Europe. For the countries of Eastern Europe, including Russia, as well as Japan, India, and China, the main reasons for the development of accreditation were the emergence and growth of the non-state education sector and the volume of the entire educational system as a whole. Further, the practice of accreditation spread throughout the CIS, including the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan [12]

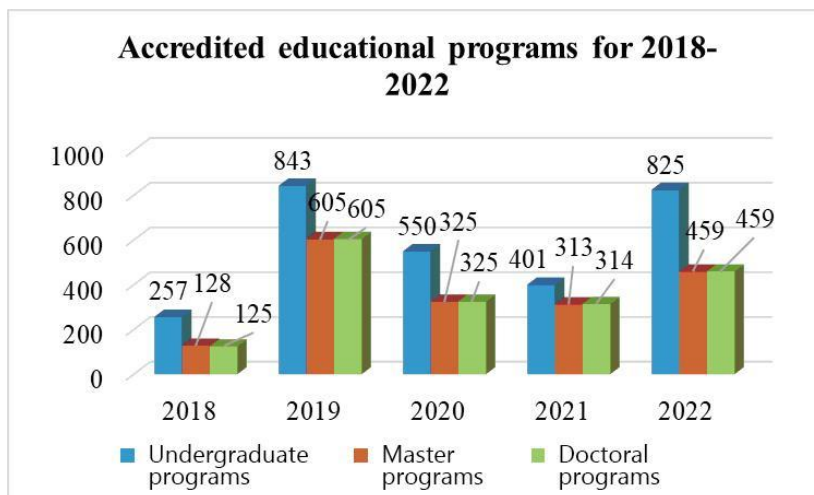
To date, the register of the National Center for the Development of Higher Education in the Republic of Kazakhstan has 12 agencies.

**Table 2.** Recognized accreditation agencies of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2022 [13]

<b>№</b>	<b>Name of the accreditation body</b>	<b>A country</b>
1	Non-profit institution "Independent Accreditation and Rating Agency" (IAAR)	Kazakhstan
2	FIBAA - Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation	Germany
3	Non-governmental institution "Independent Agency for Quality Assurance in Education" (IQAA)	Kazakhstan
4	Agency for Accreditation of Educational Programs in Engineering, Computer Science, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ASIIN)	Germany
5	Council for Accreditation of Engineering and Technology Programs (ABET)	USA
6	Kazakhstan Association of Modern (Elite) Education KAZSEE	Kazakhstan
7	Independent Agency for Accreditation and Examination of the Quality of Education, (ARQA)	Kazakhstan
8	MusiQuE - Music Quality Enhancement	Belgium
9	Non-profit institution "Eurasian Center for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education and Healthcare", (ECAQA)	Kazakhstan
10	Non-profit institution "Independent Kazakhstan Accreditation Center"	Kazakhstan
11	Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute - ACQUIN	Germany
12	Council for Accreditation of Business Schools and Programs, (ACBSP)	USA

Analyzing this list, it can be concluded that 50% of accreditation agencies are foreign organizations that are recognized in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which indicates the positive policy of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of accreditation of universities and the expansion of international borders in the field of quality assurance of education.

If we talk about the types of accreditation programs for the period from 2018 to 2022, the National Center for the Development of Higher Education has the following data:



**Figure 4.** Dynamics of accreditation of educational programs by levels of study in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the period from 2018 to 2022 [13]

This diagram shows that the completion of the process of accreditation of bachelor's degree educational programs exceeded the indicators of master's and doctoral studies for the entire period under review. However, the dynamics of accreditation of educational programs was not always positive. Analyzing the chart data, it can be observed that the activity in the field of accreditation for 2020 has low indicators in relation to 2019. This dynamic is caused by the COVID- 19 Coronavirus pandemic. Due to quarantine measures, the passage of accreditation switched to a new, online format, which turned out to be not the most positive indicator for this process. But by 2022, the accreditation procedure returned to the previous mode and the process of passing accreditation began to approach growing indicators, which has a positive effect on this process.[13]

Accreditation in different countries has its own specific characteristics and similarities. So, for example, in the Republic of Kazakhstan and in the Republic of Tajikistan, the process of accreditation has characteristic similarities with the process of accreditation on the territory of our country. According to the law "On Education" of these countries, accreditation is a confirmation of the compliance of the university's activities with certain norms and standards, as well as recognition of its continuous self-improvement.

In France, the process of accreditation is compulsory and has inconsistencies with the requirements of educational standards, which significantly reduces the ability of participants to influence the passage of accreditation.

Universities in the UK and Germany, while accreditation, use site visits and data collection in the form of self-assessment as a tool for determining the level of compliance with standards. At the same time, the standards of the countries have differences, according to which they have the ability to determine the tools used at each stage of verification. [14].

Let's consider the world experience of universities in accreditation.

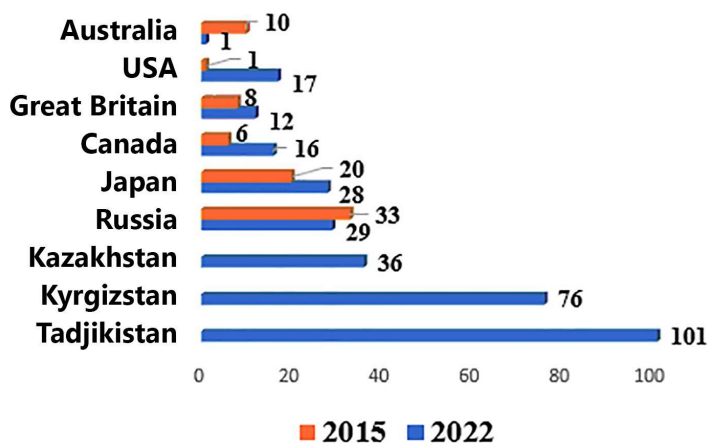
**Table 3** World ranking of universities by accreditation for 2020-2023.

UNIVERSITY	country	2020	2021	2022	2023
Harvard University	USA	1	1	1	1
Stanford University	USA	2	2	2	2
Johns Hopkins University	USA	3	4	5	5

University of Toronto	Canada	4	3	3	6
Oxford University	Great Britain	5	6	4	4
University College London	Great Britain	6	5	6	3
University of Washington	USA	7	8	7	7
University of Michigan	USA	8	9	9	14
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	USA	9	7	8	8
Cambridge University	Great Britain	10	11	10	9
University of Melbourne	Australia	25	23	24	20
Sorbonne University	France	35	26	30	22
Heidelberg University	Germany	56	55	62	57
Lomonosov Moscow State University	Russian Federation	225	260	284	284

According to the NTU - Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World University, which is formed by the National University of Taiwan in cooperation with the accreditation agency Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan, Harvard and Stanford Universities have not lost their positions for 4 years, taking leading places in the ranking, Johns Hopkins University is in the top five for the period under review universities of the world. The University of Michigan in 2023 is in 14th place, losing 9th place to the University of Cambridge. The Australian University of Melbourne rose 5 positions higher during the period under review. The French Sorbonne University rose 13 positions higher; the German Heidelberg University practically retained its positions. From the universities of the post-Soviet countries, Lomonosov Moscow State University has dropped 59 positions in the ranking from 2020-2023 and is in 284th place out of 701. The table also shows that the top 10 universities in the world are located in the United States of America, Great Britain and Canada. [15]

Let's consider the world rank of countries by level of education for 2015 and 2022.



**Figure 5.** World ranking of countries according to the Education Level Index for 2015 and 2022.

The data presented in the figure suggests that despite the NTU rating for 2022, the United States of America ranks 17th in terms of education, while Australia took the leading position.

Canada has dropped 10 positions in recent years and is ranked 16th, behind the UK. Russia from 33 positions out of 50 countries in 2015, rose to 29th place in 2022. In 2022, Tajikistan is behind Kyrgyzstan by 25 positions, and Kazakhstan by 65 positions and is on 101 out of 191. This indicator is positive for the educational services market of the Kyrgyz Republic.[16]

## Conclusions

The quality of education is of paramount importance, educational organizations need to build an educational process a priori in accordance with quality requirements. The primary tasks in ensuring the quality of education:

1. Development of new methods of work on the effectiveness of the quality of education.
2. Conducting scientific research on the introduction of the quality of education.
3. Planning together with accreditation agencies, professional development in the field of quality.
4. On the part of the state, when developing state educational standards, include requirements for compliance with international quality standards of education.
5. Continuous monitoring of the effectiveness of the quality management system of educational organizations.

As a result, it can be noted that the formation and development of the accreditation procedure in Kyrgyzstan gives a positive effect for the education system.

Every year the number of accredited educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan increases, which contributes to the growth of the quality of education in the country, since the accreditation of educational institutions is based on principles and procedures agreed at the international level and is one of the most important stages of the educational activities of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Compliance of the activities of universities with international requirements will further contribute to improving the competitiveness of universities in Kyrgyzstan and integration into the international community.

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