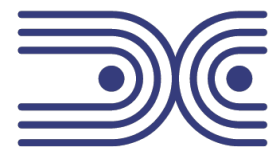


Polish  
Accreditation  
Committee



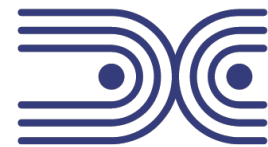
# SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

Warsaw, 2022



## Content

PART I – BACKGROUND .....	3
Introduction.....	3
Higher Education System in Poland .....	4
National Qualifications Framework / Polish Qualifications Framework .....	13
History, profile and activities of the Agency .....	14
Mission and Strategy .....	24
Organisational structure of PKA .....	25
Higher education quality assurance activities of the Agency.....	28
Data illustrating PKA operations .....	30
PART II – FOCUS AREA .....	32
ESG Standard 3.3 Independence .....	32
ESG Standard 3.5 Resources.....	36
ESG Standard 3.6 Standard Internal quality assurance and professional conduct .....	40
Standard for enhancement - ESG Standard 3.4 Thematic analysis.....	46
ESG Standard 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance.....	53
ESG Standard 2.3 Implementing processes.....	58
ESG Standard 2.4 Peer-review experts.....	62
ESG Standard 2.6 Reporting .....	72
ESG Standard 2.7 Complaints and appeals.....	76
PART III – SWOT ANALYSIS .....	79
Strengths .....	79
Weaknesses.....	81
Opportunities .....	82
Threats.....	84
PART IV – CONCLUSIONS.....	85
Glossary of Terms .....	85
Annexes (hyperlinks or links): .....	86



## PART I – BACKGROUND

### Introduction

Article 1(4) of the Statutes of the Polish Accreditation Committee (Polish: Polska Komisja Akredytacyjna (PKA) ([Appendix no. 1](#)) stipulates that the activities of the Committee are subject to external review at least once every five years in accordance with the operational arrangements for accreditation agencies working within the European Higher Education Area.

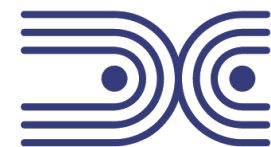
In 2008, 2013 and 2018 PKA was subjected to external review by a panel of international experts. The strategic goal of the review was obtaining/renewing full membership in ENQA and registration in EQAR. The awarded positive rating made the Committee more credible to Polish HEIs as an external quality assurance agency, which applies comparable procedures and methodology with those adopted by recognized accreditation agencies, in keeping with European standards. In response to comments included in the latest report, and in 2018, the Polish Accreditation Committee adopted a Follow-up Action Plan, which complies with the recommendations of the panel of external experts. As a result of the external review held in early 2009, PKA obtained and has maintained full membership in ENQA and has been registered in EQAR.

The fourth PKA's review is extraordinary and takes place based on [EQAR decision dated June 28, 2022](#). This review will evaluate the extent to which PKA continues to fulfil the requirements of the ESG. The targeted review aims to place more focus on those parts that require attention and provide sufficient information to support PKA's application to EQAR, especially standards with a partial compliance conclusion in the Register Committee's latest renewal decision and standards affected by other types of substantive changes.

Over this time, legal regulations pertaining to Polish higher education have been repeatedly changed. The dynamics of changes, particularly these in the scope of legal regulations, has resulted in the need for the Polish Accreditation Committee to adapt to the new requirements. These changes have already been reported in 2019, 2021 and 2022. Having regard to the above, the self-assessment report presents the role PKA plays in the higher education system in Poland after the subsequent amendments of Polish Law on Higher Education and Science. The new legal context, in which PKA currently operates has been accompanied by the emergence of new challenges for the operations of this institution. The Polish Accreditation Committee has made its best efforts in order to assure that the new approach to the evaluation process, which at present involves only one path, i.e., programme evaluation, is understood by all the stakeholders.

The Polish Accreditation Committee believes that the external review contributes to greater effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system, because the external review allows PKA to identify its weaknesses and indicates the directions for the development of the Committee, also in the context of the professionalisation of accreditation agencies operating in the European Higher Education Area.

Due to the fact that self-assessment is inherently a subjective analysis, PKA strived at its objectivisation by confronting opposing points of view. For this purpose, representatives of various stakeholders were included in the self-assessment process at different stages. Besides the inclusion of a large number of people in the self-assessment report consultation process was of paramount importance to PKA. The draft self-assessment report was the subject of internal consultations within PKA (Presidium, Sections,



the Appeals Body, the Ethics Team, PKA Bureau, experts, secretary of evaluation panel) as well as external consultations (Ministry of Education and Science, General Council for Science and Higher Education, Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, Conference of Rectors of Non University Higher Education Institutions in Poland, Conference of Rectors of Public Non-University Higher Education Institutions in Poland, the Polish Chamber of Commerce, Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland). The open consultation process was held on between 15 to 20 December 2022 through PKA website.

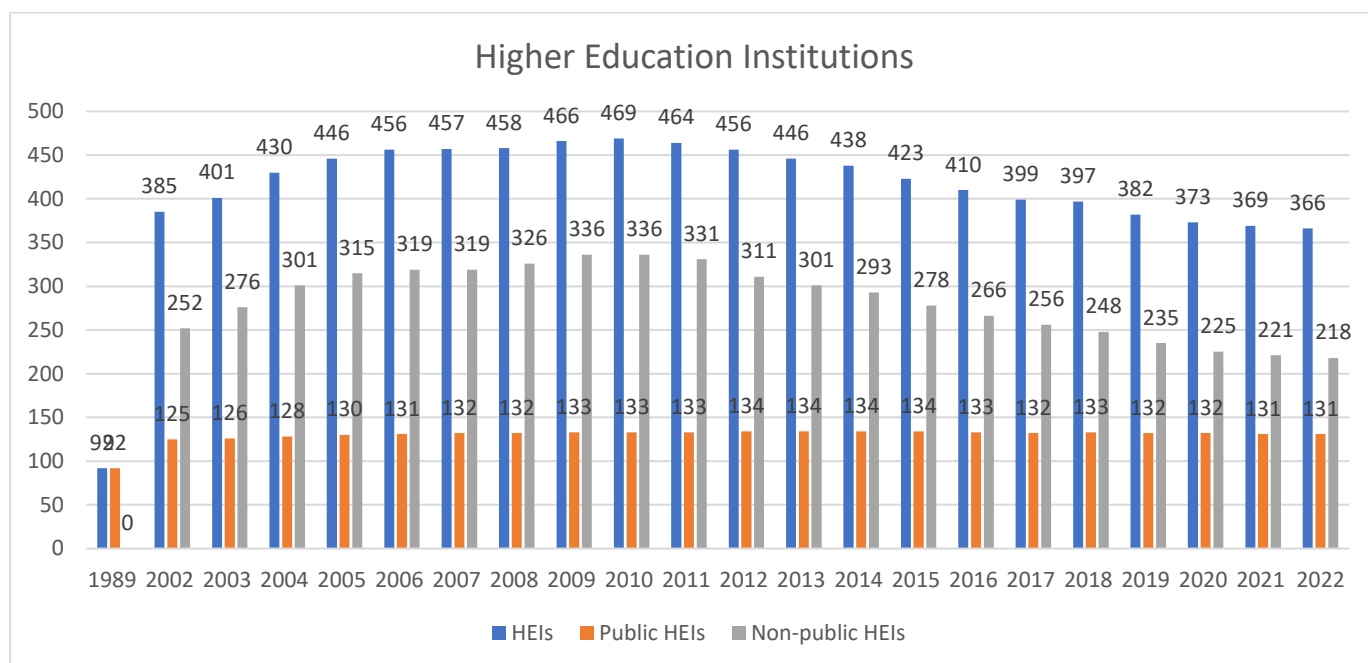
## Higher Education System in Poland

Act of 20 July 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws of 2020; item 85, 374) ([Appendix no. 2](#)) constitutes the legal basis for providing higher education programmes in both public (state-run) higher education institutions and since 1990 non-public (private) HEIs that operate in Poland. Public HEIs are founded by the state represented by a relevant state authority or public administration agency, whereas non-public schools can be established by natural or legal persons other than state and local authority entities.

Both groups include university- and non-university-type higher education institutions. Pursuant to the act, a university-type HEI is an institution if it conducts scientific activity and has scientific category A+, A or B+ in at least 1 scientific or artistic discipline. University-type HEIs can offer first- cycle tertiary education programmes leading to the award of *licencjat* (bachelor's) or *inżynier* (engineer) degree and second-cycle or long-cycle programmes (master's degree courses) leading to the award of the *magister* (master's) or an equivalent degree, as well as doctoral programmes. Non-university-type higher education institutions are HEIs, which offer first-cycle, second-cycle or long-cycle programmes, but which do not have scientific category A+, A or B+ in at least 1 scientific or artistic discipline. Changes initiated by the political transformation in the late 1980s spurred the establishment of the first non-public universities in Poland in 1991, and their number continued to grow until the academic year 2010/2011. In the year 2010, there were 336 non-public higher education institutions in Poland and 469 both public and non-public HEIs. From that point, one can observe a gradual drop in their number, as evidenced by the data pertaining to academic years 1989/190 - 2022/2023 presented in Figures 1 and 2 and in Table 1. In accordance with data contained in the Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on<sup>1</sup>, the system of higher education in Poland, as of December 2022, includes 366 higher education institutions, including 131 public HEIs, 218 non-public HEIs founded by natural or legal persons other than the state and local authority entities and 17 church-administered HEIs run by the Catholic Church, other churches and religious communities on the basis of regulations on the relationship between the state and the Catholic Church in the Republic of Poland and regulations on the relationship between the state and other churches and religious communities. Data for the past 20 years is presented in Figure 1.

<sup>1</sup> **The Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on** has been commissioned by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in 2011 as a tool for formulating an effective policy in the field of science and higher education. POL-on collects data about all Polish academic units, to which public access is granted in accordance with the laws and regulations adopted by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (higher education institutions' registers, information about degree programmes and training profiles, aggregated numerical data on students, academic staff, etc.). The system also collects information about laboratories and research equipment, library collections, investments made, scientific projects, publications, patents and achievements of HEIs aimed at the promotion of science. It is possible also find there indicators used for the assessment of higher education institutions. Access to certain parts of the system is limited to public administration staff.

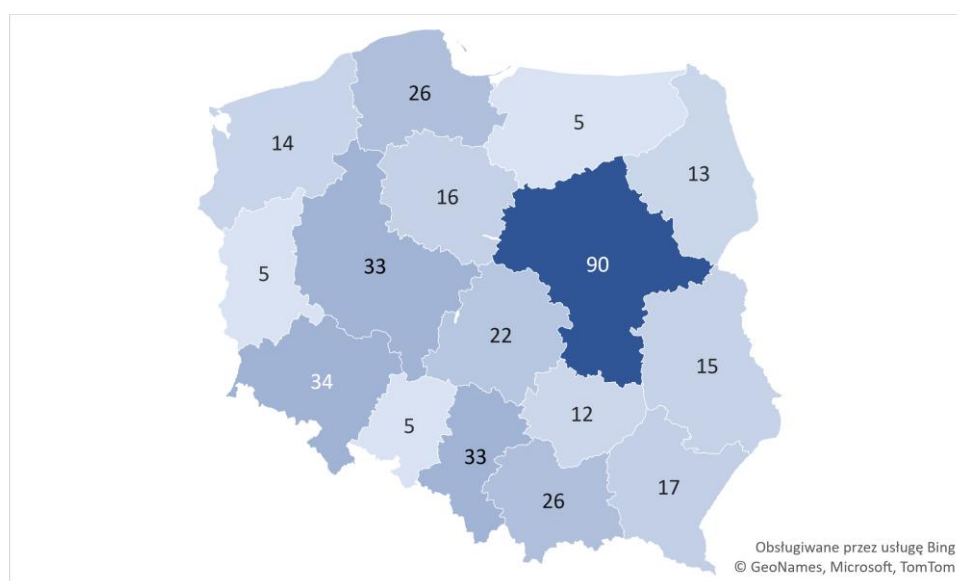
**Figure 1.** The number of public, non-public HEIs<sup>2</sup> in Poland



Source: GUS Reports: Higher Education Institutions and their Finances; The Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on. (December 2022)

The largest number of HEIs is located in the Mazowieckie region. On the other hand, the smallest are in Opolskie, Lubuskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeships.

**Figure 2.** The number of Higher Education Institutions in total in individual voivodeships



Source: GUS Reports: Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on. (December 2022)

<sup>2</sup> The classification adopted in the POL-on. system

In the early days of the PKA, the market for non-public universities grew rapidly. In 2002, there were a total of 252 non-public HEIs. At its peak in 2009 and 2010, there were as many as 336 such non-public HEI. Since then, the number has been steadily declining. As of December 2022, there are only 218 non-public HEIs. Only 18 of them have the status of non-public universities. The rest (200) are non-public non-university type of HEI.

**Table 1.** The number of non-public HEIs in subsequent academic years

	2002	2008	2013	2016	2018	2022
<b>Total</b>	252	326	301	266	248	218

Source: GUS Reports: Higher Education Institutions and their Finances; The Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on (December 2022).

University-type HEIs (98) form the largest group of public HEIs. The distribution of public higher education institutions according to their type is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Public higher education institutions by type

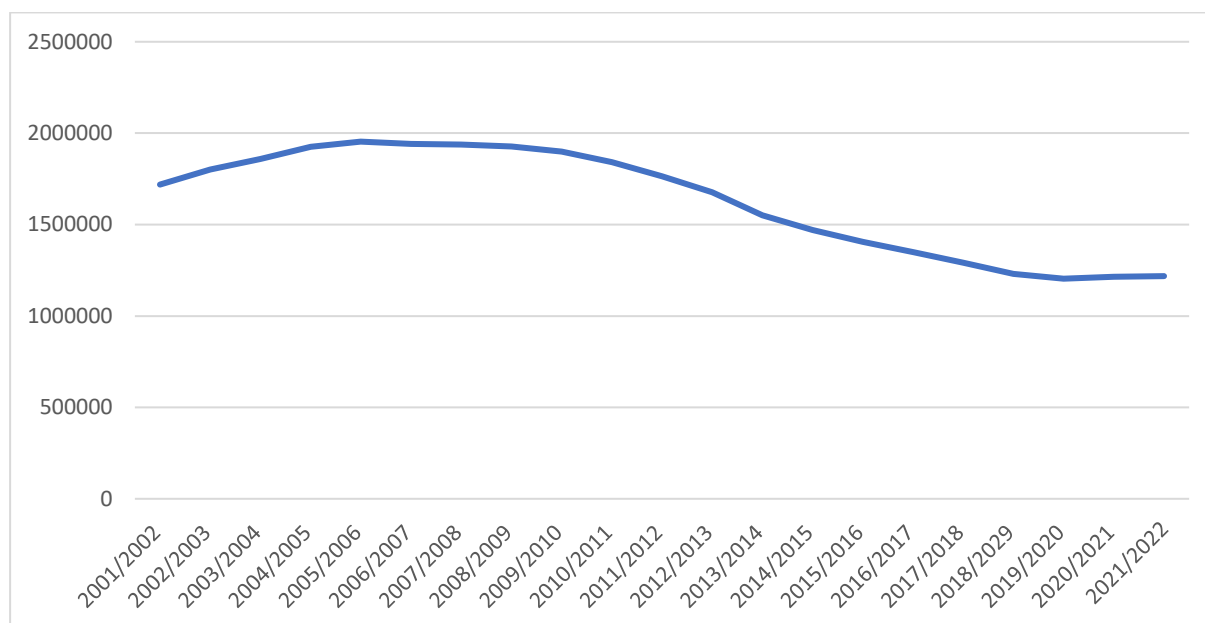
Type of HEI <sup>3</sup>	The number of HEIs	Percentage share of a given type of HEI in the number of public HEIs
<b>Non-university type</b>	33	25.19%
<b>University-type</b>	98	74.81%

Source: GUS Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on. (December 2022)

The dynamic growth of the number of HEIs has been accompanied by an increase in the number of students. The academic year 2005/2006 saw the largest number of students amounting to 1953800. Since then, due to the decline in the population aged 19-24, the number of students has consistently decreased, which has resulted in changes in the structure of higher education in Poland. However, since the academic year 2019/2020, we have noticed a slight increase in the number of students. In 2021/2022, the total number of students reached 1 218 166. Figure 3 illustrates the decline in the number of students in the academic years 2001/2002 - 2021/2022.

<sup>3</sup> The classification adopted in the POL-on system.

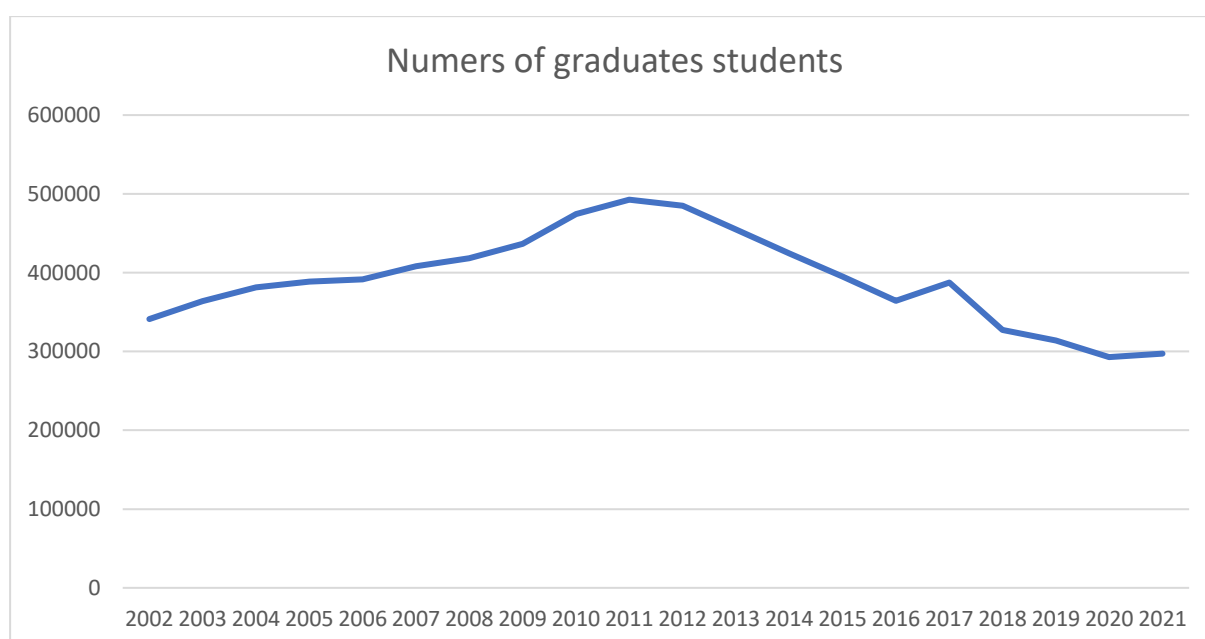
**Figure 3.** The number of students in individual academic years



Source: GUS Reports: Higher Education Institutions and their Finances

During the 20 years of PKA's activity in Poland, almost 8 million students graduated from Polish HEIs. The most - almost half a million - in 2011. Since 2011, the number of graduates has been decreasing. In 2020, for the first time in 20 years, it did not exceed 300,000. However, this may have resulted from the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Figure 4.** The number of graduates students in individual years



Source: GUS Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on. (December 2022)

When analysing the trends resulting from the above changes, one needs to take into consideration a positive phenomenon, which is an increase in the number of students to Poland coming from abroad. Starting from the academic year 2000/2001, when the number of international students in Poland amounted to 5202, one can observe a huge surge in their numbers reaching 85897 in the winter semester of the academic year 2021/2022. Relevant data in this respect is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The number of international students in individual academic years

Academic Year	Number of international students
2001/2002	7,380
2002/2003	7,608
2003/2004	8,106
2004/2005	8,829
2005/2006	10,092
2006/2007	11,752
2007/2008	13,695
2008/2009	15,862
2009/2010	17,000
2010/2011	21,474
2011/2012	24,253
2012/2013	29,172
2013/2014	35,983
2014/2015	46,101
2015/2016	57,119
2016/2017	62,434
2017/2018	71 695
2018/2019	78 117
2019/2020	78 374
2020/2021	82 562
2021/2022	85 897

Source: GUS Reports: Higher Education Institutions and their Finances; The Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on. (December 2022)

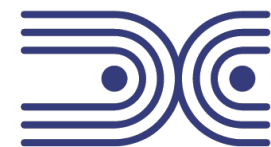
Although Poland is not the most popular destination for Erasmus+ arrivals, around 3,500 exchange students come to Polish HEIs every year (except for the year when severe restrictions were imposed worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

**Table 4.** The number of Erasmus students in individual years

Year	Number of Erasmus students
2017	3 448
2018	3 590
2019	3 904
2020	2 060
2021	3 520

Source: The Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on. (December 2022)





In accordance with the applicable provisions of the Law on Higher Education and Science, higher education institutions can provide education as part of programmes with general or practical profiles. The characteristics of the two profiles and the main differences between them are presented in the table below.

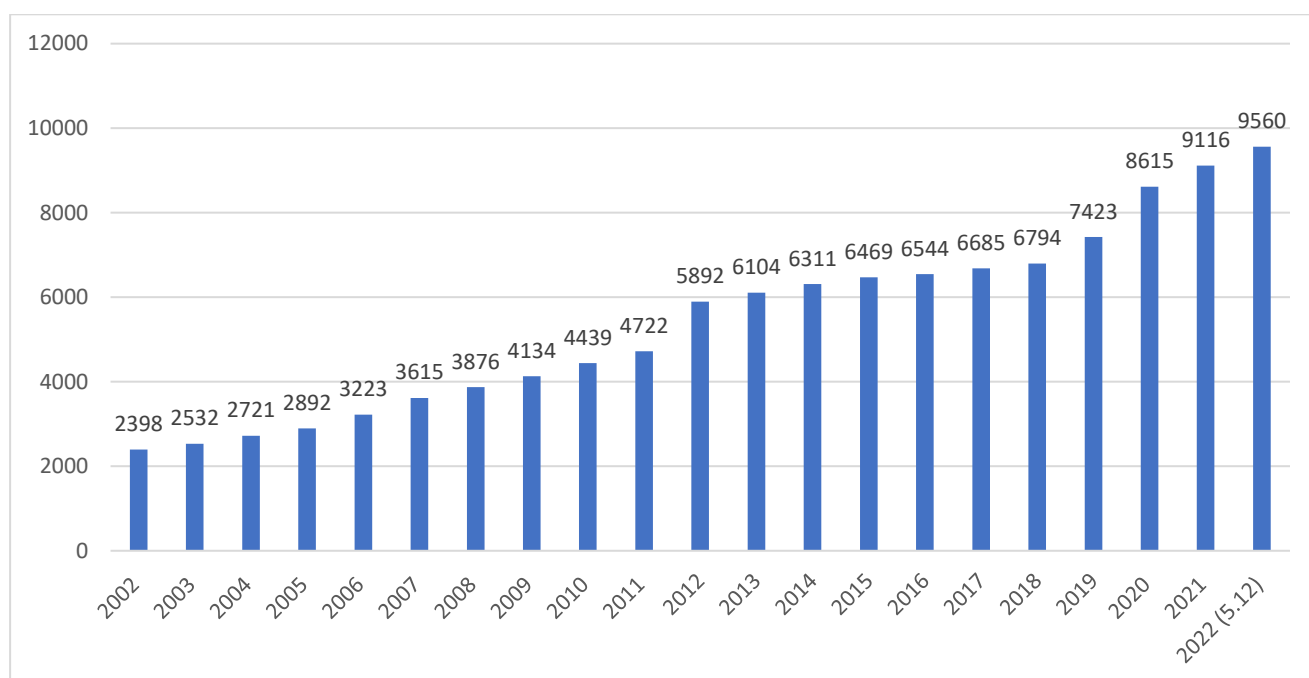
**Table 5.** Description of practical and general profiles and main differences between them

Practical profile	General profile
<b>DEFINITION</b>	
<b>degree profile</b> - either practical or general profile of the Law on Higher Education and Science	
<b>practical profile</b> – a profile of a study programme that includes more than half of the ECTS credits are allocated to classes developing practical skills Article 64 (2)	<b>general profile</b> – a profile of a study programme that includes more than half of the ECTS credits are allocated to classes related to the scientific activity conducted in the higher education institution. Article 64(2)
<b>ACADEMIC STAFF EMPLOYED</b>	
Within the framework of studies with a practical profile – at least 50% of classes shall be taught by academic staff employed in that higher education institution as the primary place of employment (Article 73 (2))	Within the framework of studies with a general academic profile – at least 75% of classes shall be taught by academic staff employed in that higher education institution as the primary place of employment. (Article 73 (2))
<b>STUDENT PLACEMENTS</b>	
An academic unit of a higher education institution that provides a programme in a specific field and level of study with a practical profile shall provide work placement of at least: <b>6 months – in the case of first-cycle programmes and long-cycle programmes; 3 months - in the case of second-cycle programmes</b> Article 67 (5)	A study programme of a field and level study and for a degree profile shall, among other things, specify: the number of hours, rules for and forms of student placements organised as part of degree programmes with general profile - <b>if the study programme of such a degree programme provides for student placements</b> - as well as the number of ECTS credits that students must earn as part of such placements

Source: Authors

Within the twenty years of PKA's operation, the number of majors has increased almost fivefold. Since the latest review, the number has grown from more than 6000 to nearly 10000 majors run by HEI. In the last three years, the number of majors taught has been increasing by about 500. The geometric growth of the directions is shown in Figure 5.

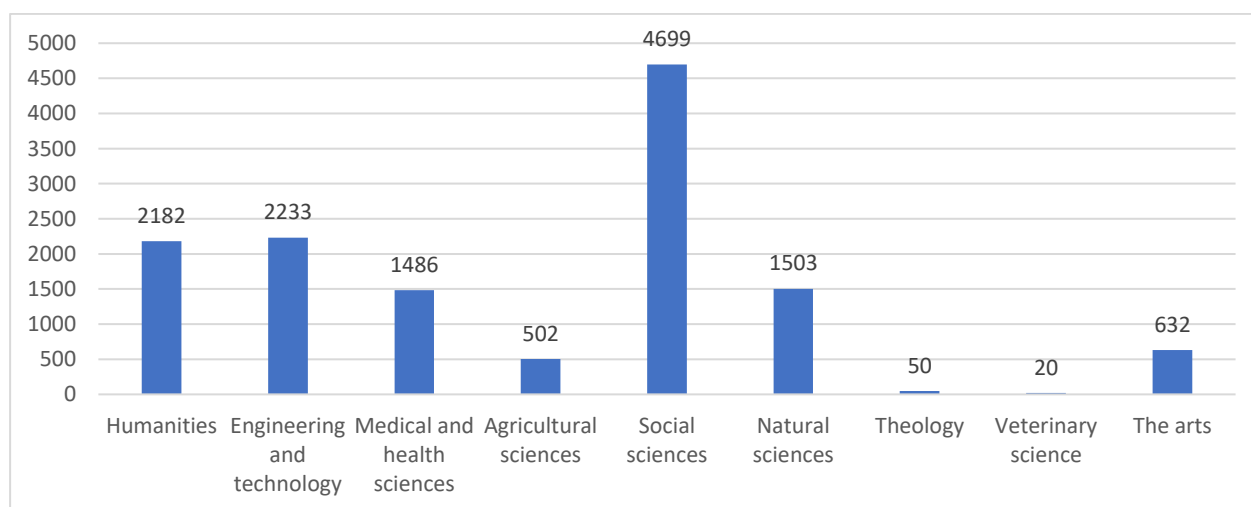
**Figure 5. Degree programmes by fields of science**



Source: GUS Reports: Higher Education Institutions and their Finances; The Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on. (December 2022)

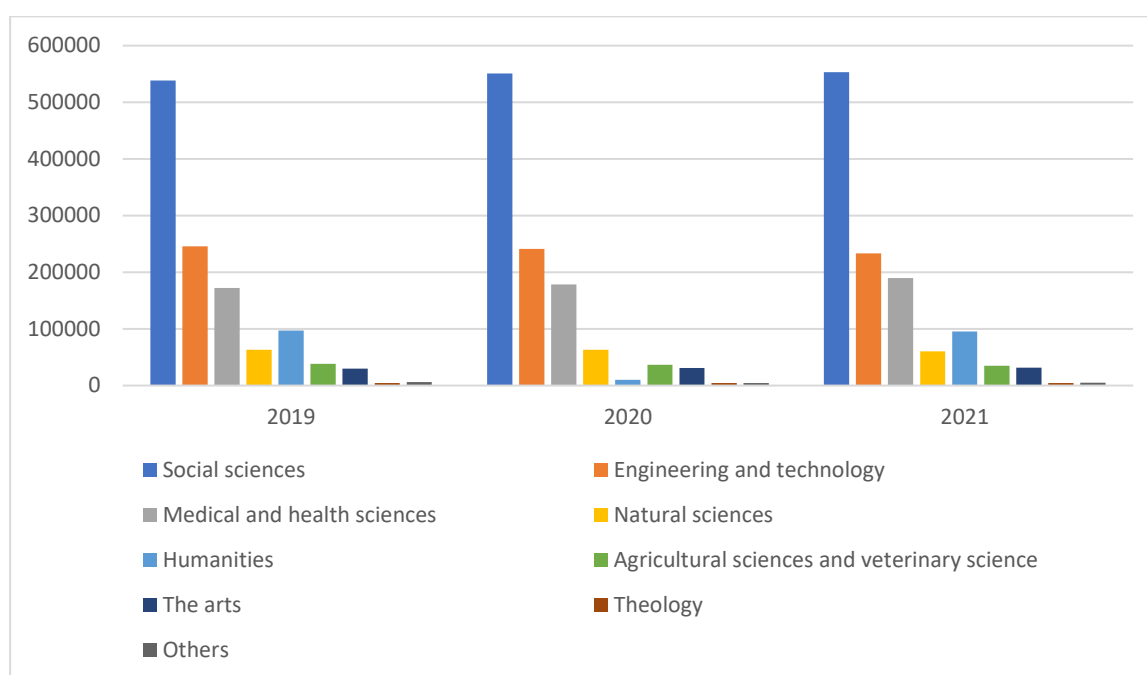
According to the Law of Education and Science field of study can be assigned to at least one discipline. (Article 53 (1)). Most majors are assigned to the field of social sciences. The least to the field of veterinary sciences – 20. Figure 6 shows the assignment of majors to fields of science. It is worth noting the rather large number of interdisciplinary majors that are assigned to more than one discipline. This may explain the popularity of majors assigned to the humanities field. The number of students studying within each field of study is shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 6. Degree programmes by fields of science**



Source: GUS Reports: The Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on. (December 2022)

**Figure 7. Numbers of students by fields of science**



The Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on. (December 2022)

Since the introduction of changes resulting from the amendment of the Law on Higher Education and Science of 2018, which stipulates that academic units, which are not authorised to confer the degree of doctor (doctor) or do not have a positive rating of education quality resulting from an evaluation of a given degree programme by the Polish Accreditation Committee is obliged to provide degree programmes with practical profile, we can observe the decline in the number of so far prevailing general degree profiles. This trend has also been maintained in the current law. Currently, however, the profile of education depends on the scientific category held by HEI's in the specific scientific disciplines. HEI that do not have a scientific category or have a scientific category of B or C can only provide education on a practical profile. (Article 53).

As the data shows, the establishment of the educational profile is not dependent on the concept of education, but just follows, as a rule, from the above-mentioned laws. University-type HEI's (especially public ones) very rarely decide to launch education on a practical profile. Therefore, for several years the division of the educational market in terms of the assignment of majors to a certain profile has remained unchanged. In 2017/2018, there were about 34% of majors with a practical profile. Currently, it is about 37%.

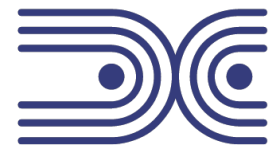
**Table 6. Degree profiles**

	Practical profile	General profile
<b>2017/2018</b>	<b>34.43%</b>	<b>65.57%</b>
<b>2019/2020</b>	<b>37.42%</b>	<b>62.58%</b>
<b>2022/2023</b>	<b>37.87%</b>	<b>62.13%</b>

Source: GUS Reports: Higher Education Institutions and their Finances; The Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education POL-on. (December 2022)

**Table 7.** Description of individual levels of education

Level of study	Definition	Length and number of ECTS	Qualifications
First cycle programmes	a mode of education, to which candidates holding secondary education graduation certificates are admitted and upon graduation from which first cycle qualifications are awarded	In order to obtain a first cycle higher education diploma students are obliged to accumulate at least 180 ECTS credits. First cycle programmes leading to the award of a degree of licencjat comprise a minimum of six semesters, and first cycle programmes leading to the award of a degree of inżynier shall comprise a minimum of seven semesters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• licencjat (bachelor's) degree</li> <li>• inżynier (engineering) degree</li> <li>• a degree equivalent to licencjat or inżynier</li> </ul>
Second cycle programmes	a mode of education, to which candidates holding at least first cycle qualifications are admitted and upon graduation from which second cycle qualifications are awarded	In order to obtain a second cycle higher education diploma students are obliged to accumulate at least 90 ECTS credits. Second cycle programmes comprise from three to five semesters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• magister (master's) degree</li> <li>• magister inżynier (master of science in engineering) degree</li> <li>• a degree equivalent to magister or magister inżynier degree (e.g. lekarz -- M.D.)</li> </ul>
Long cycle programmes	a mode of education, to which candidates holding secondary education graduation certificates are admitted and upon graduation from which second cycle qualifications are awarded.	In order to obtain a long cycle higher education diploma students are obliged to accumulate at least 300 ECTS credits during a five-year programme and 360 ECTS credits during a six-year programme.	
Doctoral education	a mode of education conducted in doctoral schools that may be run by a university-type higher education institution, an institute of Polish Academy of Sciences, a research institute or an international institute, to which candidates holding second cycle qualifications are admitted.	Doctoral education lasts from 6 to 8 semesters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The doctoral education ends with the submission of a doctoral dissertation. Conferring the degree of the doctor is the subject of a separate procedure</li> </ul>
Post-graduate Programmes	a mode of education, to which candidates holding at least first cycle qualifications are admitted offered by a HEI, a research institute of Polish Academy of Sciences, a research institute or a medical centre offering	A programme lasts at least 2 semesters and at least 30 ECTS credits are awarded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• varied</li> </ul>



	postgraduate programmes, upon graduation from which postgraduate qualifications are awarded.		
--	--	--	--

Source: Authors

Studies can be offered in the form of full time and part-time programmes.<sup>4</sup> Detailed rules for the establishment of HEIs, both public and non-public ones, and the fields of study have been stipulated in the act of 20 July 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science. In accordance with Article 9(1-2) of the act, HEIs are autonomous in all areas of their activity pursuant to the rules laid down in the act.

## National Qualifications Framework / Polish Qualifications Framework<sup>5</sup>

In accordance with the Law on Higher Education and Science, HEIs enjoy full autonomy in the scope of the development of study programmes. In the years 2011-2015, the regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 2 November 2011 on the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 5 October 2011, as amended by the regulation of 3 October 2014 on the conditions for the provision of degree programmes in a specific field and at a specific level of study constituted the basis for the development of study programmes. The regulation on NQF stipulated learning outcomes for first- and second cycle programmes, both for general and practical profiles and for areas of study. HEIs have been authorised to attest qualifications in a form of a diploma in accordance with the adopted template.

The act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System entered into force on 15 January 2016. The system forms a distinct part of the National Qualifications System, which includes standards for describing qualifications and assigning levels of Polish Qualifications Framework to them; rules for incorporating qualifications in the Integrated Qualifications System and recording them in the Integrated Qualifications Register; and the rules and standards for qualifications certification and quality assurance in the scope of qualifications awarding, as specified in the act. The Integrated Qualifications System covers a large part of Polish qualifications, which are incorporated into it by virtue of the act and can be added to it pursuant to decisions of competent ministers. Polish Qualifications Framework has 8 levels, and each one of them represents general requirements to be met in order to obtain qualification at a given level. Levels 6 to 8 relate directly to qualifications awarded in the higher education system, where:

- level 6 is assigned to full qualifications awarded upon the completion of first cycle programmes and obtain a bachelor's degree or equivalent;
- level 7 is assigned to full qualifications awarded upon the completion of second cycle and long cycle programmes and obtain a master's degree or equivalent;
- level 8 is assigned to full qualifications awarded along with obtaining a doctoral degree

<sup>4</sup>**Full-time programmes** – a mode of studies, where at least 50% of the programme is offered in the form of classes that require direct participation of academic teachers and students.

**Part-time programmes** – a mode of study other than full-time, as specified by the senate of a higher education institution.

<sup>5</sup>**Polish Qualifications Framework** - a description of eight levels of qualifications identified in Poland and corresponding to relevant levels of European Qualifications Framework. Each level is defined by general learning outcomes descriptors for qualifications at various levels divided into the category of knowledge, skills and social competences. Initially in Polish documents and studies on the qualifications framework, the term national qualifications framework was used.



- level 6 or 7 is assigned to partial qualifications awarded upon the completion of post-graduate programmes.

Since 2018, the regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 14 November 2018 on the second level descriptors of Polish Qualifications Framework typical for qualifications awarded in higher education after the award of full qualification at level 4 - levels 6-8 issued on the basis of an authorisation included in the act on the Integrated Qualifications System and the regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 27 September 2018 on the conditions for providing degree programmes form the basis for the establishment of degree programmes.

## History, profile and activities of the Agency

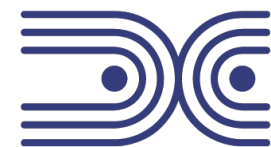
The Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) was established under the name of the State Accreditation Committee on 1 January 2002 pursuant to Article 38(1) of the Law on Higher Education of 12 September 1990 (OJ No. 65, item 385) amended on 20 July 2001. The Polish Accreditation Committee is an independent institution dedicated to quality assurance and enhancing the quality of education. PKA's activities are governed by the principles of fairness, impartiality and transparency. Upon its establishment, PKA covered with its scope all public and non-public HEIs, both these founded based on the act of 26 June 1997 on non-university higher education institutions and those operating pursuant to the act of 12 September 1990 law on higher education. PKA assumed all responsibilities of the State Accreditation Committee for Higher Vocational Education (Polish: Komisja Akredytacyjna Wyższego Szkolnictwa Zawodowego (KAWSZ)) and some of the responsibilities of the General Council for Higher Education (Polish: Rada Główna Szkolnictwa Wyższego (RGSW)) pertaining to giving opinions on applications for the establishment of new HEIs and their academic units, fields of study and occupational majors, yet unlike KAWSZ and RGSW, PKA was given broader powers, and evaluations made by the Committee are far more binding for the Minister than it was the case with opinions given by KAWSZ and RGSW.

If one is to attempt making a historical analysis of the operations of PKA, you can divide its activities into five stages, which result mainly from subsequent amendments of legal regulations governing higher education sector in Poland. Thanks to expanding PKA's competencies so that it meets the requirements of evolving system of higher education and quality assurance in Poland, the subsequent amendments of law have strengthened the position of PKA in the system of higher education. Also the organisational structure of PKA was subject to change with subsequent stages of its development, however, the integrity of its objectives was preserved and expressed in its Mission Statement ([Appendix no.3](#)).

**Table 8.** Outline of history of the Polish Accreditation Committee

Stage	PKA' term of office	Legal basis	Tasks
Stage 1  2002-2005	1. 2002-2004	Act of 12 September 1990 Law on Higher Education	The minister responsible for higher education appointed the Polish Accreditation Committee for a three-year term of office, i.e. the years 2002-2004, from among candidates presented by HEIs, General Council for Higher Education, scientific, professional and artistic associations, as well as employers' organisations.

	2. 2005-2007		<p>Tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. evaluating the quality of education in a given field of study,</li> <li>2. presenting opinions and motions in matters including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the establishment of higher education institutions;</li> <li>2) granting to HEIs authorisations to provide programmes in specific fields of study and at specific levels of study;</li> <li>3) the establishment by a HEI of an academic unit, including a branch campus;</li> <li>4) assigning professional majors offered by non-university higher education institutions to relevant fields of study;</li> <li>5) giving permission for the establishment and offering fields of study different from these stipulated in the regulations.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p>Stage 2</p> <p>2005-2011</p>	3. 2008- 2011	Act of 27 July 2005 Law on Higher Education	<p>Tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. evaluating the quality of education in a given field of study,</li> <li>2. presenting opinions and motions in matters including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the establishment of higher education institutions;</li> <li>2) authorisation for a higher education institution to provide degree programmes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) in a given field and at a given level of study,</li> <li>b) in the form of a macro field of study,</li> <li>c) in the form of interdisciplinary programmes,</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) extending the permits for the operation of non-public HEIs;</li> <li>4) granting the existing or newly established branch campuses of a HEI the authorisation to provide education, if the application pertains to a unit/HEI authorised to provide second cycle degree programmes or long cycle programmes;</li> <li>5) the establishment of a HEI in the Republic of Poland by a foreign HEI.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>



<p>Stage 3</p> <p>2011-2016</p>	<p>4. 2012-2015</p>	<p>Act of 18 March 2011 amending the Law on Higher Education, amending the Law on Academic Degrees and Title and Degrees and Title in the Arts, and amending certain other laws.</p> <p>and</p> <p>Act of 11 July 2014 amending the act - Law on higher education and certain other acts, which introduced, among other things, significant changes in the procedure for the examination of requests for the reconsideration of the matter by the Committee.</p>	<p>Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. programme evaluation, including the evaluation of initial teacher training programmes;</li> <li>2. institutional evaluation, including the quality evaluation of third cycle programmes and non-degree postgraduate programmes;</li> <li>3. giving opinions in matters pertaining to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the compliance with the requirements for the provision of programmes as laid down in the legislation;</li> <li>2) the re-granting of suspended authorisations to provide programmes in specific fields of study and at specific levels of study;</li> <li>3) the establishment of higher education institutions;</li> <li>4) the granting of authorisations to academic units of higher education institutions to provide programmes in specific fields of study and at specific levels of study where the field of study concerned covers an academic area and domains of science or fine arts which do not correspond to authorisations to confer post-doctoral degree (doktor habilitowany) held by a given unit;</li> <li>5) the establishment of a higher education institution or a branch campus in the territory of the Republic of Poland by a foreign higher education institution;</li> <li>6) the quality of education provided by the unit applying for the authorization to grant the doktor and doktor habilitowany degrees.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p>Stage 4</p> <p>2016-2018</p>	<p>5. 2016-2019</p>	<p>Act of 23 June 2016 amending the act - Law on higher education and certain other acts</p>	<p>Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. programme evaluation, including the evaluation of initial teacher training programmes;</li> <li>2. giving opinions in matters pertaining to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the compliance with the requirements for the provision of programmes as laid down in the legislation;</li> <li>2) the re-granting of suspended authorisations to provide programmes in specific fields of study and at specific levels of study;</li> <li>3) the establishment of higher education institutions;</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

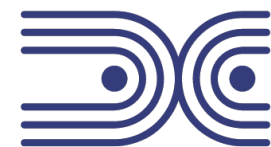


			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) the granting of authorisations to academic units of higher education institutions to provide programmes in specific fields of study and at specific levels of study where the field of study concerned covers an academic area and domains of science or fine arts which do not correspond to authorisations to confer post-doctoral degree (doktor habilitowany) held by a given unit;</li> <li>5) the establishment of a higher education institution or a branch campus in the territory of the Republic of Poland by a foreign higher education institution;</li> <li>6) the quality of education provided by the unit applying for the authorization to grant the doktor and doktor habilitowany degrees.</li> </ul>
Stage 5  2019 -	–  2020-2023	Act of 20 July 2018 – the Law on Higher Education and Science	<p>Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. expressing opinions on the entry of a non-public higher education institutions in the register;</li> <li>2. conducting a programme evaluation;</li> <li>3. expressing opinions on meeting the conditions for conducting studies in a specific field, level and profile, and the relationship of studies with the higher education institutions 's strategy;</li> <li>4. conducting a comprehensive evaluation;</li> <li>5. conducting analytical and training activities as well as disseminating good practices in the field of the quality of education;</li> <li>6. cooperation with national and international institutions and organizations operating in the area of higher education;</li> <li>7. giving opinions on other matters presented by the minister.</li> </ul>

Source: Authors

**At the first stage** of PKA's operations, legal and operational bases were formed, which due to the large number of tasks, were urgently needed. The Committee adopted its Statutes during a plenary sessions on 11 January 2002, i.e. only a few days after the award of the appointment by the minister. Next, indispensable internal regulations were adopted. PKA, being a successor of RGSW and KAWSZ was forced to immediately start giving opinions on applications and undertake quality assurance activities.

**The second stage** was very important for the operations of the Committee due to the changes introduced to the system of higher education, including quality assurance, as introduced by the Act of

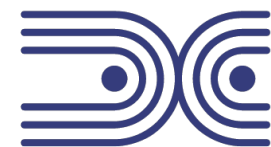


27 July 2005 Law on Higher Education. The Committee's term of office was extended by one year, and its members were joined by a section for military sciences and President of Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland, who also became a Presidium member by virtue of law. Due to the fact that the act on non-university higher education institutions and military schools was repealed and a uniform system of higher education governed by a single act was formed, the powers of the Committee also covered military and police schools and degree programmes offered by them. At the time when ENQA published its Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Education in European Higher Education Area (ESG 2005), PKA commenced the adaptation process, which over the next years was verified by Stocktaking Reports aimed at the review of the implementation of the principles of the Bologna Process in individual countries. The conclusions of the report were positive for PKA.

**The third stage** of the Committee's operations commenced with the amendment of the Law on Higher Education adopted on 18 March 2011. The first modification was changing its name from the State Accreditation Committee to the Polish Accreditation Committee. The amended law stipulated in more detail the organisation and role of PKA and emphasised its operational independence. A rule has been introduced that when appointing members of the Committee, the Minister should respect the requirement that all areas of study are represented and should ensure that at least 30% of the number of Committee members are women. The minimum and maximum number of Committee members has been increased. Due to the fact that representatives of employers' organisations have been appointed as Committee members, two of them sit on the Presidium of PKA. Moreover, the composition and method of appointing individual sections have changed. From 2012, the sections are formed by the President and correspond to individual areas of study. Two types of evaluation have been introduced; programme and institutional one. PKA has also covered third cycle and post-graduate programmes with quality assurance activities. The provision naming the ratings; outstanding, positive, conditional and negative, has been introduced to the law. So far, this provision had only been included in PKA's Statutes. The law has stipulated that PKA's opinion on the quality of education run by the HEI's unit is obligatory in the authorization process of awarding degrees and titles. Moreover, the law confirmed PKA's right to stipulate in its Statutes detailed criteria for the evaluations. Due to the introduction of National Qualifications Framework, the scope of opinions presented by PKA has been expanded, along with the impact the Committee has on education at the stages preceding the achievement of learning outcomes.

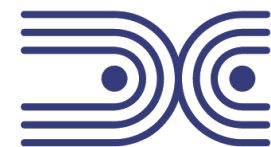
The amendment of the act in 2014 introduced changes in the organisational structure of the Polish Accreditation Committee by distinguishing a separate Appeals Body. Membership in the Appeals Body cannot be combined with membership in a section operating in a given area of study, and at least one of its members represents each of such areas. Moreover, the rules for appointing members of the Committee were modified by introducing a provision stating that during each term of office not more than 50% of the members of Committee are appointed from among persons acting as members of the Committee in the previous term of office, taking into account the evaluation of their work by the Presidium of the Committee. Another modification directly concerned the functioning of the Committee and consisted in granting the Minister powers to determine, by way of a regulation, basic criteria and the scope of programme and institutional evaluation, and not only the conditions for such evaluations as it was to date. A provision has been added stipulating that the Statutes of the Committee will come into force, if the Minister does not submit reservations concerning its legal compliance within thirty days of the receipt of the Statutes. It should be emphasised that the law confirmed PKA's right to stipulate in its Statutes detailed criteria for the evaluations. The amendment of the act resulted in the need for the Minister to issue or amend many implementing acts, including these concerning the conditions for programme and institutional evaluations and conditions for the provision of degree programmes in a specific field and at a specific level of study.

Moreover, a possibility for HEIs to validate qualifications obtained outside of the system of higher education has been introduced. It was assumed that the senates of individual HEIs would define the procedures for the validation of learning outcomes, including the rules, mode and method of the



appointment and operation of committees responsible for verifying such outcomes, whereas the Polish Accreditation Committee was entrusted with quality assurance of the operations of such a system. It was also stated that only academic units of higher education institutions, which were awarded by the Polish Accreditation Committee at least a positive rating of their programmes in a relevant field and level of study and degree profile - and if no assessment was conducted for such a field of study – an academic unit of a higher education institution, which is authorised to confer a degree of doctor (doctor) in the area of study and discipline, to which a given field of study is assigned can validate learning outcomes. The amended law complemented the reform of higher education launched in 2011 in terms of the integration of HEIs with their socio-economic environments, and presented different requirements concerning education as part of practical and general profile by, among other things, committing HEIs to increase the number of hours of student placements offered as part of practical degree profiles, i.e. it promoted closer cooperation with persons with practical experience. Moreover, provisions have been added stipulating that academic units, which are not authorised to confer the degree of doctor (doctor) or do not have a positive rating of education quality resulting from an evaluation of a given degree programme by the Polish Accreditation Committee are obliged to provide degree programmes with practical profile. Equally important were the amendments of provisions on revoking and suspending the authorisation to provide degree programmes granted to public and non-public HEIs and on the liquidation of non-public HEIs, e.g. as a consequence of their evading the evaluation by the Polish Accreditation Committee. Moreover, provisions were introduced, which allow to restrict the enrolment for studies provided in negligent way or the ones not respecting the rights of students. It was enacted that information about HEIs against which proceedings were initiated in order to revoke or suspend their authorisations to provide degree programmes or to revoke the permission to establish a non-public HEI or to liquidate it or information about HEIs, which were awarded a negative rating by Polish Accreditation Committee would be included on a warning list published by the Minister on the ministry's website and in the POL-on system. The amended law imposed an obligation on the Polish Accreditation Committee to publish on its website not only resolutions concerning its programme and institutional evaluations together with grounds for them, but also reports of evaluation panels within fourteen days from the date of a resolution becoming final. In addition, in order to meet the requirements imposed in the European Higher Education Area concerning the independent character and reliability of theses written by students, an obligation has been imposed on higher education institutions to check the theses using plagiarism detection systems and to enter them to the repository of written theses immediately after the final exams. In accordance with the amended law, the repository is included in the Information System on Higher Education, which forms a part of the Integrated Information System on Science and Higher Education POL-on run by the Minister of Science and Higher Education. The system was also used for the needs of amended procedure for monitoring the careers of graduates, which no longer is the responsibility of the HEIs. A Poland-wide monitoring system managed by the Minister in cooperation with the Social Insurance Institution (Polish: Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych (ZUS)) was introduced instead. Each year, the Ministry transfers data on graduates from the Integrated Information System on Science and Higher Education POL-on to the Social Insurance Institution, where it is aggregated with data determining the status history of a graduate in the labour market. Next, the Ministry analyses so obtained data by creating a database of information about the employability of graduates of individual HEIs and degree programmes. This change was introduced because of the need to obtain objective and comparable data on careers of graduates and provide it to the public, government and candidates for studies. However, the solution does not prevent HEIs from making their own analyses of graduate careers in order to prepare offers of degree programmes possibly best tailored to the growing requirements of the labour market and the needs of employers, and to improve the quality of the education provided to students.

When analysing **the fourth stage** of the Committee's operations, it should be stressed that in 2016 the Law on Higher Education was amended three times, including by the act of 23 June 2016 amending the act - Law on higher education and certain other acts (OJ of 2016, Item 1311), which introduced

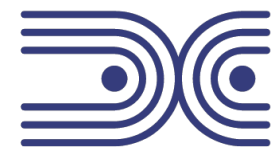


major changes affecting the Committee. In connection with Article 1(13)(b) of the Law, The Polish Accreditation Committee no longer conducts quality assurance activities related to the operations of academic units of HEIs (institutional evaluation). This change resulted from a broad discussion in the academic community, which identified too much bureaucratisation of the provisions causing excessive load on HEIs resulting from formal requirements related to the process of creating internal quality assurance systems, often without sufficient focus on the actual quality of education.

In the opinion of academic community, the concept of institutional evaluation should be redefined in cooperation with all stakeholders and its introduction should be preceded by a well prepared pilot procedure. Institutional evaluations were conducted by the Committee from 2011, and their suspension was an important topic of internal discussions held by the sections operating in the scope of individual areas of study and individual expert groups at the Committee. During internal discussions some Committee members and experts said that external quality assessment aimed at the verification of effectiveness and comprehensiveness of mechanisms operating within HEIs focusing on current and ongoing monitoring of the quality of education and research, and that it should be continued and should remain within the remit of the Committee. Moreover, some of them raised concerns that the suspension of institutional evaluation could result in abandoning the improvement of internal education quality assurance systems and giving up by the HEIs/academic units the effective, though often labour-intensive processes focusing on education quality, which were being significantly developed over the past years. Institutional evaluation also involved external assurance of the quality of education provided as part of post-graduate and third cycle programmes. In the opinion of some of PKA members and experts, evaluation of these programmes should be provided for in the legislation. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the views of the Committee's members and the experts on the form and extent of institutional evaluation significantly vary and the discussion on the topic is continued at present, i.e. at the time when advanced works on a new law on higher education are conducted. It should be noted that the latest draft of the Law on Higher Education as for the date of the report, dated 22 January 2018, introduces a concept of comprehensive evaluation, which would include measures aimed at quality assurance at the level of HEIs, and, in particular, at ensuring its effectiveness throughout the institutions, in all disciplines, in which education is provided.

Another change important from the point of view of PKA's competences concerns abandoning the use of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and the introduction of the Polish Qualifications Framework covering the whole system of education, starting from primary school. The above legislative changes and the commencement of the process of removing excess red tape from the provisions governing the operation of the system of higher education have significantly changed the provisions contained in the regulation laying down general criteria for programme evaluation. In 2016, in accordance with its powers set out in Article 53(1) of the Law on Higher Education, the Committee developed a catalogue of programme evaluation criteria and held broad consultation on the topic. Eight general and 16 detailed criteria demonstrating compliance with general evaluation criteria of programme evaluation laid down by the Minister of Science and Higher Education in a relevant regulation were identified.

The entry into force of the Law of July 20, 2018 - Law on Higher Education and Science - marks the start of **the fifth stage** of the Polish Accreditation Committee. These changes were indicated in the Substantive change report submitted to EQAR with the application for registration renewal in 2019, as well as in the Follow-up report submitted to ENQA in 2020. It needs to be noted, that unlike previous amendments to the legal system, introduction of the Law on Higher Education and Science created completely new set of rules and regulations. Their main aim was to facilitate greater European and global competitiveness of Polish higher education institutions. Enhancement of quality of education and scientific outcomes have been the overarching principle of the new Law (called Law 2.0).



Therefore, the new legal framework introduces greater institutional autonomy in its organisational aspect. Higher education institutions received greater flexibility in reshaping their own internal structures, processes and policies. Besides PKA received new tasks, which was meant to strengthen its systematic impact on quality in Polish higher education. Moreover, introduction of a new type of external quality assurance procedure was initiated. Such significant changes required adjusting of the PKA Statute and quality assurance procedures.

Introduction of the new Law on Higher Education and Science has significantly reshaped the national policy context of PKA's operations. First of all, PKA's tasks has been significantly extended. PKA has been assigned with new tasks, which aim to stimulate the quality enhancement in Polish higher education through new type of activities. These are:

- analytical activities
- training activities
- dissemination of good practices.

Comparing the current scope of the Committee tasks with the previous one, it can be noted that currently PKA no longer issues an opinion on the reinstatement of a suspended authorization to conduct studies in a specific field, level and profile of education, nor does it prepare for the Central Commission for Degrees and Titles an opinion on the quality of education in units applying for the authorization to confer doctoral and postdoctoral degrees (the latter was in charge of, under specific regulations, until June 2020). This is due to changes in the procedure and conditions for obtaining the authority to confer doctoral and postdoctoral degrees. At present, such authorization is obtained by a HEIs that, as a result of the evaluation of the quality of scientific activity, receives the scientific category A+, A or B.

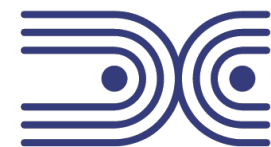
The entry into force of the new Law on Higher Education and Science has forced the need to also update regulations on studies and quality of education. The most important implementing acts affecting PKA's activities are the Ordinance of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of September 12, 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 1787) on criteria for program evaluation, the Ordinance of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of September 27, 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 681) on studies, the Ordinance of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of November 14, 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 2218) on characteristics of second-level learning outcomes for qualifications at levels 6-8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework, and a set of regulations on standards of education preparing for regulated professions.

Introduction of the new Law on Higher Education and Science, resulted also in important internal changes in the PKA activities. First of all, plenary sessions of the Polish Accreditation Committee on 13 December 2018 approved the new Statute. It introduced significant changes regarding the criteria for programme evaluation and introduction of the separate criteria for the opinion-giving procedure.

PKA has introduced the separate criteria for reviewing requests for granting permission to provide a degree programme. They follow ESG standards and are composed of the following criteria:

1. Structure of the study programme: concept of education, learning objectives and outcomes
2. Implementation of the study programme: programme contents, timetable for the implementation of the study programme, forms and organisation of classes, methods of education, student placements, organisation of the teaching and learning process
3. Admission to studies, verification of learning outcomes achievement by students, giving credit for individual semesters and years and awarding diplomas
4. Competence, experience, qualifications and the number of staff providing education. Staff development and in-service training





5. Education infrastructure and resources used in the implementation of the study programme and their improvement
6. Cooperation with social and economic stakeholders on the development, implementation and improvement of the study programme and its impact on the development of the degree programme
7. Conditions for and methods of improving the internationalisation of education provided as part of the degree programme
8. Supporting learning, social, academic or professional development of students and their entry on the labour market. Development and improvement of such support
9. Public access to information about the study programme, conditions for its implementation and achieved results
10. Quality assurance policy, designing, approving, monitoring, reviewing and improving the study programme

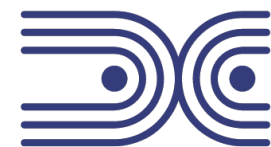
Furthermore, up to 5 quality education standards have been formulated for each of the 10 criteria.

Finally, a new procedural change has been introduced regarding the experts' panel composition. According to the Article 7 point 3. 12) of the new PKA Statutes, a student experts' section for reviewing requests will be appointed by the President of PKA from among student experts of the Committee. Article 10 point 2. 5) indicates that the Secretary of the PKA appoints the review panel and one of the reviewers must be a member of student experts' section for reviewing requests.

Moreover, since the October 2018 the reviews in the opinion-giving matters are being published on PKA's website. New PKA's Statutes also introduced new set of criteria and organizational changes regarding the programme evaluation procedure. The updated assessment framework covers all the ESG standards and is composed of 10 following criteria:

1. Structure of the study programme: concept of education, learning objectives and outcomes
2. Implementation of the study programme: programme contents, timetable for the implementation of the study programme, forms and organisation of classes, methods of education, student placements, organisation of the teaching and learning process
3. Admission to studies, verification of learning outcomes achievement by students, giving credit for individual semesters and years and awarding diplomas
4. Competence, experience, qualifications and the number of staff providing education. Staff development and in-service training programme and their improvement
5. Education infrastructure and resources used in the implementation of the study
6. Cooperation with social and economic stakeholders on the development, implementation and improvement of the study programme and its impact on the development of the degree programme
7. Conditions for and methods of improving the internationalisation of education provided as part of the degree programme
8. Supporting learning, social, academic or professional development of students and their entry on the labour market. Development and improvement of such support
9. Public access to information about the study programme, conditions for its implementation and achieved results
10. Quality assurance policy, designing, approving, monitoring, reviewing and improving the study programme.

According to the Statute, as part of the programme evaluation, the Presidium of the PKA may issue an evaluation: positive for a period of up to six years, positive for a period of up to two years, and a negative evaluation.



Shortly after all the changes resulting from the introduction of the new law and the PKA Statutes came into effect, the COVID-19 pandemic, forced further changes in PKA activities.

PKA has implemented and provided programme evaluation procedure remotely - due to the pandemic situation of SARS-Cov-2 the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee made up decision to conduct all programme evaluation procedures remotely since the beginning of new academic year 2021/2022. The adopted change only affected the mode of procedure delivery while the quality criteria and standards remained unchanged.

During the period of the emergency caused by the COVID-19 epidemic in Poland, PKA hasn't changed:

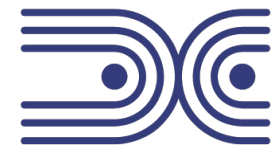
1. Detailed programme evaluation criteria stipulated in the Statute of the Polish Accreditation Committee,
2. Detailed procedure for the programme evaluation,
3. Composition of the panel of experts,
4. Principles of conducting the site-visits, under condition that if it is impossible to hold visit on site, the site-visit may be carried out remotely,
5. The duration and schedule of the site-visit,
6. Reporting,
7. Final decision-making process.

During the period of the emergency caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, PKA has changed:

1. Conditions in which the site-visit is carried out - remote site-visit is carried out by using distance communication platform offering workspace and Video Conferencing provided by the PKA Bureau,
2. Methods of communication between the evaluation panel and the HEI and the tools used in this regard.

To facilitate the implementation of remote procedure PKA organized training activities (webinars) addressed to various group of stakeholders (PKA members, experts, secretaries of the panels, staff and HEIs). PKA, striving to implement its mission, as well as gaining valuable experience from a COVID-19 situation that unexpectedly changed the functioning of many aspects of social life, conducted a research in order to reflect, as well as to improve the remote evaluation procedure and to develop recommendations for the future. The survey was conducted in the period from February 22, 2021 to March 10, 2021 and from January 3 to January 31, 2022. In total, over 990 respondents participated in it, both from the group of HEIs representatives, PKA's members of evaluation panel and PKA's Presidium participating in such a procedure. The results of the research were presented in June 2021 to all stakeholders during the Quality Forum, initiated and organized by PKA on *"What did we learn about higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic? Quality assurance in higher education -crises and opportunities in the short and long term"*. The analysis of the results of the study showed that carrying out the site-visit with the use of the distance communication tools allows for the evaluation of the programme to validate evidence in relation to all detailed evaluation criteria. Moreover, the study confirmed that the procedure meets all European principles, norms and standards, which makes the programme evaluation process fair, reliable and equal for all participants of the process. Another key finding from the conducted research is the general observation that, once the pandemic and related restrictions are over, it is not expected to return to the manner of conducting site-visits in the same way as before the pandemic (in stationary format), as some elements (e.g. communication, online circulation of documents, coordination of review teams) which was designed and implemented under remote work conditions significantly improved the course of the evaluation procedure. During this time, the above-mentioned research on the remote programme evaluation procedures will be carried out in cycles by PKA.

In September 2022, due to the continuing epidemic emergency in Poland, the Presidium of the PKA decided to maintain the conduct of site-visits remotely with three exceptions: 1) in the case of programme evaluations carried out at the request of the Minister of Education and Science referred to in § 4 clause 4 point 2 of the Statutes, 2) approval by the PKA's Presidium a the justified request of the section referred to in § 3 points 1 and 2 of the Statute, supported by the premises submitted by the members of the section or the section for teacher education to conduct a full-time programme evaluation, 3) approval by the PKA's Presidium a the justified request of the section referred to in § 3



points 1 and 2 of the Statutes, supported by premises submitted by the HEIs accepted by the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee. It is not planned the resignation from stationary procedures after the end of the pandemic.

The complex evaluation is PKA's task in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education and Science, but so far, the basic criteria for the assessment, determining further activities of PKA, i.e. defining the detailed assessment procedure and detailed criteria, have not been issued by the Minister of Education and Science.

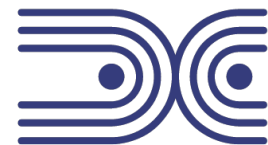
## Mission and Strategy

The Polish Accreditation Committee carries out its mission by conducting obligatory programme evaluations and by giving opinions on applications for the authorisation to provide degree programmes submitted by higher education institutions. PKA considers itself a partner in the education quality assurance process in Polish system of higher education. The overriding value guiding the work of the Committee is common good, because the quality and effectiveness of education significantly contribute to the development of intellectual capital and civil society. The Polish Accreditation Committee feels accountable for the decisions it makes, as they impact on the development of higher education. PKA enhances its credibility thanks to objective evaluations and opinions, professional activities, observing the principle of openness and transparency of the procedures, presenting clear arguments, and respecting ethical principles and academic tradition. PKA is a platform for cooperation and dialogue for all stakeholders interested in acting on behalf of ensuring top quality higher education. The Committee undertakes cooperation initiatives in this area, also in an international arena. It actively cooperates with other accreditation agencies and international organisations on the implementation of the Bologna Process and the development of European Higher Education Area.

The Committee has adopted a Strategy ([Appendix no. 4](#)), which will be implemented until 2025, and which stipulates operational goals and tasks allowing for the achievement of strategic goals in the areas presented below:

- Strategic Area 1 - PKA as an upholder of higher education quality standards
  - performing its basic tasks in the scope of programme evaluation and opinions on the fulfilment of conditions for the provision of degree programmes at a given level and profile;
  - developing competences of PKA members and experts;
  - developing the organization of work of evaluation panels;
  - increasing the efficiency and transparency of accreditation procedures.
- Strategic Area 2 - PKA as a partner in fostering quality culture
  - developing analytical and research activity;
  - intensifying dialogue with external and internal stakeholders;
  - disseminating good practices in education quality assurance;
  - raising the level of accreditation procedures internationalisation;
  - developing of new forms of procedures for external evaluation of the quality of education.
- Strategic Area 3 - PKA as an active and globally recognised accreditation agency
  - developing active membership in international organisations promoting higher education quality and intensifying bilateral and multilateral cooperation;
  - intensifying publishing activity and measures aimed at the promotion of PKA operations in an international arena;
  - maintaining formal status of PKA in an international arena.





The development of the PKA's Strategy was preceded by an internal, in-depth strategic analysis based on the SWOT methodology which included the examination of its internal organisational structure and external stakeholders. Besides SWOT analysis of the Polish Accreditation Committee was made using the following documents:

- Mission Statement of the Polish Accreditation Committee;
- Strategy of the Polish Accreditation Committee for the years 2020-2025;
- Declaration of Quality Policy;
- Report of the Polish Accreditation Committee on its operations during the 5th term of office, including the report on Strategy implementation in the years 2016-2019; and operations during the 6th term of office, including the report on Strategy implementation in the years 2020-2021;
- PKA's Self-Evaluation Report of 2018 and External Review Report.

Reflection and discussion on strategic matrix fields held by PKA's management and its internal stakeholders also formed a part of the SWOT analysis.

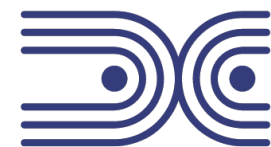
It should be emphasised that the Polish Accreditation Committee monitors the implementation of its strategy and develops in-depth analyses relating to the evaluation of the attainment of specific strategic objectives ([see Report of the Polish Accreditation Committee on its operations in the years 2016-2019](#)).

## Organisational structure of PKA

The Law on Higher Education and Science, regulation of the Minister of Education and Science on general criteria for programme evaluation, PKA Statutes, procedures, criteria and guidelines constitute a consistent set of complementary regulations, which enable PKA to efficiently, on time, and in a reliable, objective and transparent manner perform the tasks, which have been defined in the Law on Higher Education and Science.

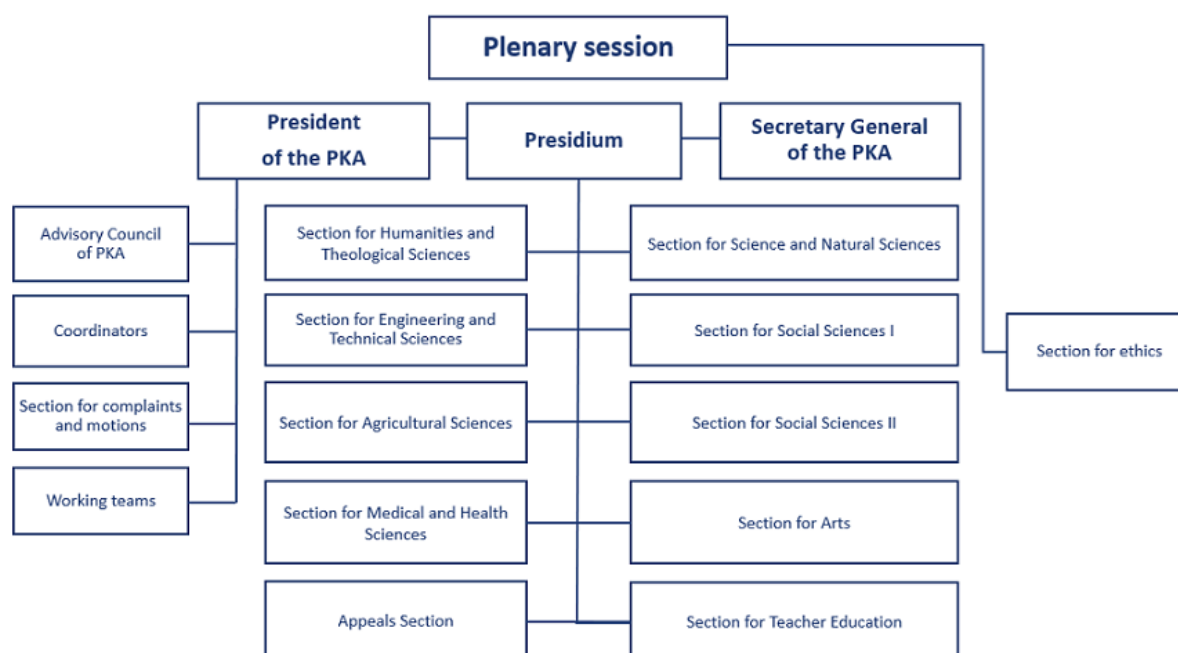
The Mission Statement ([Appendix no. 3](#)), which describes the role the Committee plays in the system of higher education, is the main programme document of the Polish Accreditation Committee. Act of 20 July 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science constitutes legal basis for the establishment and operation of PKA. The act stipulates the body that appoints the Committee and method of appointing it, the number of its members, duration of the term of office, the Committee's bodies and their basic competencies, organisational structure, tasks, method for adopting resolutions and principles for applicants' appeals against them, as well as administrative and financial support provided to the Committee. General criteria for programme evaluation are set out in a regulation of the Minister of Education and Science. The scope of PKA's opinions on granting a HEI the authorisation to provide degree programmes at a given level and with a given degree profile is set out in Article 53 of the Law on Higher Education and in Clause 9 of the regulation of the Minister of Education and 27 September 2018 (Journal of Laws 2021, item 661) on the regarding the study. In accordance with its powers, PKA has stipulated the procedures binding when making evaluations and giving opinions on requests presented by the Minister, as well as detailed evaluation criteria and instructions, guidelines for conducting site visits and preparing self-assessment reports by HEIs, and templates of opinions and site visit reports.

Pursuant to the article 251 of the Law on Higher Education and Science, PKA's members are appointed by the Minister from among candidates proposed by HEIs, the General Council for Science and Higher Education, the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, the Conference of Rectors of Public Professional Universities, the Conference of Rectors of Vocational Schools in Poland, the



Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee, the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland, state-wide scientific associations and employers' organisations. The Committee is composed of maximum 100 members. The chair of the Polish Accreditation Committee and a member of the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee may not hold office for more than 2 consecutive terms. (article 253(5)). A member of the Polish Accreditation Committee may be a person who: holds at least a doctor's degree, has academic achievements and, for a candidate proposed by an employers' organisation - higher education (Article 251 (5)). However, this requirement does not apply to the President of Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland, who is a PKA member by the virtue of law (Article 251 (2). The chair of the Polish Accreditation Committee shall state the expiration of the tenure of a member of the Polish Accreditation Committee in the event of: 1) his/her death; 2) submitting a resignation by him/her; 3) his/her failure to submit a vetting declaration or vetting information; 4) failure to meet at least one of the requirements specified in Art. 251 sections 5 and 6; 5) failure to participate in the work of the Polish Accreditation Committee for a period longer than 6 months. (Article 252 (1)).

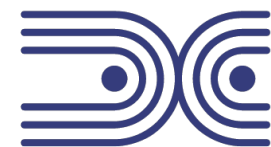
**Figure 8.** PKA's organizational chart



In the years 2002-2005, the Committee could have up to 70 members, in 2005 up to 80, and from 2011 up to 90. During the 6th term of office, PKA has 100 members. According to article 254 (1): The Polish Accreditation Committee shall be composed of: 1) sections operating within the fields of science and a section for teachers education; 2) the appeals body. When appointing the members of the Committee, the Minister considers the requirement that they represent all areas of study.

The organisational structure of the Committee comprises 10 Sections, including eight sections responsible for individual areas of science (referred to as 'Sections'):

- 1) Humanities and Theological Sciences;
- 2) Social Sciences I;
- 3) Social Sciences II;
- 4) Science and Natural Sciences;
- 5) Agricultural Sciences;



- 6) Engineering and Technical Sciences,
- 7) Medical and Health Sciences,
- 8) Arts,
- Teacher Education
- and Appeals Body.

The Sections formulate opinions and proposals on matters included in the scope of operations of the Committee and their opinions form the basis for decisions taken by the Presidium. In their work, sections' members are assisted by a group of almost 930 experts and secretaries of evaluation panels appointed by the PKA President in accordance with the procedure for the mode and criteria for the appointment of experts. PKA works in plenary sessions and through its bodies. In accordance with the Law on Higher Education and Science, the Polish Accreditation Committee has the following bodies:

- one-man bodies: the President of the Committee;
- a collegial body: the Presidium of the Committee.

PKA's President is appointed and dismissed by the Minister. The Presidium is composed of: the President, Secretary, President of the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland, one representative of employers' organisations and nine Chairs of Sections. The Chair of the Appeals Body attends the meetings of the Presidium, during which resolutions are adopted on requests for reconsideration of a matter, and has a voting right during such meetings. The powers of individual bodies are set out in the Statutes of PKA.

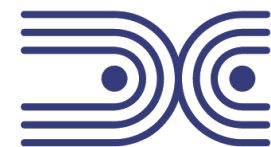
Moreover, the organisational structure of the Committee includes the Section for Ethics, to which Committee members and experts are accountable for violating the standards of conduct laid down in the Code of Ethics ([Appendix no. 5](#)).

The organisational structure of PKA is complemented by Advisory Council established in accordance with Article 8 of the Statutes of the Polish Accreditation Committee and according to the Article 7 (19) another two working teams: For complains and mentions and Program Council.

The Bureau of the Polish Accreditation Committee provides administrative and financial services to the Committee. From 1 January 2006, the Bureau is an independent state budget unit. Organisational structure and detailed scope of activities of the Bureau are laid down in its organisational regulations. At present, 23 employees work at the Bureau of the Polish Accreditation Committee. In 2022, state budget funds allocated to PKA for the performance of its statutory tasks amounted to PLN 13,855,000.00, which amounted to ca. 0.00049 % of the state budget funds allocated to higher education in the budget law. The allocated funding was mainly used for:

- programme evaluation procedure;
- opinion-giving procedure;
- research, analytical, teaching and communication activities taken by the Committee;
- international cooperation of the Committee;
- making lump sum payments to the President, Secretary, and paying remuneration to Committee members for attending the sessions of the Committee;
- maintaining material resources of the Bureau and the Committee.

HEIs do not bear financial costs related to quality assurance procedures followed by the Polish Accreditation Committee and giving opinions to the applications. All costs related with external quality assurance, such as: business travel, accommodation and remuneration costs for experts are covered with the funds at the disposal of the PKA's Bureau.



## Higher education quality assurance activities of the Agency

In accordance with Article 258(1) of the Law on Higher Education and Science, PKA tasks include:

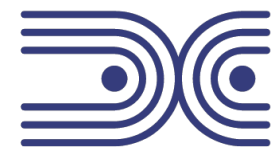
1. expressing opinions on the entry of a non-public higher education institutions in the register;
2. expressing opinions on meeting the conditions for conducting studies in a specific field, level and profile, and the relationship of studies with the higher education institutions 's strategy;
3. conducting a programme evaluation;
4. conducting a comprehensive evaluation;
5. conducting analytical and training activities as well as disseminating good practices in the field of the quality of education;
6. cooperation with national and international institutions and organizations operating in the area of higher education;
7. giving opinions on other matters presented by the minister.

In accordance with the regulation of the Minister Education and Science of 12 September 2018, general criteria for programme evaluation include the ones pertaining to:

1. Structure of the study programme: concept of education, learning objectives and outcomes
2. Implementation of the study programme: programme contents, timetable for the implementation of the study programme, forms and organisation of classes, methods of education, student placements, organisation of the teaching and learning process
3. Admission to studies, verification of learning outcomes achievement by students, giving credit for individual semesters and years and awarding diplomas
4. Competence, experience, qualifications and the number of staff providing education. Staff development and in-service training
5. Education infrastructure and resources used in the implementation of the study programme and their improvement
6. Cooperation with social and economic stakeholders on the development, implementation and improvement of the study programme and its impact on the development of the degree programme
7. Conditions for and methods of improving the internationalisation of education provided as part of the degree programme
8. Supporting learning, social, academic or professional development of students and their entry on the labour market. Development and improvement of such support
9. Public access to information about the study programme, conditions for its implementation and achieved results
10. Quality assurance policy, designing, approving, monitoring, reviewing and improving the study programme

When conducting programme evaluation, the Polish Accreditation Committee takes into consideration accreditations and certificates obtained as a result of reviews carried out by international and national agencies evaluating selected areas of education and by accreditation agencies registered in the European Quality Assurance Register or by agencies with whom it has concluded agreements on the recognition of accreditation decisions.

Besides in the case of conducting programme evaluation procedures in the foreign branches of Polish HEIs abroad or giving opinions on applications for establishment of such branches abroad, the procedure and criteria are identical to that carried out with reference to national providers because the provisions of the Law on Higher Education and Science remain still in force.



In 2018, in accordance with its powers set out in Article 253(1) of the Law on Higher Education and Science, PKA developed a catalogue of programme evaluation criteria and held broad consultation on the topic. Ten general criteria and subordinated to them quality education standard demonstrating compliance with general evaluation criteria of programme evaluation laid down by the Minister of Science and Higher Education in a relevant regulation were identified. Moreover, criteria and conditions for the award of assessments, which specify the rules for the award of the following ratings: positive and negative, have been developed. Programme evaluation criteria and the criteria and conditions for the award of assessments were adopted at a plenary session of the Polish Accreditation Committee and form an annex to the Statutes of the Committee. Moreover, a template self-assessment report, which was approved after holding broad consultation with stakeholders, and templates of site visit reports and opinions were developed.

In accordance with the Statutes, another evaluation is conducted after 6 years if a positive rating was previously awarded, unless there are reasons to conduct them at an earlier date.

Evaluations made by the Committee, both in the past and today, result in specific consequences for HEIs or their academic units. At present, according to article 248: Should the Polish Accreditation Committee give a negative evaluation of the quality of education in a field of study, a higher education institution referred to in Art. 53 sections 7 to 9 shall cease the conduct of degree programmes in that field of study at the end of the semester in which the resolution becomes final. If there are less than 3 months of the semester remaining, a higher education institution shall cease the conduct of studies in that field of study at the end of the following semester. Moreover, the Minister may withdraw the permission to establish studies in a specific field of study, level and profile if PKA issued a negative assessment of the quality of education. (Article 56 (1)). In addition, Minister shall, by way of an administrative decision, refuse to renew the entry in the register to the non-public HEIs if PKA has issued a negative assessment of the quality of education in at least half of the fields of study offered by the higher education institution (Article 41(4)).

The site visit reports drawn by PKA constitute a compendium of knowledge on the standing of HEIs in the community; their role and position in the education market; their concepts of education and their implementation; internal quality assurance systems applied; academic teachers and students of the evaluated field of study; research activity; international cooperation; teaching and research facilities; and student matters and public access to information about the study programme. This information is useful to the Minister who takes the decision.

External quality assurance activities conducted by the Committee help HEIs identify their strengths and weaknesses and develop improvement and remedial action plans, which are of benefit to them. During following evaluation, the Committee surveys how, to what extent and with what result HEI authorities have used the acquired knowledge in day-to-day quality management. The dates for subsequent evaluations are dependent on the degree to which the requirements stipulated in PKA standards are met.

The scope of PKA's opinions on granting a HEI the authorisation to provide degree programmes at a given level and with a given degree profile is set out in Article 53(3-7) a of the Law on Higher Education and Science and Clause 9 of the regulation of the Minister of Education and 27 September 2018 on the regarding the study. The opinions given by the Committee are not legally binding for the Minister.

In accordance with the regulation of the Minister Education and Science of 12 September 2018, general criteria for opinions on the fulfilment of conditions for the provision of degree programmes at a given level and profile as well as on the relevance of degree programmes to the strategy of a higher education institution include the ones pertaining to:

1. Structure of the study programme: concept of education, learning objectives and outcomes
2. Implementation of the study programme: programme contents, timetable for the implementation of the study programme, forms and organisation of classes, methods of education, student placements, organisation of the teaching and learning process
3. Admission to studies, verification of learning outcomes achievement by students, giving credit for individual semesters and years and awarding diplomas
4. Competence, experience, qualifications and the number of staff providing education. Staff development and in-service training programme and their improvement
5. Education infrastructure and resources used in the implementation of the study
6. Cooperation with social and economic stakeholders on the development, implementation and improvement of the study programme and its impact on the development of the degree programme
7. Conditions for and methods of improving the internationalisation of education provided as part of the degree programme
8. Supporting learning, social, academic or professional development of students and their entry on the labour market. Development and improvement of such support
9. Public access to information about the study programme, conditions for its implementation and achieved results
10. Quality assurance policy, designing, approving, monitoring, reviewing and improving the study programme

The Polish Accreditation Committee - being an opinion-making body - takes an active part in legislative works of the government, for whom it prepares opinions on draft bills and regulations. The Committee considers the participation in the development and improvement of legal regulations governing the higher education system as its obligation and pays due diligence and attention to the performance of these tasks.

### Data illustrating PKA operations

In the period 2002-2022, PKA made 8795 programme evaluations, (on average 439 evaluations per year) and awarded 226 outstanding ratings, 6895 positive ratings, 707 conditional ratings and 237 negative ones (forming respectively ca. 2,55%, 78,03%, 8,63% and 2,70%).<sup>6</sup> Table 9 and present detailed data in this scope. Moreover, in the period 2011-2017, PKA made 265 institutional evaluations and awarded 23 outstanding ratings, 233 positive ratings, 8 conditional ratings and 1 negative rating (forming respectively ca. 9,5%, 87,9%, 3% and 01,3%) As far as opinions on applications are concerned, in the period 2002-2017, PKA issued 8708 opinions, including 3964 positive ones, 2870 negative ones and 150 opinions, which were defined as opinions without a positive assessment. Table 9 present relevant data in this respect.

<sup>6</sup> In the period from 2002 to 2020, PKA could issue a rating: outstanding, positive, conditional and negative. Starting in 2020, the scale includes only positive and negative ratings.

**Table 9.** Number of cases processed in each term

	Years	Programme	Insitiutional	Opinions	Appel	All
I term	2002-2004	985		2049		<b>3034</b>
II term	2005-2007	1405		1307		<b>2712</b>
III term	2008-2011	2320		1868		<b>4188</b>
IV term	2012-2015	1361	242	1220	224	<b>3047</b>
V term	2016-2019	1382	23	1162	396	<b>2963</b>
VI term	1.01.2020-1.12.2022	1344		1109	408	<b>2861</b>
<b>All</b>		<b>8797</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>8715</b>	<b>1028</b>	<b>18 805</b>

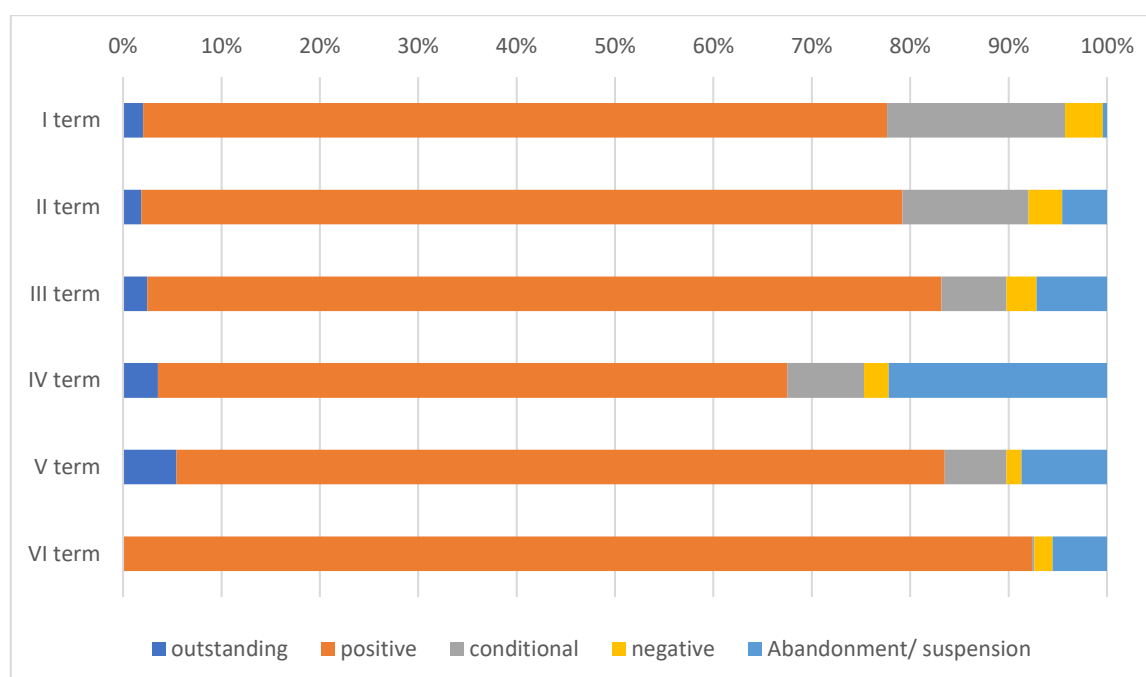
Source: Authors

**Table 10.** Results of programme evaluations by term

	Outstanding	Positive	Conditional	Negative	Abandonment/suspension	All
I term	20	745	178	38	4	<b>985</b>
II term	26	1087	180	48	64	<b>1405</b>
III term	57	1873	153	71	166	<b>2320</b>
IV term	48	871	106	34	302	<b>1361</b>
V term	75	1079	87	21	120	<b>1382</b>
VI term	0	1241	3	25	75	<b>1344</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>6896</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>8797</b>

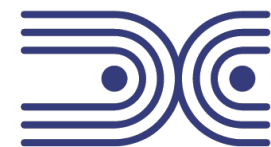
Source: Authors

**Figure 10.** Results of programme evaluations by term in precents



Source: Authors





As far as opinions on applications are concerned, in the period 2002-2022, PKA issued 8708 opinions, including 4863 positive ones, 3695 negative ones and 150 opinions, which were defined as opinions without consideration. Table 11 present relevant data in this respect.

**Table 11.** Opinions on applications given by the Polish Accreditation Committee

	Positive	Negative	Without consideration	All
I term	1032	1017	0	<b>2049</b>
II term	699	551	57	<b>1307</b>
III term	1071	707	90	<b>1868</b>
IV term	834	384	2	<b>1220</b>
V term	675	486	1	<b>1162</b>
VI term	555	554	0	<b>1109</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>4865</b>	<b>3699</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>8715</b>

Source: Authors

The Appeal Body was established in 2014. Since then, it has processed 1020 requests for reconsideration. Most of them concerned requests for opinions on the fulfilment of conditions for the provision of degree programmes at a given level and profile- 804 of which the vast majority of 454 upheld the original decision of the PKA Presidium. In the case of programme evaluations, it issued a total of 216 resolutions on the request for reconsideration - 146 of which upheld the original decision of the PKA Presidium.

**Table 12.** Appeals considered by the Polish Accreditation Committee

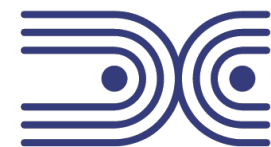
	Programme and institutional evaluation			Opinions given proces		All
	Maintained	Considered	Left unconsidered	Maintained	Considered	
IV term	28	31		76	89	<b>224</b>
V term	58	21	2	174	141	<b>396</b>
2020	12	3	0	89	51	<b>408</b>
2021	32	9	0	55	44	
2022 (till 1.12.)	16	5	0	64	28	
<b>All</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>1028</b>

## PART II – FOCUS AREA

### ESG Standard 3.3 Independence

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of their operations without third party influence.





### Evidence proving that the standard has been met:

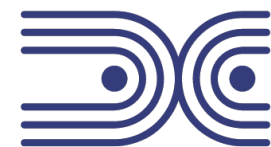
- Operational independence and organizational autonomy of the Polish Accreditation Committee has been guaranteed by the law in the Art. 251 (1) act of 20 July 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science.
- Organizational arrangements and operational procedures of PKA, specific powers of its bodies, detailed criteria and procedure for evaluation, and the method for the appointment of reviewers are laid down in the Statutes adopted in PKA's plenary assembly.
- Strategic decisions remain the competence of Presidium and plenary assembly of PKA (i.e. Strategy, Statute, detailed criteria and evaluation procedures, quality standards, decisions on processes' results, selection of candidates for experts).
- Candidates for PKA's members are presented by various stakeholders, statement of the expiry of the mandate of a member of the Polish Accreditation Committee which may only take place in the cases specified in Art. 252 (2) Act of July 20, 2018 - Law on Higher Education and Science, constitutes the exclusive competence of the PKA's President.
- External experts are appointed by autonomous decisions of PKA according to the procedure stipulated in PKA's Statute. The process of selection and appointment of experts is transparent, multilayered and is not affected by state authorities, HEIs or other stakeholders.
- PKA is independent and acts autonomously. It has full responsibility for its operations and the outcomes without third party influence.
- The decision-making process of formal outcome is independent - PKA adopts independent resolutions, and no external institution can impact the decision-making process.
- Relevant stakeholders background, particularly students take part in quality assurance processes, as well as in decision-making and / or consultative-advisory bodies.
- The system check-and-balance is built in multilayered decision-making process and competences of individual and collegiate bodies. Its effectiveness has been confirmed in practice by PKA.

### **Organizational independence**

Independence of the Committee on the strength of the binding law was ensured in Article 251 of the Law on Higher Education and Science stipulating that *"the Committee is an independent institution dedicated to enhancing the quality of education"*. At the same time, pursuant to Article 256, the Committee has retained the right to develop on its own detailed evaluation criteria, procedures, rules of experts' selections.

### **Operational Independence**

The Committee enjoys autonomy in shaping its operational solutions. On the strength of powers granted in the Law on Higher Education and Science, organisational arrangements and operational procedures, specific powers of the Committee's bodies, detailed evaluation criteria and procedures, and the method of appointing reviewers are regulated in the Statutes adopted in a plenary assembly of PKA. Moreover, all the rules concerning the structure and tasks performed by the Bureau, and the precise remit of the Bureau and its organisational structure are specified in its organisational regulations provided by the President of the Committee (Article 257 of the Law on Higher Education). Since 2014 the Minister's been authorized to determine, by way of a regulation, general criteria and the scope of evaluation, while leaving to the Committee the powers to determine detailed criteria and mode of evaluation. As a result of this, PKA, when determining detailed criteria for programme



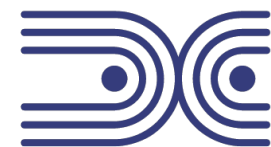
evaluation, is obliged to consider general criteria laid down by the Minister of Education and Science. Moreover, the Statutes of the Committee will come into force, if the Minister does not submit reservations concerning its legal compliance within thirty days of the receipt of the Statutes by plenary assembly of PKA.

PKA members are appointed by the Minister of Education and Science from among candidates presented by the HEIs, the General Council for Science and Higher Education, the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, the Conference of Rectors of Public Professional Universities, the Conference of Rectors of Vocational Schools in Poland, the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee, the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland, nationwide scientific associations and employers' organisations. By the virtue of law, the President of the Students Parliament is also the PKA's member. A Committee's member mandate may be expired only in the cases specified by the law, which limits the possibility for intervening in the internal staffing policy of PKA and affecting its governance rules.

In accordance with the Art. 253 (4) Act of July 20, 2018 - Law on Higher Education and Science: ***The President of the Polish Accreditation Committee shall be appointed from among its members and dismissed by the Minister.*** It should be noted that dismissal from the position of the PKA's President is not the same as declaration of the expiry of the mandate of PKA's member, which may only take place in the cases specified in Art.252 (2) of the Act of July 20, 2018 - Law on Higher Education and Science (LoHES). Pursuant to the Law only PKA's acting President may state mandate's expiry in the event of member's death; submission a resignation; failure to submit a vetting declaration or vetting information; failure to participate in the PKA's work for a period longer than 6 months, as well as cessation of meeting one of the prerequisites for candidates for PKA's member, specified in Art. 251 paragraph. 5 and 6. These requirements stipulate that PKA's member may be only a person who has an unblemished opinion and adheres to the principles of scientific ethics; has at least a doctoral degree and teaching achievements, and in the case of candidate proposed by the employers' organization - university education; has not reached the age of 70 by the date of commencement of the term of office; has full legal capacity; enjoys full public rights; has not been convicted by a valid sentence for an intentional crime or an intentional fiscal crime; was not punished with a disciplinary penalty; in the period from July 22, 1944 to July 31, 1990, did not work in state security agencies within the meaning of Art. 2 of the Act of October 18, 2006 on the disclosure of information on documents of state security organs from 1944–1990 and the content of these documents (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1633), did not perform service in them or cooperate with these authorities. Moreover, a member of the PKA may not act as a member of the Science Evaluation Committee; founder of the HEI; rector; member of the HEI council; employee of the PKA's Bureau.

Referring to the prerequisites for declaring the expiry of a member's mandate by the PKA's President, it should be emphasized that the Minister has only the power to dismiss the PKA's President from among its members whereas the statement of the expiry of the mandate, in strictly defined cases referred to above, is the sole competence of PKA's President.

PKA also maintains its independence in the scope of appointing experts. The President of PKA appoints PKA's experts, and the Secretary of PKA appoints members of evaluation panels. No external institution is authorised to affect the composition of PKA's evaluation panels or the list of experts. It should be noted that in ex-post evaluation procedures Rectors of HEIs receive information about the composition of the evaluation panel along with the notification of the site visit and could report a potential conflict of interest if they notice it, but they cannot request a change without justification.



PKA on its own selects degree programmes to be evaluated in a given academic year. The Minister of Education and Science may request that PKA conducts an evaluation outside of the adopted annual schedule. Besides, on the request of a HEI interested in evaluation, the Committee may include the HEI in the schedule in a given academic year.

Moreover, the Law on Higher Education and Science grants powers to PKA to independently decide about the scope and form of cooperation with other accreditation institutions operating in Poland and abroad.

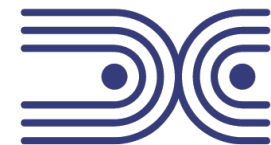
### ***Independence of formal outcomes***

Independence of formal outcomes is protected in clearly defined statutory competences, procedures, and policy of non-conflict interests. The resolutions of the Committee are final, and no external institution is authorised to alter them or affect their contents at any stage of their drafting. The units offering degree programmes under evaluation may present additional information/documentation in response to a site visit report and as part of the appeal process. In the case of a negative rating, the Minister of Education and Science may withdraw the permission to establish studies in a specific field of study, level and profile.

The decision-making process, which is divided into stages, (the evaluation panel, the Section and the Presidium) as provided for in the Statutes of the Polish Accreditation Committee excludes the possibility of an interference by a third party or their influence on the contents of a resolution. The Polish Accreditation Committee makes all the decisions collegially and in an independent manner. As observed by the review team in 2008 and confirmed in 2014: *"The two-stage decision-making procedure combined with collective decision making prevents any third party from influencing quality ratings that PKA gives as a result of its ex-post evaluations and opinions given as part of the ex-ante evaluation"*.

The current law and regulations concerning the activities of PKA provide sufficient guarantees for the agency's independence. The system check-and-balance has been built at all levels of PKA's operations, with particular emphasis on the organizational structure, range of competences reserved for the PKA's bodies, all established and implemented processes, as well as the decision-making process relating to their results. The effectiveness of adopted solutions that guarantee PKA's independence in all dimensions of its activities has also been confirmed recently. In the face of the changes PKA acted fully autonomously and maintained operational continuity in an unchanged organizational structure, providing all established processes, as well as running decision-making processes without the influence of third parties, taking full responsibility for its operations. Pursuant to the Law on Higher Education and Science and the Statute, all operational and strategic decisions are reserved for collegiate bodies, which in practice established a mechanism to maintain PKA's continuity and further optimize the decision-making process in any changes in the occurrence. The competences of individual bodies are closely related to the decision-making process carried out by collegiate bodies or are linked to the activities taken by members of the Committee at an earlier stage. This decision-making model, which PKA has been successfully implemented for many years, allows to protect overriding values or principles resulting from PKA's mission, as well as safeguards against an infringement on the agency's independence.

Referring to areas of cooperation with PKA's external stakeholders, it should be emphasized that the broad inclusion of stakeholders' group in PKA's activities, both in the form of participation in decision-making and / or opinion-making and advisory bodies, and in the form of consultations on the proposed



solutions strengthen PKA's independence by permanently embedding feedback mechanism from external stakeholders in the multi-level check-and-balance system.

#### Related documents:

- Law on Higher Education and Science – [Appendix no. 2](#).
- PKA's Statutes – [Appendix no. 1](#).

#### ESG Standard 3.5 Resources

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

#### Evidence proving that the standard has been met:

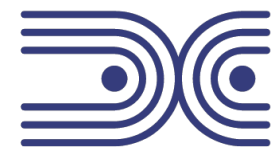
- PKA is composed of not more than 100 members appointed by the Minister of Education and Science in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education and Science. PKA members work within nine sections and the Appeals Body, which perform statutory tasks of PKA;
- PKA is supported by almost 930 experts and panel's secretaries. PKA experts are appointed on the strength of a decision of the President of PKA based on the needs identified by sections;
- PKA members and experts undergo intensive internal training in order to ensure effective implementation of external quality assurance processes;
- PKA avails of sufficient financial resources allowing for the implementation of its statutory tasks, including annual work schedules developed by the Presidium. Planning and monitoring of expenditures are conducted in accordance with the rules stipulated in the public finance law.
- PKA Bureau employees, who provide administrative services to PKA, are hired based on employment contracts;
- The infrastructure is adequate for the implementation of current tasks of PKA, and the list of IT tools used in day-to-day work is consistently expanded.

#### Human Resources

In accordance with article 251 of the Law on Higher Education and Science, members of the Polish Accreditation Committee are appointed by the Minister of Education and Science. The Committee is composed of not more than 100 members by virtue of law, the President of the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland is also a Committee member.

During the 6th term of office, PKA has 100 members, including 16 members who acted as its members during the fifth term. Invariably, the vast majority of Committee members hold the title of professor. As at the commencement of the fifth term of office this group forms 50% of Committee members. Among PKA members are also holders of the degree of doktor habilitowany (doctor habilitatus) (37%) and holders of the degree of doctor (doctor) (11%). In addition, the Polish Accreditation Committee by law includes the President of the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland.

Minister of Education and Science increased number of members of the Polish Accreditation Committee on April 2021 (9 members), and on May 2021 (1 member). In the Act of 21 January 2021 amending the Act on special solutions related to the prevention, prevention and combating of Covid-19, other infectious diseases and situations caused by them crisis and some other acts, Journal of Laws, item 159). The above mentioned Act of 21 January 2021 introduced changes related to many regulations in force to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public and private sector operations during a pandemic. Some of the changes concerned the higher education sector. In Limitations



resulting from the epidemic in force in the country, the number and diversified scope of cases conducted by the PKA, resulting from its statutory tasks, as well as specified in Law on Higher Education and Science (Art 245) deadlines for the handling of these matters by the Committee, as a consequence, led to a greater burden of obligations for members of the PKA. Number of cases conducted by the PKA in the period from January to September 2020 showed that the PKA issued 458 opinions on HEIs' applications for permission to run study programmes pursuant to Art. 54 (2) Law on Higher Education and Science. 96% of these opinions were issued during the period of the epidemic in Poland. The additional recruitment of PKA members was carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education and Science. The detailed rules of recruitment were published by the Ministry of Education and Science on its website: <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja-i-nauka/rozpoczal-sie-nabor-uzupelniajacy-na-czlonkow-polskiej-komisji-akredytacyjnej-w-kadencji-20202023>.

A large group of experts and evaluation panel secretaries (approximately 930), including 32 international experts, participates in the work of PKA. As part of human resources development measures, PKA members and experts undergo training. In the period 2020 - 2022, approx. 40 such training events were organised ([Appendix no. 6](#)).

**Table 15.** PKA's experts and evaluation panel's secretaries

Expert	Year		
	2020 (31.12)	2021 (31.12)	2022 (11.12)
from among academic teachers (quality)	493	572	614
from among students	68	83	100
from among employers	109	109	121
International experts	32	32	32
Evaluation panel secretaries	46	61	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>928</b>

Source: Authors

PKA members, including the President, and Secretary, are not officially employed at the Committee, yet they may be fully or partially exempted from the obligation to teach classes at their HEIs. Apart from benefits, such a solution results in unfavourable consequences consisting in the fact that PKA members are not fully focused on the implementation of PKA's statutory tasks.

Bureau of the Polish Accreditation Committee, a state-owned independent budgetary unit, provides administrative and financial services to the Committee. The Director of the Bureau, appointed and dismissed by the President of PKA, is responsible for HR policy and organising the work of the Bureau. At present the Bureau employs 23 staff members displaying broad competences.

The employees of the Bureau perform the functions of secretaries of Committee sections and some of them act as secretaries of evaluation panel in the programme evaluation. They are also responsible for international activities, thematic-analysis, accountancy and legal and organizational matters at the Committee. The management orientation in the Bureau is based on the process approach, under which the main and supporting processes focused on the administrative support function of PKA in the implementation of its statutory tasks have been identified. The entire system is supervised by the Director, while lower-level managers (coordinators) are also owners of the processes responsible for their ongoing monitoring, evaluation and improvement. The management system in the Bureau is coupled with the quality management system in PKA. The work of the Bureau is subject to ongoing evaluation by PKA's members and experts, as well as external stakeholders, and the results of the



research conducted in 2020-2022 showed the high efficiency and professionalism of the employees of the Bureau. The vision of the Bureau's work is a professional budgetary unit enjoying the general trust of stakeholders, dynamically responding to the needs of the external environment, whose work contributes to the success of the functioning of the Polish Accreditation Committee, and thus the external quality assurance system. Due to low remuneration rates in the public sector comparing to the other sectors, PKA's Bureau employees do not obtain sufficient compensation for their qualifications that seems to have an impact on HR policy in the Bureau. The policy of slowing down wages in the public sector, even their periodic freezing, combined with galloping inflation (17%) causes a significant decrease in real wages.

### ***Material and IT resources***

In order to perform its statutory tasks, the Committee rents office space of 900m<sup>2</sup>. It is sufficient, with adequate organisation, to provide enough space for the work of the Presidium, ten sections and PKA's Bureau.

For the needs of optimising the effectiveness of its internal processes and procedures, PKA has developed dedicated IT infrastructure and applications (to mention databases of evaluations and applications, repository of documents used by PKA members and experts, correspondence file, intranet). In addition, in 2020, PKA co-operating with Ministry of Education and Science started works on the introduction of a application generator for HEIs, which in future will support PKA's reviewers in ex-ante procedure. PKA also has access to the Integrated Information System on Science and Higher Education RAD-on.

In addition, the rapid development of IT tools used in the current work of PKA took place in 2018/2020, on the one hand, as a result of the migration of all processes to Microsoft 365 that started in 2018/2019 on the other hand as result of pandemic period in 2020. The pandemic period contributed to greater extent to the virtualization of the processes carried out by PKA and its Bureau, which definitely had a positive impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of work. Both employees of the Bureau as well as PKA's members are able to monitor all implemented projects on an ongoing basis and observe each completed stage of implementation. Along with the increase in efficiency, the timeliness of the tasks performed by PKA increased both in relation to statutory and procedural deadlines and amounts ca. 90-100%. This is undoubtedly the result of the optimization of management processes in PKA and BPKA as well as the introduction of standardization of tools supporting the work of BPKA employees, members and experts.

### ***Financial Resources***

In accordance with Article 53 of the Law on Higher Education, the operations of PKA are fully funded by the state budget. HEIs do not bear any financial costs of state accreditation. At present, annual budget of PKA amounts to PLN 13,855,000.00, which constitutes ca. 0.00049% of all expenditures on higher education. Remuneration for PKA members and experts for participation in the external accreditation process forms the bulk of PKA's expenditure. The amount and principles for paying such remuneration are determined by way of a regulation of the Minister of Education and Science. At present, it is based on the regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 14 December 2018 on the amount of remuneration to which members of institutions, bodies and teams as well as experts and disciplinary ombudsmen are entitled in the system of higher education and science (Journal of Laws, item 2405), which stipulates that the remuneration for each day of work during site visits at HEIs amounts to PLN 1000.00. The all site-visits lasts two days, therefore each member of evaluation panels is paid PLN 2000.00 for each visit.



**Table 16.** The budget structure / Expenditure schedule for 2022

**Expenditure schedule for 2022**

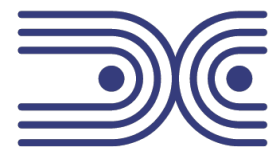
For the Bureau of the Polish Accreditation Committee under part 38 “Higher Education”  
Section 803 “Higher Education” Chapter 80395 “Other activity”

		2022
Specification	Paragraph	
2	3	
Current expenditure including:		13 754 000
Current expenditure of the unit	4000	3 372 000
Payroll	4010	1 734 000
Supplementary payroll	4040	135 000
Social security contributions	4110	443 000
Labour Fund contributions	4120	54 000
Outsources work costs	4170	7 819 000
Purchase of renovation services	4270	0
Domestic business trips	4410	10 000
International business trips	4420	70 000
Various fees and contributions	4430	6 000
Contribution to the Unit’s Social Benefits Fund	4440	35 000
Fees paid to international organisations	4540	57 000
Training of staff who are not members of the civil service	4700	15 000
Contributions to PPK financed by the employing entity	4710	4 000
Capital expenditure Including		101 000
Expenditure for the investment by state budget units	6060	101 000
Total expenditure		13 855 000

Source: Authors

Based on the experiences of more than 20 years of the Committee’s operations, it can be said that human and financial resources have allowed for efficient organisation of works related to the objectives and tasks of PKA. In particular, all the operational objectives have been met, including these related with scheduled site visits and giving opinions on applications, and PKA budget has been balanced.

In 2019-2022 the analytical activities were financed with internal and external funds since the analytical activity has found formal confirmation in legal acts and has been reflected in the structure of PKA’s Bureau. Following those new circumstances, in January 2019 Bureau of the Polish Accreditation Committee has introduced a new internal unit for analysis, research, training and public communication. Currently it is composed of 4.5 FTE. Besides in the period 2018-2021 PKA benefited from external funds, such as European grants, e.g. as part of the Erasmus+ programme European Commission, when coordinating IMPEA projects funded as part of Erasmus+ and when acting as a partner organisation, to which the costs of work of individual experts who contributed to intellectual outputs of such projects were reimbursed (i.e. DEQAR, The University of Future, etc.).



### Recommendation 2018 ENQA

PKA should take action to improve the situation of staff in its Bureau. Valuing – in terms of remuneration as well as job profiles – and capitalizing on its acquired expertise, should decrease staff turnover and increase PKA's capacity to invest time and knowledge in thematic analysis and internal enhancement.	According to the Law on Higher Education and Science Bureau of the Polish Accreditation Committee is a state-owned independent budgetary unit that provides administrative and financial services to the Committee. At the beginning of 2019 new Managing Director of the Bureau after successful run in the open contest, was appointed by the President of PKA. Following the changes the new structure of the Bureau was introduced that explore and capitalize human potential in New Public Management manner. All persons already hired in the PKA Bureau received job proposals and decided to prolong their contracts stepping into new responsibilities. Intensive plan of systematic trainings and further skills development have been successfully implemented in 2019/2020. Besides, in 2019 Bureau received significant increase of HR budget that improved in a short time staff remuneration policy. However, comparing year to year is should be noted that the increase of remuneration in public finances sector is slower than in any other sectors. See more 3.5. Thematic analysis
---	--

### Recommendation 2019 EQAR

The Register Committee further underlined the review panel's recommendations on the need to increase the agency's capacity to perform thematic analysis.	Following the recommendation in 2018 analytical activity of Polish Accreditation Committee has found formal confirmation in legal acts and has been reflected in the structure of PKA's Bureau. The Law on Higher Education and Science introduced in 2018 facilitates development of this strand of PKA activities by acknowledging it as a legal PKA obligation. Following those new circumstances, in January 2019 Bureau of the Polish Accreditation Committee has introduced a new internal unit for analysis, research, training and public communication. Currently it is composed of 4.5 FTE. In 2019-2022 the analytical activities were financed with internal and external funds since the analytical activity has found formal confirmation in legal acts and has been reflected in the structure of PKA's Bureau.
--	--

## ESG Standard 3.6 Standard Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

### Evidence proving that the standard has been met:

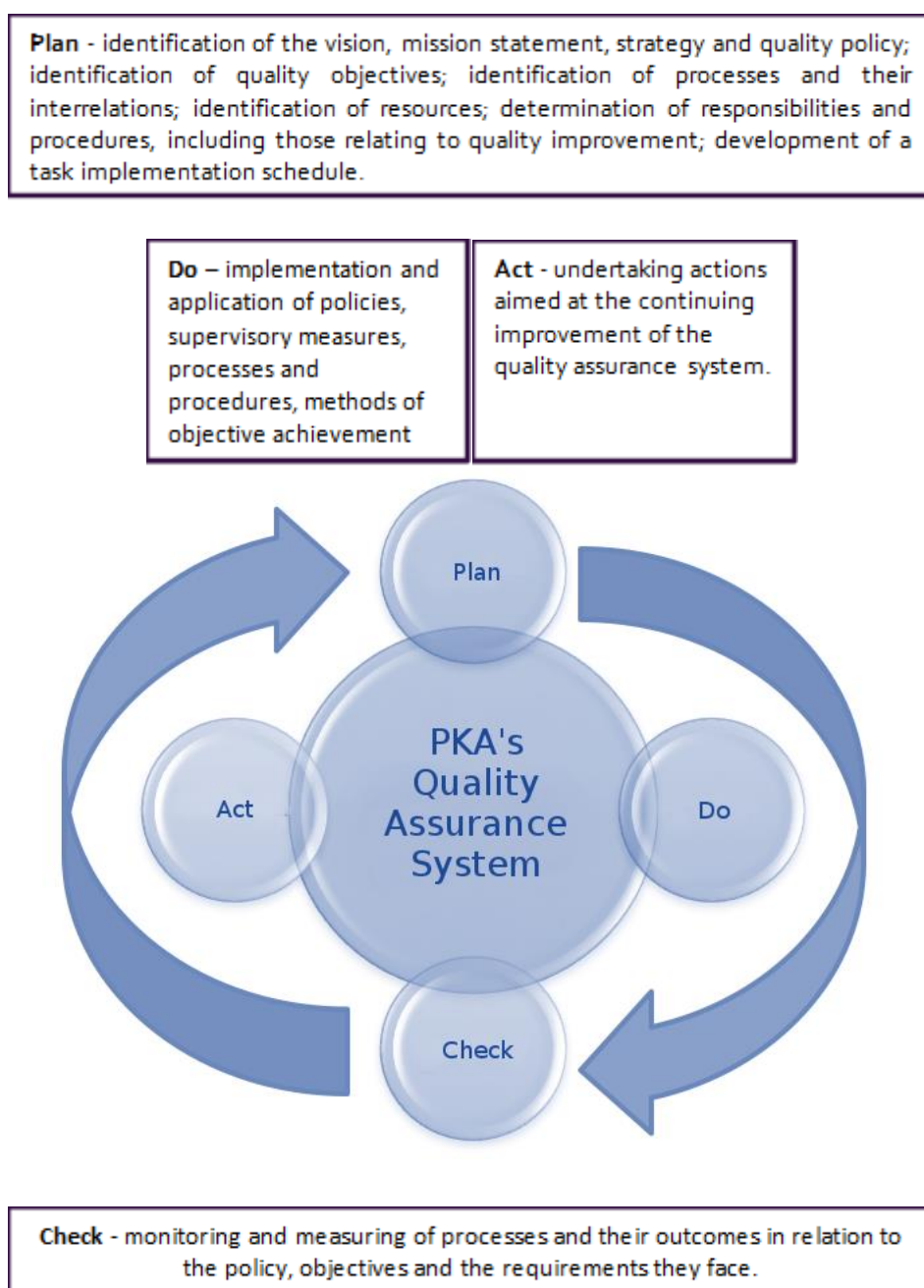
- Feeling accountable for its operations, PKA has adopted its Quality Policy and quality objectives, which are related with the Mission and Strategy of the Committee and form the basis for the implementation of its activities in the field of quality assurance. The Polish Accreditation Committee adopts the Mission Statement, Strategy and Quality Policy in a plenary session and informs its internal and external stakeholders about them via its website.



- The Polish Accreditation Committee has implemented a comprehensive internal quality management system concerning its work, which is consistently adapted to changing legal regulations.
- A mechanism to prevent conflicts of interest has been implemented at the Polish Accreditation Committee. It covers the procedures for selection, monitoring and evaluation of work of Committee members and experts;
- In accordance with the Statutes, professionalism, impartiality and transparency are the overriding principles for the operations of the Polish Accreditation Committee. For this purpose, the Section for Ethics has been appointed and the Code of Ethics has been adopted. In addition, PKA members and experts sign a declaration of no conflict of interest.
- PKA has adopted criteria for the selection of experts, which have been made public. Notices of vacancies and lists of experts are fully transparent to external stakeholders.
- PKA has a formal mechanism in place, which allows for reflection, collecting, analysing and using information from external and internal stakeholders in order to improve its processes.
- Both the results of PKA's work and the results of analyses related with the monitoring of the quality of its works are presented to external and internal stakeholders during regular meetings, published in annual reports and on its website.
- Moreover, representatives of external stakeholders have been appointed to the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee, evaluation panels, and as a result have direct influence on the operations of PKA.
- The operations of the Committee are subject to cyclical, mandatory inspections and external reviews conducted by international organisations and the domestic control bodies.
- PKA neither subcontracts nor outsources any elements of the evaluation and accreditation processes.
- The processes, procedures, guidelines and criteria identified by the Committee form the basis for external quality assurance and decision-making processes.

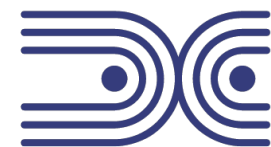
The Polish Accreditation Committee has introduced a comprehensive internal quality management system, which involves all the processes and procedures in the scope of its powers and responsibilities. The identification of key processes allowing for the implementation of tasks entrusted to the Polish Accreditation Committee in relation with the requirements formulated in the Law on Higher Education and implementing regulations formed the basis for the development of the internal quality assurance system. The model of the quality assurance system at the Polish Accreditation Committee operates in the PDCA cycle related to the planning, implementation, supervision and continuing improvement of identified processes.

**Figure 6.** PKA's Quality Assurance System



Source: Authors

The ultimate goal of the quality management system is to raise the effectiveness of activities undertaken in relation to the implementation of the Mission Statement and Strategy of the Polish Accreditation Committee, their continuous improvement, as well as to ensure that the statutory tasks are implemented in a way that guarantees the repetitiveness of quality characteristics. Moreover, the objectives of the system include ensuring professionalism and objectivity in the scope of projects implemented, providing resources guaranteeing high standards in project implementation and improving communication channels and cooperation with Committee stakeholders. In relation with the implementation of the system requirements, processes, which are the most important for the work of the Polish Accreditation Committee have been identified, i.e. objectives, procedures and the scope of responsibilities at individual stages of implementation have been described for each process. These processes are monitored and supervised in accordance with the requirements stipulated in generally

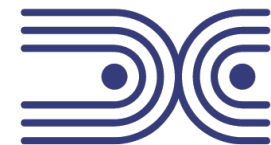


binding and internal regulations of the Polish Accreditation Committee, with taking into consideration indispensable facilities and qualifications of human resources. Having regard to the dynamics of change in legal regulations, PKA systematically updates its quality assurance system and introduces procedures improved in line with comments formulated by internal and external stakeholders.

Professionalism, impartiality and transparency are the overriding principles for the operations of the Polish Accreditation Committee. Having the above in mind, a multi-stage mechanism, which does not cause the conflict of interests between the members and experts of PKA, and which allows for the observance of the above rules in day-to-day work of the Committee, has been purposefully implemented. The initial stage is implemented in accordance with the procedure for the selection of experts, which allows for the appointment of professionals meeting the criteria of the Polish Accreditation Committee in terms of qualifications, competences and predispositions for working as Committee experts. The procedure for the selection of candidates is fully transparent, as notices of expert vacancies are posted on the website of PKA, the same holds true for the lists of selected experts. HEIs and all stakeholders know the names of all experts and are free make reservations at an early stage of quality assurance process. Experts are appointed by a decision of the President of the Polish Accreditation Committee and are obliged to take on a commitment not to take actions, which could collide with the performance of entrusted tasks. Moreover, in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes, in performance of their tasks, experts are obliged to abide by the Code of Ethics, which stipulates the rules for ethical conduct of PKA members and experts and the scope of liability for their infringements. For the infringement of rules of conduct stipulated in the Code of Ethics, Committee members and experts are accountable to the Section for Ethics appointed from among Committee members in the first plenary session of a given term of office. Detailed organisation and mode of work of the Section for Ethics are stipulated in the regulations adopted by the Section. The Secretary of the Committee is responsible for ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the mechanism. In accordance with the procedures, the Secretary is also responsible for the appointment of members of evaluation panels and persons who analyse questionnaires sent by HEIs on an ongoing basis. The Polish Accreditation Committee monitors and measures the effectiveness of all processes in relation to the implemented policy, objectives and requirements set for the processes relating to quantity (among other things determined in the schedules) and to quality (among other things in the national legislation and internal regulations). In the measurements, external and internal feedback mechanism and an ongoing control by PKA bodies in accordance with the powers granted in the Status are applied.

#### ***External feedback mechanism***

- Based on the **questionnaires filled out by the HEIs** upon the completed evaluation process (introduced in 2011), the overall rating of the Polish Accreditation Committee in the years 2012 - 2020 was very good; the arithmetic mean calculated on the basis of the answers to closed questions amounted to 4.75 on a 1-5 scale. However, in the years 2016-2020, a very low response rate was observed. Bearing above in mind, in April 2021, the PKA implemented a new research and analysis concept, which is attended by all participants of the programme evaluation process and consists of survey for higher education institutions; survey for members, experts and secretaries of the evaluation panels at the beginning and at the end of a given term of office of the Committee; Survey for members of evaluation panels; survey for secretaries of the evaluation panels. The results are published on PKA website.
- **"Quality Window"** - a tool for communication with stakeholders, which is available on the website dedicated to internal quality management system of the Polish Accreditation Committee and which provides an unhindered communication channel. However in the past,

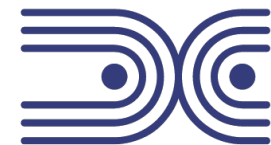


stakeholders extremely rarely benefited from this opportunity, and if any questions appeared, they mainly related to the questions of criteria interpretation.

- **External consultation mechanism** has been established under a separate procedure and is used for the collection of opinions put forward by external stakeholders, including the opinions presented by the Conferences of the Rectors, Minister of Science and Higher Education, General Council for Science and Higher Education, Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland, representatives of external stakeholders sitting on the Presidium and evaluation panels. The Committee also provides opportunities for consultation via its website, where individuals and HEIs can present their opinions. Recently, two major consultation processes were held in 2018 and 2022. They related to the amendments of Statutes. The consultation is not only about presenting opinions on internal acts adopted by PKA, but also about the reflection on the quality assurance system and operation of the higher education system.
- **PKA Quality Forum** - is a platform for cyclical meetings of stakeholders and discussion on the most significant issues for higher education and quality assurance system. PKA invites external stakeholders to discussion and opens up to dialogue. PKA sends an open invitation to the Quality Forum by posting it on its general website <https://www.pka.edu.pl/forum-jakosci/>. HEIs operating in relevant areas are invited to co-organise the Forum. In the period 2012-2022, Quality Forums focused on the following topics: "New challenges to providing education and its quality assurance", 5-6 November 2012; "Challenges to quality assurance in higher education", 26-27 March 2015; "Degree programmes with practical profile - the first years' experience" 9-10 June 2015; "Programme assumptions and providing education as part of degree programmes with practical profile", 16-17 November 2016; "New quality in teacher education", 16-17 November 2017, 8 June 2021; "What have we learned about higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic? Ensuring the quality of education in higher education - crises and opportunities in the short and long term", 26 October 2022; "Evolution of the education quality assurance system challenges for future."
- **Advisory Board of PKA** – on the ground of Decision No. 16/2021 of the President of the Polish Accreditation Committee of 8 September 2021 the Advisory Council of the Polish Accreditation Committee has been reactivated <https://www.pka.edu.pl/en/2021/09/20/appointment-of-the-advisory-council-of-polish-accreditation-comittee/>. The Advisory Council of the Polish Accreditation Committee performs consultative and advisory functions in the field of strategic directions of PKA's development. [In 2021 and 2022 Advisory Board held 2 meetings and issued its opinion on the Strategy of PKA and amendments to Statute. Besides the President submitted annual reports on PKA's activities.](#)
- **Regular external reviews of PKA's operations** are undertaken by domestic (the Supreme Audit Office) and international institutions (ENQA, NCFMEA, EQAR). From 2004, PKA has been subject to several inspections by domestic inspection authorities. Inspection reports have shown that the Committee performs its tasks in accordance with binding regulations and called for enhancing or modification of procedures in place. Inspection reports have been posted on the websites of inspection bodies and were presented at meetings of parliamentary committees.

### ***Internal feedback mechanism***

- Since April 2021, the Polish Accreditation Committee implemented a new research and analysis concept, which is attended by all participants of the programme evaluation process and consists of survey for higher education institutions; **survey for members, experts and secretaries of the evaluation panels** at the beginning and at the end of a given term of office of the Committee; survey for members of evaluation panels; survey for secretaries of the evaluation panels.



- Moreover, it was decided to introduce in 2021 a **survey on the activity of PKA dedicated for members, experts from the group of academic teachers, employers, students and secretaries of evaluation panels**, which is held at the beginning and at the end of a given term of office of the Committee. The survey is completely anonymous and consists of 26 questions. The aim of the survey is to get acquainted with the opinions of internal stakeholders of the Committee about itself, and thus to increase the effectiveness of actions taken by PKA in connection with the implementation of its mission and strategy, their continuous improvement, and to guarantee the implementation of statutory tasks in a manner ensuring repeatability of quality characteristics. The survey was completed in March 2022 and 627 respondents took part in a survey.
- **Opinions on quality issues or needs expressed by PKA members, experts and employees of the Bureau during regular meetings** with the management of PKA and its Bureau -- PKA is open to dialogue with its internal stakeholders, because the quality of its work is the overriding value for PKA members and experts.
- **The results of the ongoing and cyclical assessment of the performance of PKA's members and experts** – the Statute regulations introduce the issues of the current and periodic evaluation of the quality of work of the members and experts of the Committee, as well as of the secretaries in the evaluation panel. A key role in the evaluation process is played by the Chairs of the Sections, the Section for Teacher Education and the Appeals Section, as well as the Presidium or the Quality Council of PKA's activity, if appointed. In 2022 PKA introduced changes in the Statute that consists in the creation of a new body in the Committee in the form of the Quality Council of PKA's activity, whose main task will be to carry out activities related to improving the quality of PKA's work, including the implementation of a new task, which is the periodic evaluation of the work of members of the Committee and its experts. The detailed mode of operation of the Council will be specified in the regulations adopted by the Presidium of the PKA. Till the date of SAR's submission, the Quality Council hasn't been appointed as well as regulations haven't been adopted by the Presidium. Till the date of SAR submission the Quality Council hasn't been appointed.
- **Reviews of the quality management system** - are carried out on regular basis in order to introduce updates related to amendments of legal regulations or improvements of procedures in place.
- **Cyclical self-assessment of PKA operations** - is an internal mechanism for self-reflection, which helps to identify weaknesses and challenges for the development of PKA. In addition, corrective action programmes developed in line with recommendations of external panels bring short- or long-term improvement measures taken by PKA.

Being aware of the importance of modern forms of communication and having in mind the need to support the improvement processes by means of dialogue with stakeholders, the Polish Accreditation Committee has launched on its website [www.pka.edu.pl](http://www.pka.edu.pl) a quality assurance system information panel accessible to the public at <https://www.pka.edu.pl/en/procedures-and-standards/pka-quality-management-system/>, where current analyses are published. Online communication is used for broad consultation with stakeholders on essential works on the criteria and on the recording of the accreditation process.

#### Related documents:

- Statutes of PKA - [Appendix no. 1](#);
- The Code of Ethics of PKA - [Appendix no. 5](#);
- Quality Management System - [Appendix no. 7](#);
- Regulations of the Section for Ethics - [Appendix no. 8](#);
- Regular reports of the Polish Accreditation Committee on its operations available at [www.pka.edu.pl](http://www.pka.edu.pl)

## Recommendation 2018 ENQA

<p>The comprehensiveness of the IQA, should be developed in the areas of management procedures (decision-making process; definition and implementation of the strategic plan, etc.), role of the President of panel in programme evaluation and internal feedback.</p>	<p>PKA's management team and the PKA's Presidium are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategy. Monitoring process is held cyclical basis and collected results usually are reflected in the PKA's term of office reports, which are published on the PKA website. In addition, the responsibility for the implementation of strategic tasks has been distributed via task forces or statutory responsibility, and the accountability of their implementation is of a current nature within the scope of business subordination. The new PKA Strategy was adopted at the end of 2020 and the results of its monitoring will be presented in the next report. The Appeals Body referred to in the example is monitored on an ongoing basis, see the annual report <a href="http://www.pka.edu.pl">www.pka.edu.pl</a>. Besides in 2020/2021 PKA re-engineered the system of collecting internal feedback by introducing the new surveys addressed to PKA's members and experts e.g. on the evaluation process and on the PKA's activity.</p>
<p>PKA should update its internal Quality Assurance for the procedure for programme evaluation in a way that there is a checks and balance system for the strong role of the PKA member serving as president of the review panel.</p>	<p>The responsibility of the Chairman of evaluation panel was a bit released recently by introducing by the end of 2018 Secretary position in the panel who is responsible for drafting the report and coordinating the entire programme evaluation procedure since its beginning to the end. <i>According to the the PKA's Statute the assessment process is conducted by an assessment panel composed of Committee members, experts and a person acting as the assessment panel's secretary.</i> Besides according to the same Statute's article <i>a member of the Committee or, in duly justified cases, an expert – academic teachers, can perform the function of the chair of an assessment panel.</i> So the chairman role is not only limited to the member or former member of PKA.</p>

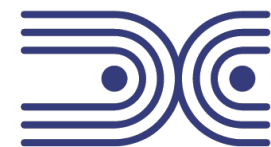
Standard for enhancement - ESG Standard 3.4 Thematic analysis

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyze the general findings of their external quality assurance activity.

### Evidence proving that the standard has been met:

- PKA regularly publishes annual reports summarising its operations in a given calendar year and presenting an in-depth analysis of its results.



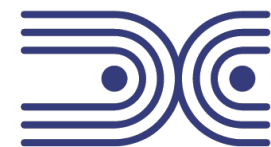


- PKA reports are published for each year and for each term of office and describe major QA issues and trends, as well as good practices and weaknesses.
- PKA developed and introduced the Concept of Analytical and Research activities of the PKA
- Programme Council of PKA has been appointed by the President of PKA according to the Concept of Analytical and Research activities of the PKA. The representatives of PKA stakeholders are involved in Program Council activities.
- PKA Presidium adopted the scope of analysis and research that was developed by Program Council.
- In the pandemic period PKA started and continues to run processes of analysis based on a survey related to site visits implemented remotely.
- PKA improved of the current model of reporting and presentation of the results of research conducted within the PKA.
- PKA developed and implemented a new concept of survey on programme evaluation procedure that enrich analysis and research area: 1) a survey for HEIs, 2) a survey addressed to the PKA evaluation panel completed within 24 hours after the visit 3) a survey for the secretary of the evaluation team containing the most important findings of the evaluation team on good practices and recommendations contained in the visit report 4) PKA's own evaluation.
- For many years PKA has been continuing organization of the seminars in the Quality Forum series, which aims to familiarize a wide audience with the research and analysis carried out by PKA. In 2021, the topics of the Forum resulted from both the survey on remote site-visits and short questionnaire on "the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education," while were proposed by the PKA Program Council as a result of the discussion held within this body.
- In the event of 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary PKA's launched project "20 Conversations for the 20th Anniversary of PKA" which is a collection of conversations with internal and external stakeholders who participated/still participate in the process of designing, functioning and evaluating of the external quality assurance system in Poland.
- PKA participates in research and analysis conducted in connection with the international projects such as IMPEA, Universities of the Future, etc. PKA disseminates the projects' outcomes on its website and dedicated seminars for internal and external stakeholder.
- Separation of the research and analysis process within the structure of PKA Bureau, including a coordinator and a team of employees responsible for activities in this regard including among others person with a PhD in social sciences in the field of sociological sciences responsible for research and analysis.

The Polish Accreditation Committee conducts qualitative and quantitative analyses of its operations. The results of such analyses are published in annual reports ([www.pka.edu.pl](http://www.pka.edu.pl)) or in reports on a given term of office, which are also sent to HEIs and external stakeholders. Annual publications give grounds for drawing conclusions on the whole population on the basis of studies on samples of the population (i.e. data comes from evaluations completed in a given reporting year or term of office or from applications to which opinions were given). The presented studies are used to identify the frequency of occurrence of a given phenomenon and to determine the level of interdependence, which exists between individual data. Factual analyses contained in the reports and pertaining to the operations of individual sections include, among other things: general observations of PKA evaluation panels with reference to specific fields of study formulated based on the analyses of reports covering the whole reporting period; the most frequent reasons for reservations expressed by PKA; assessment of changes and development trends; assessment of the impact of PKA operations on the development of quality culture.

Since 2018, conducting research and analysis is one of the basic statutory tasks imposed on the PKA by Law on Higher Education and Science. Since then, PKA constantly has been expanding its research

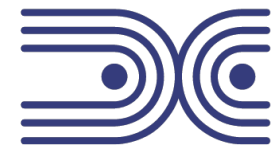




and analytical activities. PKA developed the Concept of Analytical and Research Activity. This document was developed and adopted already at 2019 and identifies the key areas of analytical and research activities stemming from the PKA's Mission, Quality Policy and Strategy 2020-2025 , which include: 1) obtainance of objective data on the effectiveness of activities undertaken to achieve PKA's Mission; 2) analysis of possibilities and desirable directions for improving PKA's methods of operation based on documented research results; 3) identification of good practices in education quality assurance; 3) identification of key trends and significant innovations in education, education quality assurance and accreditation; 4) identification of needs and opportunities to develop and improve the competencies of PKA members and experts, as well as those serving as secretary of the evaluation team; 5) identification of changes of a qualitative and quantitative nature related to the activities and operation of the PKA Quality Management System; 6) identification of international projects related to key aspects of PKA's activities (e.g., in the area of innovation in education) and the development of innovative forms of external and internal quality assurance; 7) identification of opportunities to obtain funding to finance PKA's development priorities in the areas identified in the strategic objectives; 8) identification of desirable organizations or other forms of internationalization of PKA activities ; 9) publication of the results of PKA's analytical and project activities, with both national and international coverage; 10) presentation of the results of PKA's analytical and project activities in the framework of national and international conferences; dedicated to the topic of quality assurance in higher education.

According to the Analytical and Research Concept, the Program Council of PKA was established in early 2022. The Council consisted of the current PKA Secretary (as Council Chair), the former PKA Secretary and Vice-President, a member of the PKA Presidium, a member of the Appeals Body, a representative of the socio-economic environment, a student representative, the Director of the PKA Bureau, and a PKA Bureau staff member responsible for conducting research and analysis. The tasks of the Program Council include operational support of PKA's tasks arising from its public status in terms of: 1) obtaining objective information on the effectiveness of activities undertaken in support of PKA's Mission to analyze opportunities to improve its methods of operation based on documented research results; 2) pointing out trends, identifying and disseminating good practices, as well as showing entrenched irregularities, organizational and interpretative difficulties aimed at formulating diagnoses, conclusions, recommendations and positions relating to ensuring and improving the quality of education in institutional, national and international aspects. One of the main achievements of the Program Council was development of a schedule of the analysis and research till the end of 6th term of PKA (December 2023) which will be conducting under 3 categories: 1) cyclical research, 2) process analysis and research, and 3) so-called freestyle analysis.

It should be noted that cyclical research is obligatory and embedded in ongoing activity of PKA. The first is an evaluation study on the program evaluation process. The study consists of 4 surveys: 1) a survey to HEIs sent approximately 2 weeks after the issuance of the PKA Presidium's resolution on program evaluation, 2) a survey for evaluation teams to be completed by PKA members and experts within 24 hours after the site visit 3) a survey of the secretary of the evaluation panel, who are obliged to report basic information about the visitation including identified good practices or recommendations formulated by the evaluation team 4) a survey on the evaluation of PKA activities as assessed by members, experts and secretaries of evaluation panel sent at the beginning and end of each term. The survey effective starting April 1, 2022 and have replaced the previous model of evaluating the work of evaluation panels , which was in effect from 2012-2022. To date, more than 500 participants have taken part in the survey. This includes 97 university representatives, as part of 116 HEIs in which the site visit took place between April and June 2022. Other cyclic research have been conducted by PKA for many years : 1) quantitative reports on the Committee activities; 2) studies

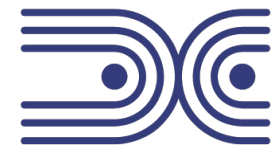


of site visits implemented remotely 3) studies to support the development of the competence of PKA's experts from among students (program of individual development interviews) and experts from among employers 4) a study on the evaluation of the quality and satisfaction of participants in evaluation, training and seminar events organized by PKA; 5) a study of the relationship between good practices identified by PKA and innovation in educational quality 6) identification of the main challenges for HEIs in the area of quality assurance based on analysis of evaluation teams' reports and resolutions 7) identification of good practices - analysis of evaluation teams' reports. Just between 2021-2022 more than 2,000 respondents took part in cyclical survey alone. This includes more than 960 people in the remote site visits, 740 people in the new evaluation concept for the program evaluation process (data as of 5/12/2022), and more than 350 people in the survey conducted after the Quality Forum.

The second category of analysis and research carried out by the PKA's Program Council include analyses of the processes conducted by the Polish Accreditation Commission, including, in particular, those relating to programme evaluation and opinion-giving process, which will be embedded in the available data collected as a result of the processes in question. In 2022-2023, the Program Council plans to undertake studies related to: 1) identification of difficulties/constraints encountered in the process of program evaluation by PKA members and experts with regard to quality standards and related indicators of meeting the standard 2) study of the impact of program evaluations conducted by PKA on education quality assurance in light of the implementation of recommendations by HEIs, based on the results of repeat evaluations/evaluations after the issuance of a positive evaluation shortened for up to 2 years 3) study of the relationship between good practices identified by PKA and innovation in educational quality. Analysis of certificates of educational excellence 4) PKA's autonomy in light of generally applicable regulations.

The third category of studies are so-called freestyle studies, i.e., research and analyses resulting from the PKA's current and future needs as a quality assurance and improvement agency, reflecting the challenges identified by the PKA under this category. The Program Council plans to conduct 3 analyses and research: 1) The role of students in program evaluation, with a focus on the views of students as internal stakeholders involved in quality assurance processes, 2) What factors contributed to the smooth transition of the university to remote learning. Examination of evaluation team reports, 3) Lesson learnt - comprehensive evaluation from the perspective of institutional evaluation experience, recommendations for the future.

According to the Analytical and Research Concept in the implementation of the ambitious research and analytical goals adopted by the Program Council, PKA Bureau is responsible for supporting these tasks, in particular the team responsible to analysis, research, training, communication and cooperation with the stakeholders. The main task of the team, in addition to providing administrative services and organizational support to the PKA Program Council, is to develop a detailed concept for the implementation of analytical tasks (implementation projects) in relation to the areas of research and analysis proposed by the PKA Program Council, accepted by the PKA's Management and approved by the Presidium of PKA, including: 1) analyzing the possibilities regarding research methodology, including research tools, and proposing solutions - in this regard, PKA's Bureau should be supported by experts with knowledge of scientific research methods, both quantitative and qualitative, and analysis conduct and cognitive value assessment; 2) determining the resources necessary for implementation, both human and material; 3) determining the concept of the composition of project working teams, proposing persons to coordinate projects' work, establishing cooperation, and ultimately creating a database/network of experts cooperating with PKA in the implementation of commissioned work of an analytical and research nature; 4) determining and supervising the



implementation of a detailed schedule of projects' working teams. Within the PKA\_Bureau, the person responsible for cooperation with the Council is a person with a doctorate in social sciences in the discipline of social sciences.

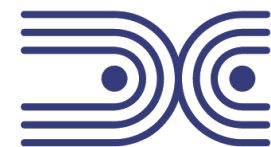
It should be noted that in 2014 -2021 PKA also continued its research and analysis activity in the framework of international projects.

In the period 2014-2017, EIQAS ('Enhancing Internal Quality Assurance Systems') project was carried out. The project focused on the improvement of internal education quality assurance systems operating at HEIs and ESG 2015 Part 1. In the framework of the project, a quantitative and qualitative study on the development of internal education quality assurance systems at HEIs was conducted. One of the analysed aspects was determining the degree of internal quality assurance systems maturity and the Committee's impact on their development, and identifying further areas of support. All intellectual outputs of the project were posted on the website ([www.eiqas.com.pl](http://www.eiqas.com.pl)), the most important include:

- *Country Report Poland*, I. Kwiatkowska & M. W. Socha, Warsaw, 2015
- *Cross-country report Bulgaria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia*, I. Kwiatkowska, M. Fonseca, K. Subic, T. Shopov, Warsaw, 2015
- *Reference framework for comparative analysis of assessment methodologies of IQA*, J. Sirok, M. Markowski, I. Kwiatkowska, M. Fonseca, T. Shopov, Ljubljana, 2015
- *Comparative analysis of assessment methodologies of IQA*, J. Sirok, M. Markowski, I. Kwiatkowska, M. Fonseca, T. Shopov, Ljubljana, 2015
- *Students' Guide to ESG*, A. Gaber, A. Praznik, I. Jesih, J. Strbac, B. Petrov, R. Jakimova, V. Dimitrova, V. Petkova, A. Ganchev, A. Mrozowska, E. Profaska, G. Kołodziej, T. Kocoł, L. Nowak, A. Mordido, H. Soares, J. Ferreira, M. Sampaio, S. Vileila, E. Bohinc, Ljubljana, 2016
- *Guide to IQA*, I. Kwiatkowska, M. W. Socha, M. Fonseca, M. Markowski, T. Shopov, V. Perovsek, A. Kraśniewski, S. Vileila, J. Borges, A. Mrozowska, G. Kołodziej, Warsaw, 2016
- *Final methodology for identification of good practice in IQA. Descriptions of examples of good practice*, M. Penelova, T. Shopov, M. Markowski, M.W. Socha, M. Fonseca, V. Perovsek, I. Santos, K. Subic, Sofia, 2015

In addition, in 2015, in parallel to the EIQAS project and in line with the recommendations of the review team who analysed the operations of PKA in 2014, the Committee published the first in a series book entitled *Selected good practices in education quality assurance at Higher Education Institutions in Poland* (Polish: *Wybrane Dobre praktyki zarządzania jakością kształcenia w polskich szkołach wyższych*). The book edited by prof. dr hab. Łukasz Sułkowski features 10 good practices selected together with HEIs. The publication of the book was preceded by numerous meetings of quality expert groups, during which the criteria for the identification of good practices were identified for the needs of PKA.

In the period 2017-2021 IMPEA project (Facilitating Implementation of European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes) was carried out and contributed to the analytical and research activities of project partners. The objectives of the project focused on one of the dimensions of higher education, internationalisation, i.e. joint programmes. Both HEIs and accreditation agencies still identify challenges in the area of the provision and accreditation of joint programmes. For many years, PKA has advocated the introduction of legal regulations promoting the provision of this type of studies in Poland, as well as the accreditation of such programme and recognition of accreditation decisions. The present law allows for making relevant analyses and presenting satisfactory solutions at the national level. The main aim of the project was to support efficient implementation of the European



Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. This aim was meant to be achieved by successful completion of the following objectives:

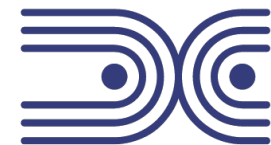
1. Identifying key obstacles in implementation of the European Approach in the European Higher Education Area in general, and project partner countries in particular;
2. Supporting partner QA agencies in running EA-based programme accreditation procedures (ex ante and ex post);
3. Supporting partner HEIs in pursuing the external accreditation based on the EA;
4. Developing an EA implementation toolkit (set of recommendations and proposed solutions for the policy makers and QA agencies).

Any outputs of the project are posted on a dedicated website ([www.impea.online](http://www.impea.online)). The main target audience and direct impact groups of the project were the following: European and national policy-making bodies, higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies in terms of enhanced awareness and understanding of the European Approach. For the project partners and participants of the project events, this was achieved through their direct involvement in, and contribution to the activities. This means in particular the work carried out in order to develop and deliver the intellectual outputs, training events, multiplier and dissemination activities. Above-mentioned members of the project target groups, not engaged in the project activities directly, this 'enhanced capacity' effect will be achieved through the project publications, dissemination activities and foremost, the availability of the European Approach online toolkit ([www.impea.eu](http://www.impea.eu)).

ImpEA project received a very keen interest throughout its duration and past it. This means that the project was able to generate a robust outreach to the main target groups. More than 1650 participants took part in the project and third-party events, where the European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes and ImpEA project were discussed and presented. The main participant groups were higher education institutions (approx. 1070 participants), quality assurance agencies (250), students (370), policy making bodies (100), stakeholder organisations (ENQA, ECA, ESU, EUA) and other interested parties (i.e. EQAR, ENIC-NARIC). The direct and indirect project dissemination activities were aimed to reach national, European and global audience.

- Implementing the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, background report - Authors: Maria Kelo – ENQA Eva Fernandez de Labastida – Unibasq Mark Frederiks – ECA Ronny Heinze – AQAS Maciej Markowski – PKA, 2018
- IMPEA Training events publication – Authors: Ronny Heintze -AQAS, Mark Frederiks – ECA, Maciej Markowski – PKA, 2019
- Template of SER, 2020 – Authors: project's partners
- Template for panel report, 2020 – Authors: project's partners
- Analytical report - The European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint programmes in 2020 – Authors: Maria Kelo - ENQA Maciej Markowski - PKA Ronny Heintze – AQAS Eva Fernandez de Labastida – Unibasq
- European Approach online toolkit, 2021 ([www.impea.eu](http://www.impea.eu)) – Authors: project's partners - An online interactive tool, which is designed to answer to the most important and up-to-date challenges and obstacles in implementation of the European Approach. The toolkit will be useful and meaningful even after full implementation of the EA in all EHEA countries. It includes practical guidance for each target group, frequently asked question, guidance notes, manuals and good practices in efficient use of the European Approach.

Moreover, in the years 2017-2021, PKA was a partner of the project Universities of the Future that by creating a community of practice brought together actors from the quadruple helix (businesses, universities, public authorities and students) to address the existing gap in the current offer in Higher



Education and co-create innovative and multidisciplinary solutions adjusted to the current and upcoming challenges of a digital era. The results of project may be found on the website <https://universitiesofthefuture.eu/results-and-activities/>.

Besides PKA continued to implement periodic conferences as part of the Quality Forum initiative. In 2021, the Forum's theme was: *“What have we learned about higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic? Quality assurance in higher education - crises and opportunities in the short and long term.”* And in 2022: *“The evolution of the quality assurance system-challenges for the future”*. The participants of the Quality Forum – apart from members and experts of PKA and persons closely cooperating with the Committee – are representatives of: domestic institutions and organisations active in the field of higher education (such as: the Ministry of Education and Science, the General Council for Science and Higher Education, environmental accreditation committees, the Conference of Rectors ,universities, the Students’ Parliament of the Republic of Poland, the National Representation of PhD candidates and others), representatives of employers’ organizations, as well as other accompanying sectors that function in the higher education system on a daily basis and work to assurance and development of the quality of education.

The Quality Forum – in its essence – is an example of broad national and international cooperation in the field of quality assurance in higher education. From the very beginning, it has been guided by the idea of pluralism and the exchange of opinions, perspectives and experiences in the widest possible group of professionals. Importantly, this conference has become a platform for opinion-making consultations that allowing the development of appropriate methods and forms of action for PKA itself, as an institution for which social welfare is the overriding value. The main aim of the Quality Forum is to create a dialogue platform that will allow for joint development of solutions to improve the process of quality assurance in Poland. Therefore, each time, when the Committee undertaking a topic, it takes into consideration such aspects as: the applicable legal conditions; the current socio-economic situation; doubts and questions addressed to the PKA from the academic community; as well as the proposed solutions found by evaluation panel and the encountered problems or the background to the implementation of tasks resulting from ensuring the quality of education in higher education institutions throughout Poland. It should be emphasized that this conference is one of the key forms of supporting higher education institutions in building a quality culture as well as providing and improving education. The Quality Forum responds to the expectations all stakeholders of the education process, creating a field for debates and the exchange of constructive opinions and conclusions. The Quality Forum is an excellent example of professional, multidimensional cooperation of institutions and organizations and their common concern for ensuring quality of education provided by Polish higher education system, which refers to the best practices in the European and global educational area. One of the main role of PKA resulting from its public status is obtaining objective information concerning, on the one hand, the effectiveness of activities taken to implement the PKA mission, and on the other hand, aimed at analyzing the possibilities of improving operating methods based on documented research results. The implementation of analytical and research activities, and then making them public, aims to build the image of PKA as an effective, transparent organization responsible for the rational spending of public funds. The Quality Forum – thanks to its open formula – provides an excellent opportunity to present the activities undertaken by , disseminate the results of the work (including in the field of analytical and research activities), as well as publicly consult solutions and adopted methods of operation.

PKA is aware of the growing wealth of information it avails of and, as far as possible, strives to make analyses responding to the current demand of the higher education institution and its stakeholders.



The establishment of a dedicated analytical unit within the organisational structure of PKA Bureau would allow for the profesionalisation of its activities in this area.

- Research report: <https://www.pka.edu.pl/2022/09/23/raport-z-badan-2/>
- International project results: <https://www.pka.edu.pl/en/international-projects/>
- Annual reports 2021-2020 <https://www.pka.edu.pl/2022/09/23/dzialalnosc-pka-w-latach-2020-2021/>
- Term report 2016-2019 <https://www.pka.edu.pl/publikacje/publikacja-z-dzialalnosci-pka-w-latach-2016-2019/>
- Concept of Analytical and Research Activities of the PKA (available on site)
- Schedule of Analytical and Research Activities of the PKA Programme Council (available on site)

#### Recommendation 2018 ENQA

Panel recommendations	Measures already taken
PKA should strengthen their initiatives to develop a more structured approach towards thematic analysis leading to analysis meeting the requirements of the polish HE system, independently from international projects as well as adding additional resources. Mobilizing resources from within the Bureau should be considered.	<b>PKA believes that recent changes in the Law on Higher Education and Science reflected PKA long-term experience in thematic analysis and address the ENQA recommendation directly.</b> It should be highlighted that analytical and training activities have now been included in the specific tasks of the PKA on the ground of the Act of 20 July 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science. Therefore, the analytical activity has found formal confirmation in legal acts and has been reflected in the structural solutions of PKA's Bureau. A special unit for analyses has been formed since the beginning of 2019 and Bureau's resources were dedicated to the activity. It should be emphasized that long-term PKA procedures in the area of formalizing PKA analytical activity have now been confirmed in generally applicable regulations. Both in the previous and current PKA's strategy, this area of activity has been effectively addressed, which is confirmed by numerous publications that appear in the PKA's output as a result of its on-going analysis of activities as well as targeted and systematic project activities.

#### ESG Standard 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance described in Part 1 of the ESG.

#### Evidence proving that the standard has been met:

- Individual standards of Part 1 of ESG for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area are reflected in programme and evaluation criteria adopted by PKA.

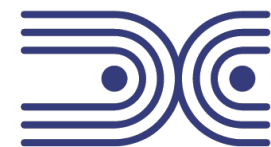
In accordance with the 2018 regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education on studies, "the study program is subject to systematic assessment and improvement". In addition, "the program of studies takes into account the conclusions from the analysis of the compatibility of learning outcomes with the needs of the labour market (...)", and the application for permission to establish studies must contain, among others, "description of activities aimed at improving the study program and ensuring the quality of education". In accordance with the binding law, PKA conducts quality evaluations of individual fields of study (Article 241 - 242) and expresses to the Minister opinions on the entry of a non-public higher education institution into the register and opinions on meeting the conditions for conducting studies in a specific field of study, level and profile of study and the relationship between studies and the strategy of a higher education institution (Article 258 (1) (1-2)) of the Law. In addition, the Act (Article 243) includes the possibility of conducting a comprehensive evaluation by PKA. Article 241 (2) specifies general criteria, which PKA should take into consideration when conducting evaluations of individual fields of study (programme evaluation), which was reflected in the evaluation criteria adopted by the plenary session of PKA. Article 241 (2) sets the framework for external quality assurance activities. PKA is responsible for conducting evaluation and awarding ratings in accordance with the scale specified in the Law.

Table 17 presents the mapping of programme evaluation criteria against standards specified in ESG 2015, Part 1. Detailed tables, containing the development of individual education quality standards separately for the general academic and practical profile, are attached in [Appendix no 9](#).

**Table 17.** Mapping programme evaluation criteria against standards of ESG, Part 1

General profile	Practical profile	ESG 2015
<b>Criterion 1. Structure of the study programme: concept of education, learning objectives and outcomes</b>		
Quality education standard 1.1 Quality education standard 1.2 Quality education standard 1.2a Quality education standard 1.2b	Quality education standard 1.1 Quality education standard 1.2 Quality education standard 1.2a Quality education standard 1.2b	ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes
<b>Criterion 2. Implementation of the study programme: programme contents, timetable for the implementation of the study programme, forms and organisation of classes, methods of education, student placements, organisation of the teaching and learning process</b>		
Quality education standard 2.1 Quality education standard 2.1a Quality education standard 2.2 Quality education standard 2.2a Quality education standard 2.3a Quality education standard 2.4 Quality education standard 2.4a Quality education standard 2.5 Quality education standard 2.5a	Quality education standard 2.1 Quality education standard 2.1a Quality education standard 2.2 Quality education standard 2.2a Quality education standard 2.3a Quality education standard 2.4 Quality education standard 2.4a Quality education standard 2.5 Quality education standard 2.5a	ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
<b>Criterion 3. Admission to studies, verification of learning outcomes achievement by students, giving credit for individual semesters and years and awarding diplomas</b>		
Quality education standard 3.1 Quality education standard 3.2 Quality education standard 3.2a Quality education standard 3.3	Quality education standard 3.1 Quality education standard 3.2 Quality education standard 3.2a Quality education standard 3.3	1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment





**Criterion 4. Competence, experience, qualifications and the number of staff providing education. Staff development and in-service training**

Quality education standard 4.1 Quality education standard 4.1a Quality education standard 4.2	Quality education standard 4.1 Quality education standard 4.1a Quality education standard 4.2	ESG 1.5 Teaching staff
---	---	------------------------

**Criterion 5. Education infrastructure and resources used in the implementation of the study programme and their improvement**

Quality education standard 5.1 Quality education standard 5.1a Quality education standard 5.2	Quality education standard 5.1 Quality education standard 5.1a Quality education standard 5.2	ESG 1.6 Learning resources and student support
---	---	--

**Criterion 6. Cooperation with social and economic stakeholders on the development, implementation and improvement of the study programme and its impact on the development of the degree programme**

Quality education standard 6.1 Quality education standard 6.2	Quality education standard 6.1 Quality education standard 6.2	ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes
--	--	---

**Criterion 7. Conditions for and methods of improving the internationalisation of education provided as part of the degree programme**

Quality education standard 7.1 Quality education standard 7.2	Quality education standard 7.1 Quality education standard 7.2	ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes ESG 1.6 Learning resources and student support
--	--	---

**Criterion 8. Supporting learning, social, academic or professional development of students and their entry on the labour market. Development and improvement of such support**

Quality education standard 8.1 Quality education standard 8.2	Quality education standard 8.1 Quality education standard 8.2	ESG 1.6 Learning resources and student support
--	--	--

**Criterion 9. Public access to information about the study programme, conditions for its implementation and achieved results**

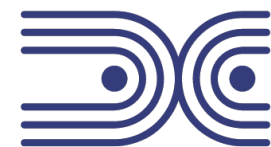
Quality education standard 9.1 Quality education standard 9.2	Quality education standard 9.1 Quality education standard 9.2	ESG 1.8 Public Information
--	--	----------------------------

**Criterion 10. Quality assurance policy, designing, approving, monitoring, reviewing and improving the study programme**

Quality education standard 10.1 Quality education standard 10.2	Quality education standard 10.1 Quality education standard 10.2	ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes ESG 1.7 Information management ESG 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
--	--	--

Source: Authors

In the case of expressing opinions on meeting the conditions for conducting studies in a specific field of study, level and profile of study and the relationship between studies and the strategy of a higher education institution, PKA does not take decisions on the establishment of higher education institutions and on granting authorisations to provide degree programmes in specific fields of study, at specific levels and with specific degree profiles. Upon a request of a rector and having consulted the



Polish Accreditation Committee, the Minister of Education and Science takes the decision concerning learning outcomes specified by the HEI's senate and the fulfilment of the conditions set forth in the regulations issued under Articles 53-82, where the requirements for degree programmes in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, midwifery, medical analysis/ laboratory medicine, physiotherapy, medical rescue, veterinary medicine, and architecture; training of students preparing for the profession of a teacher, and in some cases having consulted a competent minister having supervision over a HEI, as referred to in Article 433 (1), i.e. the Minister of National Defence – in the case of military higher education institutions; minister competent for internal affairs or minister competent for justice – in the case of public services higher education institutions; minister competent for culture and national heritage – in the case of higher education institutions for the arts; minister competent for health – in the case of higher education institutions for medical studies; minister competent for maritime economy – in the case of higher education institutions for maritime studies. (Article 433 (1) (1-5) of the Law on Higher Education and Science).

It is worth highlighting that only HEIs, that do not have the academic category A+, A or B+ in specific discipline or disciplines, and therefore also the right to award the degree of doktor habilitowany in specific discipline or disciplines, to which a given degree programme is assigned, must apply for the authorisation to provide degree programmes in specific fields of study, at specific levels and with specific degree profile. HEI's holding scientific category A+, A lub B+ in specific discipline or disciplines can provide degree programmes with general and practical profiles in the fields of study which correspond to this discipline/these disciplines at the levels of study determined by a resolution of the senate.

The analysis of binding regulations shows that PKA does not conduct ex-ante evaluation in the classic sense of the term, but is a participant in a decision-making process, through which the Minister of Education and Science goes, and which results in the issuance by the Minister of a decision to grant an HEI the authorisation to provide degree programmes at a given level and with a given degree profile.

In this process, PKA serves as an opinion-giving body, and the scope of its opinions is set out in Article 54 (2) (1) of the Law on Higher Education and Science. The conditions for conducting studies have been defined both in the Law on Higher Education and Science and in the regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of September 27, 2018 on studies. The study regulation specifies, in detail the contents of an application for such an authorisation. Although the contents of the applications specified in the above-mentioned regulations require separate description on activities aimed at improving the study program and ensuring the quality of education internal quality assurance system.

Therefore, when drawing up an opinion on an application, the Polish Accreditation Committee builds on material evidence, the contents of which are determined by the Minister of Education and Science in the above-mentioned regulation.

After a HEI obtains a favourable decision from the Ministry Education and Science and launches a degree programme, PKA conducts programme evaluation, usually upon the completion of the first cycle of education. Such programme evaluation also includes an assessment of the effectiveness of the internal education quality assurance system. In the case of programmes in medicine, programme evaluation of a newly established field of study is conducted at the end of the first year and also third year of education. It is worth noting that programme evaluation of any field of study may be conducted at any time, at the request of the Minister of Science and Higher Education.

Therefore, Table 18, which illustrates criteria used by PKA while expressing opinions on meeting the conditions for conducting studies in a specific field of study, level and profile of study and the

relationship between studies and the strategy of a higher education institution. Detailed tables, containing the development of individual education quality standards separately for the general academic and practical profile, are attached as [Appendix no. 9](#).

**Table 18.** Mapping of the criteria used in drawing up opinions on applications against ESG, Part 1

General profile	Practical profile	ESG 2015
<b>Criterion 1. Structure of the study programme: concept of education, learning objectives and outcomes</b>		
Quality education standard 1.1 Quality education standard 1.2 Quality education standard 1.2a Quality education standard 1.2b	Quality education standard 1.1 Quality education standard 1.2 Quality education standard 1.2a Quality education standard 1.2b	ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes
<b>Criterion 2. Implementation of the study programme: programme contents, timetable for the implementation of the study programme, forms and organisation of classes, methods of education, student placements, organisation of the teaching and learning process</b>		
Quality education standard 2.1 Quality education standard 2.1a Quality education standard 2.2 Quality education standard 2.2a Quality education standard 2.3a Quality education standard 2.4 Quality education standard 2.4a Quality education standard 2.5 Quality education standard 2.5a	Quality education standard 2.1 Quality education standard 2.1a Quality education standard 2.2 Quality education standard 2.2a Quality education standard 2.3a Quality education standard 2.4 Quality education standard 2.4a Quality education standard 2.5 Quality education standard 2.5a	ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
<b>Criterion 3. Admission to studies, verification of learning outcomes achievement by students, giving credit for individual semesters and years and awarding diplomas</b>		
Quality education standard 3.1 Quality education standard 3.2 Quality education standard 3.2a	Quality education standard 3.1 Quality education standard 3.2 Quality education standard 3.2a	1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
<b>Criterion 4. Competence, experience, qualifications and the number of staff providing education. Staff development and in-service training</b>		
Quality education standard 4.1 Quality education standard 4.1a Quality education standard 4.2	Quality education standard 4.1 Quality education standard 4.1a Quality education standard 4.2	ESG 1.5 Teaching staff
<b>Criterion 5. Education infrastructure and resources used in the implementation of the study programme and their improvement</b>		
Quality education standard 5.1 Quality education standard 5.1a Quality education standard 5.2	Quality education standard 5.1 Quality education standard 5.1a Quality education standard 5.2	ESG 1.6 Learning resources and student support
<b>Criterion 6. Cooperation with social and economic stakeholders on the development, implementation and improvement of the study programme and its impact on the development of the degree programme</b>		
Quality education standard 6.1	Quality education standard 6.1	ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes

### Criterion 7. Conditions for and methods of improving the internationalisation of education provided as part of the degree programme

Quality education standard 7.1	Quality education standard 7.1	ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes ESG 1.6 Learning resources and student support
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	---

### Criterion 8. Supporting learning, social, academic or professional development of students and their entry on the labour market. Development and improvement of such support

Quality education standard 8.1 Quality education standard 8.2	Quality education standard 8.1 Quality education standard 8.2	ESG 1.6 Learning resources and student support
--	--	--

### Criterion 9. Public access to information about the study programme, conditions for its implementation and achieved results

Quality education standard 9.1	Quality education standard 9.1	ESG 1.8 Public Information
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------

### Criterion 10. Quality assurance policy, designing, approving, monitoring, reviewing and improving the study programme

Quality education standard 10.1 Quality education standard 10.2	Quality education standard 10.1 Quality education standard 10.2	ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes ESG 1.7 Information management ESG 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
--	--	--

Source: Author

## Recommendation 2018 ENQA

The opinion giving procedure should be fully aligned with the requirements of Part 1 of the ESG.	Following ENQA review panel recommendation PKA based on changes in the Law on HE Act of 20 July 2018, developed new criteria for the opinion giving process that are aligned with requirements of Part 1 of the ESG. The new criteria together with the Statute were published on the website <a href="http://www.pka.edu.pl">www.pka.edu.pl</a> . The criteria were reported directly to EQAR in 2019 during registration of PKA.
--	---

## ESG Standard 2.3 Implementing processes

External quality assurance process should be reliable, useful, predefined, implemented consistently and published. They include

- a self-assessment or equivalent,
- an external assessment normally including a site visit,
- a report resulting from the external assessment,
- a consistent follow-up.

### **Evidence proving that the standard has been met:**

- The evaluation process includes self-evaluation, site visit, site visit report, and follow-up procedure.
- The self-assessment report and site visit report, the internal structure of which indicates a list of major issues, reflect the criteria applied by the Committee.
- In addition to the detailed assessment criteria and education quality standards included in the report template, PKA additionally developed and published on the website indicators of achieving individual education quality standards, as well as sheets of achieving education quality standards, which, on the one hand, are a description of expectations towards the evaluation panel, and in the case of sheets, also the working material used in the evaluation process, and on the other hand, they are a tool supporting the evaluated HEI's.
- The self-assessment report and site visit report contain references to previous recommendations and corrective action taken.
- PKA applies a follow-up procedure in order to verify if a given HEI has complied with the recommendations of PKA.
- Having undergone the evaluation procedure, HEI's are obliged to include in the self-assessment report, as an integral part, corrective actions taken or improvements in response to previous recommendation of PKA.
- Before PKA takes the decision, the report of the evaluation panel is sent to the HEI accompanied by a request that the HEI provides a reply to comments contained in it.
- PKA publishes site visit reports and HEI statement in response to the reports and resolutions adopted by Presidium PKA with justification.
- After the decision of the Minister of Education and Science issued as a result of the completion of administrative proceedings regarding the HEI's application for permission to establish studies, PKA publishes a resolution on its website, including an opinion on the fulfillment of the conditions for conducting studies in a given field of study, level and profile, and the connection of studies with the HEI strategy. Such a publication is a statutory requirement.

PKA performs its statutory tasks in accordance with adopted procedures, which are specified in the Statutes and included in PKA's internal quality assurance system. The procedures, detailed evaluation criteria and specimen documents are published on PKA's website and external stakeholders are informed about them.

### ***(Ex post) Programme evaluations***

In accordance with the Statutes, PKA's evaluation process includes: the preparation of a self-assessment report by a HEI, in accordance with the guidelines and template adopted by the Presidium; a site visit conducted in accordance with the rules adopted by the Presidium; a report prepared by an evaluation panel in accordance with the template adopted by the Presidium; submitting the evaluation panel's report to the higher education institution; the HEI adopts its position on the evaluation panel's report; the Section concerned or the Section for Teacher Education prepares an opinion on the basis of the report of the evaluation panel and the position of the higher education institution adopted in response to the report; the Presidium adopts a resolution on the rating. The evaluation procedure is carried out by the evaluation panel composed of PKA members, experts and panel's secretary. The PKA Secretary appoints evaluation panels, which are composed of from up to seven members. Academic units providing education in the field of study undergoing evaluation in a given year submit their self-evaluation reports to the Committee within six weeks of the date of receipt of evaluation notice. The template for self-evaluation report calls for self-reflection in all areas of activity related to programme evaluation criteria, and in the case of programme evaluation shortened for a period of up to two years, additionally in the scope of actions taken in connection with remedial recommendations, indicating the need for immediate remove errors and inconsistencies, as well as take effective



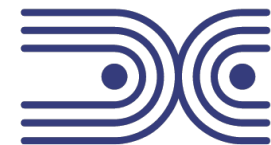
preventive measures. The programme evaluations conducted by the Polish Accreditation Committee take into consideration the changes introduced as a result of previous evaluations. Section of the reports devoted to this issue are included in the procedures on programme evaluations made after two years and follow-up evaluations. In the case of positive ratings for 6 years, recommendations are designed only to improve a good education process, their adoption is examined in the course of the subsequent programme evaluation.

In 2022, PKA changed the concept of conducting program evaluations, in which the resolution of the PKA's Presidium on a positive programme evaluations shortened duration to 2 years. In accordance with the adopted concept, after issuing a positive evaluation short for a period of up to two years, the Commission conducts a full programme evaluation of a given field of study, while assessing the degree of implementation of the recommendations formulated as a result of the previous evaluation procedure. It should be noted that failure to implement the recommendations from the previous visit, in accordance with the terms of issuing a program evaluation, constitutes the basis for issuing a negative evaluation. A site visit is undertaken in accordance with the rules for conducting site visits laid down by the Presidium of PKA and published on its website ([Appendix no. 10](#)). A site visit lasts two days and, among other things, includes a meeting with the authorities of the HEI providing the field of study under evaluation; class inspections; inspection of teaching facilities, including the buildings of the HEI and other buildings used in the teaching process in a given field of study; meetings with academic teachers and other persons teaching classes in the field of study under evaluation, meetings with students, representatives of socio-economic stakeholders. After conducting the site visit, the panel draws a report within two weeks from the end of the site visit. In the case of evaluations made at the request of the Minister, the Panel presents the report immediately. More information about reporting is presented in the section ESG Standard 2.6 Reporting. In order to ensure adequate quality of site visit reports sent to HEI authorities, PKA has implemented a procedure for internal verification of this type of documents; each report drawn by a chair of an evaluation panel must be approved by the PKA Secretary. The cohesion of the document is analysed (along with the adoption of recommendations presented by PKA during previous evaluations) and the consistency of the scope of the evaluation with the requirements included in the templates posted online are verified. The report of the evaluation panel is sent to the higher education institution, which may provide feedback to it. Then, after receiving HEIs feedback, the evaluation issue is considered by the PKA's Section. In a meeting of the Presidium, the Chair of the Section or a person appointed by the Chair presents the minutes of the Section's meeting featuring an opinion and a draft resolution on the rating, together with its justification. The Committee presents all the ratings, along with justification and conclusions, immediately upon their adoption. A party dissatisfied with a resolution adopted by the Presidium can submit a request for reconsideration of the matter within 14 days of the date of the delivery of the resolution (ESG Standard). The Committee posts on its website ratings and resolutions along with justifications.

In order to provide to stakeholders access to the results of the Committee's work, PKA posts on its website the results of education quality evaluations, reports on programme evaluations, resolutions with justification and HEI statement in response to the panel report, and reports for a given year and a term of office.

Since October 2020 PKA has been implementing and providing programme evaluation procedure remotely - due to the pandemic situation of SARS-Cov-2 the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee made up decision to conduct all programme evaluation procedures remotely. The adopted change only affected the mode of procedure delivery while the quality criteria and standards remained unchanged. In order to support PKA's review panels (internal trainings and consultations) and HEIs in





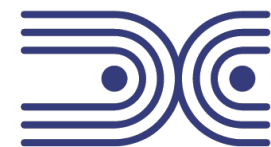
pandemic situation (open webinars) PKA decided to deliver series of webinars on the remote procedure and its schedule as well as published the FAQ on its website. In February 2021 PKA highlighted the issues of distance learning and teaching in the indicators of compliance with the quality standards, e.g. under criterion 2 concerning the implementation of the study program, the g indicator in the following wording: (teaching methods) enable the adaptation of the learning process to the diverse needs of group and individual students, including the needs of students with disabilities, as well as the implementation of individual educational paths, was given the following wording: (learning methods) enable the adaptation of the learning process, also with the use of distance learning methods and techniques, to the diverse needs of group and individual students, including the needs of students with disabilities, as well as the implementation of individual learning paths. In September 2022, due to the continuing epidemic emergency, the Presidium of the PKA decided to maintain the conduct of visits remotely with three exceptions. Pursuant to resolution no 845/2022 Presidium of the PKA of 14 September 2022, by 31 March 2023, the PKA will conduct visits remotely, without the presence of members of the evaluation panel at the HEI (site visits implemented in the remote formula), with the proviso that: in the case of programme evaluations carried out at the request of the Minister of Education and Science referred to in § 4 clause 4 point 2 of the Statutes, the site visit shall be conducted in a stationary form; at the justified request of the section referred to in § 3 points 1 and 2 of the Statute, supported by the premises submitted by the members of the section or the section for teacher education to conduct a full-time programme evaluation, the Presidium of the PKA may decide to conduct a site visit in a stationary form; at the justified request of the section referred to in § 3 points 1 and 2 of the Statutes, supported by premises submitted by the HEI, the Presidium of the PKA may decide to conduct a site visit in a stationary form. The Presidium of the PKA will adopt a resolution on the manner of conducting site visits when carrying out programme evaluation after 31 March 2023 by 31 January 2023, taking into account the conditions for safe conduct a site visit in a stationary form.

#### ***(Ex-ante) Programme accreditation/evaluation***

The Polish Accreditation Committee follows the opinion-giving procedure in relation to applications submitted by HEIs, which are not authorised to establish and provide degree programmes on their own. At the request of a rector and by way of a decision, the Minister, having consulted the opinion of a minister supervising the HEI and of the Polish Accreditation Committee in the scope of the conditions to be met by HEI in order to offer programmes in a specific field and at a specific level of study, grants authorisation to provide degree programmes and compliance of studies with the strategy of the HEI. The law also stipulates the procedure to be followed in the event of an application for granting authorisation to provide a degree programme, as well as the (opinion-giving) role of PKA, whereas the above-mentioned regulation defines the scope of the opinion, and specific contents of the application. In accordance with the scope of the opinion defined in the law and specific contents of the application specified in the regulation, PKA has prepared templates for opinions on applications (separately for academic and practical profiles) and posted them on its website.

Reviews are prepared by members of relevant Sections or experts appointed by the PKA Secretary in consultation with the Chair of a given Section or the Section for Teacher Education, and in matters referred to in Statute Article(4)(1)(2) also in consultation with the Chair of the student experts section for reviewing requests. The Chair of the Section or a member appointed by the Chair gives account of the matter at a meeting of the Section. The Section prepares opinions and resolutions not later than within four weeks of the date of the receipt of a review or a report on a site visit, if a site visit is indispensable for comprehensive assessment of the application. Resolutions of the Presidium are forwarded to the Minister and higher education institutions or applicants not later than within two weeks of the date of their adoption. In the case of higher education institutions supervised by ministers other than the Minister, a resolution is also forwarded to the competent minister. The importance of





PKA's opinions on the establishment of higher education institutions and granting them authorisations to provide degree programmes in specific fields of study, at specific levels and with specific degree profiles should also be stressed. Negative opinions on the application for the establishment of a new field of study does not prevent the HEI from the possibility to make corrections and file the documents again, and detailed justification included in the resolution of the Presidium of PKA precisely indicates elements that need to be improved. With subsequent applications, the Committee notices better adjustment to quality standards set by PKA and closer observance of legal regulations, which contributes to improving the quality of education.

Each HEI concerned can appeal against a resolution adopted by the PKA Presidium (*for more information, see: ESG Standard 2.7 Complaints and appeals*).

#### Related documents:

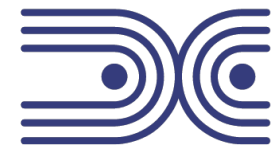
- aw on Higher Education - [Appendix no. 2](#);
- Statutes of PKA - [Appendix no. 1](#);
- Templates for self-evaluation report, site visit report, review of an application – Appendix no. 11, available on the website: <https://www.pka.edu.pl/en/home-page/>;
- Rules of conducting site visits during programme evaluation – [Appendix no. 10](#);
- Resolution nr 845/2022 Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee of 14 September 2022 on conducting site visits for programme evaluation in the academic year 2022/2023 – [Appendix no. 12](#);
- Remote assessment procedure – [Appendix no. 13](#);
- The procedure of the assessment conducted stationary with the use of remote communication tools – [Appendix no. 14](#);
- Indicators of meeting the quality standards of education, highlighting the changes introduced in February 2021 regarding the assessment of education provided with the use of methods and distance learning techniques (on site).

#### Recommendation 2018 ENQA

PKA should increase the transparency of the process in the opinion giving procedure, particularly regarding the availability of documents for the applying institution.	After the decision of the Minister of Education and Science issued as a result of the completion of administrative proceedings regarding the HEI's application for permission to establish studies, PKA publishes a resolution on its website, including an opinion on the fulfillment of the conditions for conducting studies in a given field of study, level and profile, and the connection of studies with the HEI strategy. Such a publication is a statutory requirement. They are also on cyclical basis uploaded to DEQAR database.
---	---

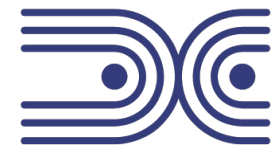
#### ESG Standard 2.4 Peer-review experts

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).



#### **Evidence proving that the standard has been met:**

- Student representatives are involved in each programme evaluation site visit as well as review each application in the process of giving opinions.
- President of the Student Parliament of the Republic of Poland participates in the work of the Polish Accreditation Committee by the virtue of law.
- Employers' representatives take part in each programme evaluation site visit.
- The amendment to the PKA Statute of 2022 established a legal framework for the involvement employers in the process of giving opinions on the fulfilment of conditions for the provision of degree programmes in a given field of study, at a given level and with a specific degree profile, and on the relationship between a degree programme and the strategy of a higher education institution, on principles analogous to the participation of students. At the request of the President of the PKA, the coordinator of experts from the group of employers conducted an analysis of the cooperation with individual experts from those group and proposed candidates who in the future could be appointed to the team of experts appointed by employers or organizations representing their organizations for reviewing applications. In addition, these people underwent appropriate training in the form of a webinar conducted by the PKA Secretary.
- Student representative and employers' representative are involved in decision making process by their presence in PKA's Presidium.
- PKA operates, monitors and updates a procedure and criteria for the selection of individual groups of experts (last update introduced in 2018). Rules and procedure for the appointment of Polish Accreditation Committee's experts regulates Annex No. 6 to the Statutes of the Polish Accreditation Committee.
- The expert recruitment procedure is open and transparent, and lists of experts are available on PKA website <https://www.pka.edu.pl/lista-ekspertow-i-sekretarzy/>.
- PKA adopted rules for the division of duties between the members of the evaluation panels, which are binding for all chairmen of the panels. At the same time, the PKA has evidence from each evaluation procedure, i.e. reports of evaluation panel prepared by experts on the assessment procedure, which confirm arrangements between all panel members regarding final assessments under each criterion as well as the most important issues that should be highlighted in the site visit report.
- PKA President has appointed a coordinator for cooperation with employers and a coordinator for cooperation with student experts who provide the relevant groups of experts with substantive support and monitor the Committee's assistance from the perspective of its adequacy to relevant tasks.
- In 2020, PKA developed and implemented a new model of communication and cooperation within the evaluation panel. The basis of the adopted solution is that each member, expert and secretary of the PKA evaluation panel has an e-mail address in the pka.edu.pl domain with the Microsoft 365 license assigned to it. Since then, documentation and information within the evaluation panel as well as between the team and the HEI have been transferred via virtual disk space MS Teams / MS SharePoint. In addition, evaluation panel prepare reports online using a shared online file where changes are saved in real time. Additional opportunities for ongoing contact and interaction via comments in the file and chat in the MS Teams application have also been provided. Microsoft 365 tools are also used in the process of giving opinions on the fulfilment of conditions for the provision of degree programmes in a given field of study, at a given level and with a specific degree profile, and on the relationship between a degree programme and the strategy of a higher education institution.
- PKA adopted a new concept of training activity which was approved in 2020.
- PKA monitors the training needs of its members and experts while organising regular evaluation and training meetings intended for: employer cooperation experts, student experts, experts being academic teachers and panel's secretaries.
- Since 2019, PKA has been consistently developing training and evaluation activities in the form of webinars organized for members, all expert groups and secretaries of PKA evaluation panel.

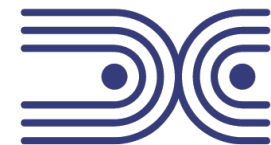


- PKA has a constantly monitored and updated database of training materials, the so-called PKApedia, containing documentation on the program evaluation procedure and application evaluation, as well as recordings from training webinars. Access to PKApedia via teams created in Microsoft Teams is provided to all members, experts and secretaries of PKA evaluation panel.
- In accordance with the program evaluation procedure, at least two preliminary meetings (briefings) for participating experts and secretaries of the PKA evaluation panel are held before the visit, including one of them no later than 10 days before the visit.
- PKA has developed an operating model in which the team, under the direction of the PKA Secretary verifies completeness and compliance with the template evaluation panel reports prior to sending them to the higher education institution concerned.
- PKA has developed and adopted a Code of Ethics preventing conflict of interest to ensure that Committee members and experts are fully independent.
- Before proceeding with the activities, both in relation to program evaluation and opinions giving process all members, experts and secretaries of the evaluation panels are required to submit a declaration on non-conflict of interest and their readiness to act in accordance with the PKA Code of Ethics.
- Information on the composition of the evaluation panel is sent to the HEI at least 14 days before the visit, therefore each HEI has the opportunity to notify PKA of a potential conflict of interest.

Taking into consideration the relevance of the competences of experts participating in evaluations to the achievement of planned outcomes, the Polish Accreditation Committee operates, monitors and updates a procedure and criteria for the selection of individual groups of experts:

1. academic teachers;
  2. students;
  3. international experts;
  4. employers;
- and
5. panel's secretary.

The evaluation of expert potential is carried out on an ongoing basis by the PKA Secretary who - as specified in the Statutes - is responsible for the organisation of the PKA's work and for initiating formal recruitment procedures, should staffing needs be identified. In addition, in accordance to the Statute, The Chairs of the Sections which are elected by their members from among themselves, are responsible for the quality and timeliness of tasks performed by the members of the Sections, the Section for Teacher Education and the Appeals Section, respectively, and cooperating experts. Also The Chairs of the Sections are responsible for the quality of the draft resolutions of the Presidium, respectively prepared by the Section, the Section for Teacher Education and the Appeals Section, until the date of the Presidium meeting at which the resolution is to be adopted, in particular in terms of compliance with the law, internal consistency, precision and transparency of theses formulated in the project as well as their justification. Committee expert recruitment is open and all relevant information is posted on the Committee's website or sent directly to potential institutions and candidates (Student Parliament of the Republic of Poland, employer associations, HR departments, etc.). Candidates for experts identified during the process are proposed by the Committee's sections operating within areas of study, the relevant body of the Student Parliament of the Republic of Poland, employers or those representing their associations. Candidates are assessed during an appropriately profiled qualification process and are approved by the President of the Committee. Expert lists are monitored, modified and completed on an ongoing basis (eg. 11 appropriate changes were made in 2022 and currently the expert and secretaries list contains about 930 names). The Secretary of the Committee must approve the composition of each evaluation panel proposed by Chairs of Sections operating within areas of study and by the Chair of the Appeals Body. There is an analogical mechanism operating in the field of

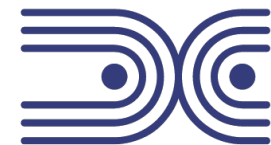


appointing reviewers of applications submitted to the Committee, including applications for reconsideration of the matter.

PKA organises or co-organises regular evaluation and training meetings which, depending on the type and subject of the meeting, are addressed to individual groups of experts or to all of them. Besides PKA recognises that its organisational professionalism requires continuous improvement in the field of the expertise of all expert groups of the Committee which, among other things, can be ensured by training programmes. In 2017-2022, the Polish Accreditation Committee regularly trained its members and all its expert groups and panel's secretary (92 training sessions). The topics of those sessions targeted to all experts or its selected groups. The content-related scope of those sessions complied with Polish legal regulations and above all - with the task-specific needs of the Polish Accreditation Committee, as well as with the latest methods of education quality assurance. The necessity of training intensification was due not only to the fact that quite a number of 5th and 6th term members started working for the Committee for the first time, but also to significant changes to the Law on Higher Education and Science, designing in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic and implementing in October 2020 a remote program evaluation procedure based on the use by members, experts and secretaries of PKA evaluation panel of Microsoft 365 tools, and - above all to the need to constantly improve experts' competences. Moreover, members, experts and panel's secretary participate in thematic seminars organised or co-organised by the Committee. [Appendix no. 6](#) contains a table presenting a detailed list of forms of continuing professional development completed by the Committee's members and experts in 2017-2022. Moreover, there are at least two preliminary meetings (briefings) for members of evaluation panel are held before the visit, including one of them no later than 10 days before the visit, in order to: share observations relating to self-evaluation reports; agree a list of matters to be discussed or explained with the participation of HEI authorities and those of the basic academic unit providing the programme under evaluation, with particular emphasis put on observations and recommendations formulated during the previous evaluation of the quality of education provided as part of this programme, final determination of tasks to be performed by individual panel members during site visits.

In accordance with the PKA's working/operational standards, representatives of all expert groups and panel's secretary who have been assigned individual competency-based tasks take part in site visits. The Committee's model of dividing tasks among evaluation panel members takes account of: proposed responsibilities for the evaluation of specific criteria; rules determining the division of responsibilities in the scope of factual investigation and ratings given to the fulfilment of individual programme evaluation criteria, as well as rules governing the preparation of site visit reports, interim reports and annexes; a description of panel's secretary responsibilities. There is a mechanism in place whereby the Secretary of a Section operating within an area of study - after consultation with the Chair of this Section - prepares a note containing the proposed composition of the evaluation panel as well as the determination of timing and tasks to be performed by individual members.

The note is submitted to the PKA Secretary who - having evaluated the proposal and declared that there is no conflict of interests - appoints an evaluation panel. Should there be any reservations as to the proposed composition of the evaluation panel, the Committee's Secretary and the Chair of the Section put forward other candidate/candidates. Therefore, any composition of an evaluation panel proposed by chairs of sections must be approved by the Secretary of the Polish Accreditation Committee. There is an analogical mechanism operating in the field of appointing reviewers of applications submitted to the Committee. Before proceeding with the activities, both in relation to program evaluation and opinions giving process all members, experts and secretaries of the evaluation



panels are required to submit a declaration on non-conflict of interest and their readiness to act in accordance with the PKA Code of Ethics.

All panel members are under the obligation to participate in the whole site visit, in accordance with its timing and schedule. Taking account of the Committee's rules of dividing responsibilities, chairs of evaluation panels divide responsibilities among evaluation panel members in the scope of factual investigation and ratings given to the fulfilment of individual programme evaluation criteria, as well as in the scope of preparing final and interim reports and annexes. Chairs of panels and experts are under the obligation to perform a thorough and expert-level factual investigation based on general and detailed guidance relating to the preparation of programme evaluation reports, and on separate guidance for the programme evaluation of programmes with a general and practical profile. Regardless of the finally agreed division of responsibilities relating to the evaluation of the extent to which specific criteria have been fulfilled, each evaluation panel member can formulate opinions, observations and recommendations. They can also indicate good practices relating to individual criteria and relay them to the Chair. It should be noted that all members of the evaluation panel have full access to all information/materials provided by HEI in the course of evaluation procedure via the MS SharePoint virtual disk space. According to a uniform site-visit schedule a panel meeting is organised at the end of each site visit, where - following a discussion about the degree of fulfilment of individual criteria - participants agree their evaluations and formulate them.

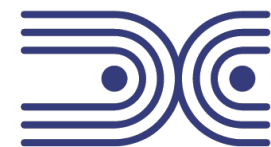
Programme evaluation site visits involve the participation of:

- experts - academic teachers;
- an expert – student representative;
- employers' representative;
- an international expert - depending on the type of evaluation and whenever possible;
- panel secretary.

During their work, experts rely on the guidance that relates to the preparation of site visit reports. This guidance consists of published standard fulfilment indicators and quality standards compliance sheets used by the Committee's members and experts as a kind of manual helping with the preparation of reports. It is also training material including webinars. It should be noted that the PKA conducted also a separate webinar devoted to the preparation of the evaluation panel's report and formulating recommendations, the recording of which is available to members, PKA experts and secretaries of the evaluation panel. Guidance for the preparation of site visit reports is also relied on by the PKA in the process of verifying the quality and completeness of site visit reports.

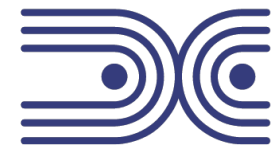
PKA seeks to involve international experts in the evaluation process as often as possible. However, as the internalisation of Polish HEIs is not very high despite a growing number of international students, programmes provided in English are rare and HEIs are reluctant to translate education-related documentation into foreign languages. Therefore, the Polish Accreditation Committee is compelled to use the services of the few international experts who speak Polish. At the same time, this is an area that the Committee considers its weakness regardless of a remedial programme already adopted. The Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee has made a commitment to increasing the involvement of international experts in all Committee-led evaluation procedures. However, as the Committee decided to withdraw from institutional evaluations in 2016, this target level is currently extremely difficult to achieve. International experts participated in each institutional procedure, and the scope of evaluation and remuneration were regarded satisfactory by persons involved in this task. The necessity to find people being not only outstanding specialists in education quality assurance, but also versed in the specificity of the legal system of Polish higher education and the conditions in which programmes are provided is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to involve international experts in





programme evaluations. The PKA sees the possibility of significantly increasing the participation of international experts in the planned comprehensive assessment, taking the position that expert panels conducting the comprehensive assessment (after its introduction) should obligatorily include the participation of international experts, which will be taken into account when designing detailed solutions for the assessment procedure as part of the comprehensive assessment.

The programme evaluation process operated by the Polish Accreditation Committee involves students and employers as full members of evaluation panels. This groups are involved in the evaluation process at each of its stages. Students and employers participate in the whole site visit in accordance with its timing and schedule. They are present at all meetings significant for the preparation of interim reports in accordance with the division of tasks. The participation of student experts in site visits (two days) as an element of the programme evaluation process was introduced in 2017 (as opposed to students' one-day participation in previous programme evaluations). The Committee introduced this change wishing to provide evaluation panels with conditions supporting effective and partner cooperation within evaluation panels. Moreover, as a result of the monitoring and evaluation of student experts' work, it became obvious that in certain situations one-day participation in the site visit made it more difficult for a student expert to evaluate student affairs in accordance with the Committee's standards. When working within their evaluation panels, student experts try to pay particular attention to outstanding, ingenious and beneficial solutions which - when successfully implemented - serve students' academic, professional and social development. The participation of all members of evaluation panels in all meetings as well as the final once enrich their competences and experience. Ensuring student experts' adequate and constant level of knowledge and skills is a particularly big challenge faced by the Committee. This is mainly due to quite a high and incessant student turnover within this expert group. Therefore, both the training programme and support offered in the form of training sessions and regular evaluations must ensure maximum effectiveness in relation to the implementation of these objectives. To meet the challenge, they have to be correlated with experts' needs. That is why a pilot programme supporting the development of Commission experts' competences was developed and implemented in 2013. The main principle of the programme consists in a comprehensive approach based on the current identification of experts' needs which offers flexibility necessary to successfully meet their development needs. The main objective of the programme focusses on raising the competences of student experts. A detailed identification of each expert's strengths and weaknesses is one of the stages of the implementation of this objective. In this way not only, it is possible to identify needs relating to professional development, but also to jointly determine individual developmental objectives whose implementation will improve the quality of tasks performed while working for the Polish Accreditation Committee. Another important element of the programme involves getting experts' opinions on the available tools and forms of support offered to them as part of cooperation with the Polish Accreditation Committee, with particular emphasis on initial training. Experts' opinions on the adequacy of training contents and methods to their knowledge, skills and competences at the moment of starting their involvement with the Committee, together with their responsibilities resulting from working as a Committee expert, facilitate the formulation of recommendations aimed at the adaptation of the current methods of expert competence development and at the creation of new ones. The following methods of collecting information are used as part of the programme: expert's self-assessment questionnaire; evaluation of site visit reports submitted by individual experts; in-depth interviews with experts. The programme of supporting the development of Committee's experts' competences has been run from May/June to November/December since 2013 when the pilot programme was implemented. Increasing the duration of training provided to candidates for student experts from 2 to 3 days is an example of programme outcomes. In response to the needs that were reported by experts, this additional day



focusses on interpersonal training aimed at the improvement of communication skills, obtaining information, public speaking and self-presentation, which is particularly important in the context of participation in meetings with various stakeholders involved in the education process. Moreover, as a result of the opinions obtained, the lecture method is now less frequently applied giving way to workshop-based group work. Currently, candidates for Committee student experts participate in a standardised training process consisting of the following stages: 1) a three-day training workshop focussing on evaluation criteria, site visit rules and report preparation principles including interpersonal training aimed at improving communication skills, obtaining information, public speaking and self-presentation. This training workshop also includes the examination and improvement of skills relating to analysis of legal regulations, synthesis of information obtained, formulation of conclusions and text edition. 2) participation in one site visit in the capacity of observer and the preparation of a site visit report which is assessed and verified by the student expert observed and by the Committee's Coordinator for Cooperation with Students. 3) the coordinator's analysis and evaluation of at least 3 reports covering subsequent site visits involving the communication of comments on the contents of the reports, ways of formulating evaluations and their reasons and interpretation.

Just like students, all candidates for Committee experts representing employers go through a standardised training system involving the following stages: 1) a two-day training workshop focussing on a detailed presentation of evaluation criteria, principles of site visits and rules governing the preparation of reports. 2) participation in at least one site visit in the capacity of an observer and the preparation of a site visit report, which is assessed and verified by the Committee's Coordinator for Cooperation with Employers. 3) the coordinator's analysis and evaluation of at least 2 reports covering subsequent site visits involving the communication of comments on the contents of the reports, ways of formulating evaluations and their reasons and interpretation. The expert candidate training programme is based on the several-year experience of the coordinator and employer experts with the most extensive experience. Recruitment shows that the level of knowledge and skills among candidates for Committee experts is quite similar, hence a standardised training process. The validity and appropriateness of this solution was later confirmed during evaluation studies. Since 2015, evaluation meetings have also been used for the purpose of preparing programmes and training material. They serve as a basis for the improvement of the programme and for the extension of the scope of new candidates' training. Apart from the participation in such meetings, experts fill in an online evaluation questionnaire where they present observations and conclusions in relation to site visits and improvement issues. Reports covering evaluation meetings and surveys constitute annexes to annual reports prepared by the coordinator. During its meetings, the Committee's Section for Employers examines and discusses evaluation outcomes. Also, as shown in the document, evaluation process/internal quality assurance experts regularly participate in training intended only for the above groups of experts and in meetings, seminars and training organised for experts who are academic teachers.

Training needs are met on a day-to-day basis, both on the initiative of the management of the Committee and its bodies and on reporting a need by chairs of sections operating within an area of study and in response to the scope of that need, most of the time linked to frequent changes to legal regulations serving as the base for the activities of the Committee. Moreover starting from April 2022, the Polish Accreditation Committee implemented a new research concept, which attended by all participants of the programme evaluation process:

- survey for higher education institutions;



- survey for members, experts and secretaries of the assessment panels at the beginning and at the end of a given term of office of the Committee;
- survey for members of evaluation panels;
- survey for secretaries of the evaluation panels.

Moreover, it was decided to introduce a survey for members, experts from the group of academic teachers, employers, students and secretaries of evaluation panels, which is completed at the beginning and at the end of a given term of office of the Committee. The survey is completely anonymous and consists of 26 questions. The aim of the survey is to get acquainted with the opinions of internal stakeholders of the Committee about itself, and thus to increase the effectiveness of actions taken by PKA in connection with the implementation of its mission and strategy, their continuous improvement, and to guarantee the implementation of statutory tasks in a manner ensuring repeatability of quality characteristics. In addition to the new concept of the survey, PKA still intends to use the feedback mechanism through:

- External consultation process as well as regular meetings between the Presidium and HEIs representative bodies;
- Quality window;
- Annual Quality Forum with broad participation of stakeholders etc.

Information obtained using the above-mentioned tools are also aimed at constant monitoring and identification of training needs of members, experts and panel secretaries.

In the opinion-giving procedure reviews are prepared by members of relevant Sections or experts appointed from among group of experts - academic teachers by the Secretary in consultation with the Chair of the Section and students. The Chair of the Section or a member appointed by the Chair gives account of the matter at a meeting of the Section. The opinion giving procedure is initiated and implemented by the PKA's Section. Besides the President of the Students Parliament of the Republic of Poland and employers' representative is a member of the PKA's Presidium by virtue of law. Both in the procedure of opinion giving on applications and evaluations, all members of the Section as well as the Presidium are obliged to read the source documentation, which is made available via virtual disk space, and express their opinion on the matter during the meetings. It is also worth noting that the opinion of the students' self-government at the applying HEI concerning the study program is obligatory element of each application and is used in the opinion giving procedure by PKA. Thus, representatives of students as well as employers have a significant impact on the opinions regarding the applications. Although in the course of PKA's current activities, students had the opportunity to express an additional opinion in the opinion giving process through the participation of their representative in the PKA's Presidium, in 2018/2019 PKA's President acknowledging the recommendations of the ENQA review panel, immediately decided to set up a team of student experts to issue their judgements in opinion giving procedure, whose activities ensure more systematic participation of students in the process of reviewing applications. The task of this team includes presentation opinions on applications regarding the awarding to HEI or its basic organizational unit the right to run study programme in a specific field, level and profile. Since then, students, together with experts from the group of academic teachers, review each application for permission to establish studies.

The amendment to the PKA Statute of 2022 established a legal framework for the involvement employers in the process of giving opinions on the fulfilment of conditions for the provision of degree programmes in a given field of study, at a given level and with a specific degree profile, and on the relationship between a degree programme and the strategy of a higher education institution, on principles analogous to the participation of students. At the request of the President of the PKA, the

coordinator of experts from the group of employers conducted an analysis of the cooperation with individual experts from those group and proposed candidates who in the future could be appointed to the team of experts appointed by employers or organizations representing their organizations for reviewing applications. In addition, these people underwent appropriate training in the form of a webinar conducted by the PKA Secretary.

The Polish Accreditation Committee has introduced a multi-stage mechanism for preventing conflict of interest between members and experts: 1) careful and transparent candidate selection; 2) making a statement confirming the absence of conflict of interest resulting from the performance of tasks; 3) verification of each evaluation panel composition by the PKA Secretary; 4) accountability to the Section for Ethics (more ESG Standard 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct); 5) Information on the composition of the evaluation panel is sent to HEI at least 14 days before the visit, therefore each HEI has the opportunity to notify PKA of a potential conflict of interest.

#### Related documents:

- Criteria and mode of appointing experts of the Polish Accreditation Committee - [Appendix no. 1](#);
- Criteria and mode of appointing secretaries of the PKA evaluation panel - [Appendix no. 15](#);
- Rules for conducting site visits as part of programme evaluation - [Appendix no. 10](#);
- Resolution nr 845/2022 Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee of 14 September 2022 on conducting site visits for programme evaluation in the academic year 2022/2023 – [Appendix no. 12](#);
- The Code of Ethics of PKA - [Appendix no. 5](#);
- Table presenting a detailed list of forms of continuing professional development completed by the Committee's members and experts in 2017-2022 - [Appendix no. 6](#) ;
- Final report of the programme "Support for the development of competences of PKA experts" (available on site);
- New concept of PKA training activity approved in 2020 with attachments (available on site).

#### Recommendation 2018 ENQA

<p>PKA should develop a practice reassuring the equal involvement of stakeholders across the different procedures making sure all experts are involved in the relevant key steps of each procedure.</p>	<p>PKA is profoundly convinced that the adopted procedures, referring to the program evaluation, guarantee that all experts, including employers' representatives, are equal in the assessment process. Students and representatives of employers are also active participants in the opinion giving process through participation in the PKA's statutory bodies responsible for this process and the process itself.</p> <p>Student representative and employers' representative are involved in decision making process by their presence in PKA's Presidium by virtue of law. Both in the procedure of opinion giving on applications and evaluations, all members of the Section as well as the Presidium are obliged to read the source documentation, which is made available via the PKA's internal disc, and express their opinion on the matter during the meetings. It is also worth noting that the opinion of the students' self-government at the applying HEI concerning the study program is obligatory element of each application and is used in the</p>
---	---

	<p>opinion giving procedure by PKA. Thus, representatives of students as well as employers have a significant impact on the opinions regarding the applications. Besides in 2018 PKA reconfirmed students' status in the opinion giving process as an equal participants involved in the procedure by providing requirement in the PKA's Statute. Article 10 point 2. 5) indicates that the Secretary of the PKA appoints the review panel and one of the reviewers must be a member of student experts' section for reviewing applications.</p> <p>The amendment to the PKA Statute of 2022 established a legal framework for the involvement employers in the process of giving opinions.</p> <p>The opinion giving process has been conducted in PKA since 2002 in a systematic manner, regulated by procedures, subjected to continuous improvement, based on uniform documentation templates, in close cooperation with the Minister as well as with the involvement of different categories of stakeholders (mentioned above). Besides so far none of the national supervisory bodies and external control institutions hasn't raised any concerns to its conduct.</p> <p>In the case of programme evaluation PKA elaborated the rules for the division of duties between the members of the evaluation panels, which are binding for all chairmen of the panels. At the same time, the PKA has evidence from each evaluation procedure, i.e. reports of evaluation panel prepared by experts on the assessment procedure, which confirm arrangements between all panel members with regard to final assessments under each criterion as well as the most important issues that should be highlighted in the site visit report.</p>
External experts, particularly students should be used in the opinion giving process.	<p>Although in the course of PKA's current activities, students had the opportunity to express an additional opinion in the opinion giving process through the participation of their representative in the PKA's Presidium, PKA's President acknowledging the recommendations of the ENQA review panel, immediately decided to set up a team of student experts to issue their judgements in opinion giving procedure, whose activities will ensure more systematic participation of students in the process of reviewing applications. The task of this team includes presentation opinions on applications regarding the awarding to HEI or its basic organizational unit the right to run study programme in a</p>



	<p>specific field, level and profile. On the other hand, PKA believes that employers at the current stage, as mentioned above, are involved respectively in the process.</p> <p>However the amendment to the PKA Statute of 2022 established a legal framework for the involvement employers in the process of giving opinions.</p>
--	---

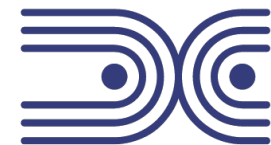
## ESG Standard 2.6 Reporting

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

### Evidence proving that the standard has been met:

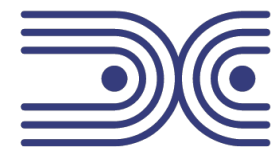
- Upon the completion of the evaluation process, reports on programme evaluations, resolutions with justification and HEI statement in response to the report are posted on PKA's website and in the Public Information Bulletin (Polish: Biuletyn Informacji Publicznej (BIP)). Such a publication is a statutory requirement.
- After the decision of the Minister of Education and Science issued as a result of the completion of administrative proceedings regarding the HEI's application for permission to establish studies, PKA publishes a resolution on its website, including an opinion on the fulfillment of the conditions for conducting studies in a given field of study, level and profile, and the connection of studies with the HEI strategy. Such a publication is a statutory requirement.
- Besides so far PKA published a total of 2,966 reports on 345 institutions in the DEQAR database.
- The site visit report has a coherent structure and is standardised for all types of evaluation (general and practical degree profiles). It is also compatible with the self-assessment report.
- Templates for site visit reports and opinions are posted on PKA's website.
- Before PKA adopts a final resolution on programme evaluation, it sends the report to the HEI with a request for providing a reply to comments contained in it (factual accuracy check).
- PKA requests feedback from the higher education institutions under evaluation concerning the whole evaluation process, which takes form of survey questionnaires. One of the aspects of the survey is assessing the usefulness of site visit reports. On the other hand, PKA also request feedback from the panel of experts whether the evaluation process allowed to complete site visit reports in a sufficient manner and whether the content of self-evaluation reports as well as site visits' report are adequate and correspond with the procedure.

Templates for site visit [reports](#) are designed in such a way that they can be published in any number of copies. The reports consist of two parts: open and secret one. The latter is intended for the HEI only and contains sensitive information covered by personal data protection. This means that PKA has introduced the rule of publishing the site visit reports. This rule has been confirmed in Article 247 (1) of the Law on Higher Education and Science.



When designing the structure of the documents, the PKA Presidium followed the rule that they should reflect the adopted criteria. In order to facilitate the searching for key opinions presented by experts, at the end of each section of the report, there is an assessment of the degree of fulfillment of a given criterion together with a synthetic one and consistent justification for the assessment; good practices, including those that may be the basis for awarding a HEIs with the Certificate of Educational Excellence; recommendations on individual assessment criteria; and recommendations regarding individual criteria listed in the resolution of the PKA's Presidium on programme evaluation in the field of study, which preceded the current evaluation along with the evaluation of their fulfillment (if applicable). The above-mentioned elements of the report are preceded by the presentation of a coherent description and analysis of the facts, which confirms the fulfillment of the criteria with an indication of strengths and weaknesses. It should also be noted that the possibility of presenting good practices in the report is a key element of the diagnostic function of evaluation reports and supporting HEIs in building a culture of quality education, as well as, by publishing reports, disseminating good practices. This approach contributes to the exchange of experiences and promotion of quality solutions, both in the field of education quality management and improvement of the learning process. Maintaining symmetry between the structure of the self-assessment report and site visit report makes the evaluation of education quality more transparent and comprehensible. Templates for self-assessment reports, site visit reports, reviews and opinions on meeting the conditions for conducting studies in a specific field of study, level and profile of study and the relationship between studies and the strategy of a higher education institution are posted at - <https://www.pka.edu.pl/en/home-page/> (Tab: assessments / templates, giving opinions / templates). At present, the reports are structured as follows:

1. Information about the visit and its course;
  - 1.1. The compositions of the PKA evaluation panel;
  - 1.2. Information about the evaluation process;
2. Basic information about the study programme of the field of study under evaluation;
3. Assessment of the degree of satisfying the programme evaluation criteria;
4. Description of the fulfilment of detailed criteria for programme evaluation and education quality standards;  
Criteria 1-10 (separately for each criterion);  
Analysis of actual facts and the assessment of the degree of satisfying the criterion;  
Recommendations regarding individual criteria listed in the resolution of the PKA Presidium on program evaluation in the field of study, which preceded the current evaluation along with the assessment of their fulfillment (if applicable)  
Proposal for the rating describing the degree of meeting the criterion (criterion fulfilled/ criterion partially fulfilled/ criterion not fulfilled)  
Justification, considering the strengths and weaknesses;  
Good practices, including those that may form the basis for awarding to higher education institution  
a Certificate of Educational Excellence;  
Recommendations;
5. Annex  
Legal basis of the evaluation of education quality;  
Detailed schedule of the site visit and the division of tasks between individual members of the evaluation panel;



- Assessment of selected mid-term papers and of final theses;
- List of modules, for which staffing of classes is improper;
- Information on inspected classes and their evaluation;
- Statements by members of the evaluation panel confirming the absence of a conflict of interest and acting in accordance with the PKA Code of Ethics;
- Detailed criteria and education quality standards for programme evaluation.

The contents of the report are well structured. In order to ensure the transparency of the evaluations, in addition to the detailed evaluation criteria and education quality standards included in the report template, PKA additionally developed and published on the website indicators of meeting individual education quality standards, as well as sheets of meeting education quality standards, which, on the one hand, are a description of expectations towards the evaluation panel, and in the case of sheets, also the working material used in the evaluation process, and on the other hand, they are a tool supporting the evaluated HEI's. The development and publication of indicators of meeting the quality standards of education deepens and consolidates the transparency of program evaluation from the perspective of all stakeholders involved in it. Before PKA takes the decision, the report of the evaluation panel is sent to the HEI accompanied by a request that the HEI provides a reply to comments contained in it. The HEI's reply is handed over to the chair of the evaluation panel who presents it for examination by the panel. HEI statement in response to the report are posted on PKA's website with reports on programme evaluations and resolutions with justification.

The Polish Accreditation Committee requests feedback on the evaluation process from each higher education institution under evaluation. The feedback takes form of a survey questionnaire to be filled out online. The survey process is distinct from the evaluation process. The survey consists of 23 questions divided into 5 blocks, which cover the entire programme evaluation process. The request for feedback is submitted approximately two weeks after the assessment by the PKA Presidium. HEI can fill out the questionnaire at any time, however it is suggested to take part in the survey no later than within two weeks of receipt of the survey. The questionnaire also enables a detailed assessment of the site-visit report by assessing 15 statements on the report's features on a five-point scale. Implementation in April 2022, a new formula of evaluation study on programme evaluation, including the development of a modified questionnaire for HEIs, significantly deepened the study, among others in terms of evaluating the visit report, allowing for a detailed opinion on the comprehensibility, consistency, completeness and other 12 features, thus leading to a comprehensive and exhaustive assessment of the usefulness of the site visit report for the identification of problems and for improving quality in the areas under evaluation. On the other hand, PKA also request feedback from the panel of experts whether the evaluation process allowed to complete site visit reports in a sufficient manner and whether the content of self-evaluation reports as well as site visits' report are adequate and correspond with the procedures.

After the decision of the Minister of Education and Science issued as a result of the completion of administrative proceedings regarding the HEI's application for permission to establish studies, PKA publishes a resolution on its website, including an opinion on the fulfillment of the conditions for conducting studies in a given field of study, level and profile, and the connection of studies with the HEI strategy. The adopted solution causes that this documentation is published by the PKA with varying frequency, conditioned by the completion of the procedure by the Minister of Education and Science in the form of an administrative decision. This results from the legal analysis of PKA's role in the decision-making process, where the Minister of Education and Science is the owner of the process and



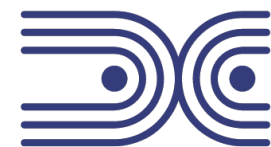
related documentation, as it is the minister who is the addressee of the application and who requests an opinion from PKA. It is also the minister who is the consumer of the opinion in the decision-making process.

PKA also takes measures aimed at investigating the needs of HEIs with reference to the site visit report. It also invites the HEIs to participate in consultation on the templates for self-assessment and site visit reports. The consultations are open and held via PKA's website.

It should also be noted that PKA has been actively involved in the implementation of the DEQAR project from the very beginning. PKA representatives participated in training and seminars related to the implementation of the project, which in turn enabled the publication of a total of 2,966 reports on 345 institutions in the DEQAR database.

### Recommendation 2018 ENQA

Expert reports and resolutions of the opinion giving process should be published.	<p>Since October 2018 PKA's resolutions and reports in the opinion giving process have been published on PKA's website.</p> <p><a href="https://www.pka.edu.pl/en/database-of-opinions/">https://www.pka.edu.pl/en/database-of-opinions/</a>  <a href="https://www.pka.edu.pl/ocena/baza-opinii-w-sprawie-spełnienia-warunkow-prowadzenia-studiow-na-okreslonym-kierunku-poziomie-i-profilu-oraz-zwiazku-studiow-ze-strategia-uczelni/">https://www.pka.edu.pl/ocena/baza-opinii-w-sprawie-spełnienia-warunkow-prowadzenia-studiow-na-okreslonym-kierunku-poziomie-i-profilu-oraz-zwiazku-studiow-ze-strategia-uczelni/</a></p> <p>Besides the resolutions and reports in the opinion giving process are uploaded to DEQAR database.</p>
When drafting the final reports for the programme evaluation procedures by the chair of the panel, PKA should setup a mechanism reassuring appropriate involvement of all experts.	<p>PKA set up a mechanism reassuring the appropriated involvement of experts by setting the rules for the division of duties between the members of the evaluation, which are binding for all chairmen of the evaluation panels. At the same time, the PKA has evidence from each evaluation procedure, i.e. reports of evaluation panels prepared by experts on programme procedure, which confirm the arrangements between panels' members regarding final assessments under each criterion, as well as the most important issues that should be addressed in the site visit report. Besides so far, PKA hasn't received any complaints from group of experts or individuals that they are not treated equally during the procedure or some problems might have occurred. Besides the President of Students' Parliament who is the member of PKA's. Presidium never raised the issue as a problematic. It should be noted that all members of the evaluation panel are required to participate in the entire site visit, in accordance with its date, uniform schedule, assuming the participation of all team members in all meetings, moreover, all evaluation panel members have full access to all information/materials provided by HEI's during the evaluation via MS SharePoint virtual disk space.</p> <p>However, at the end of 2018 PKA decided to introduce the Secretary function in the panel who is responsible for drafting the report and coordinating the entire programme evaluation procedure since its beginning to the end. The Secretary, while preparing the draft report, is obliged by the procedure to consult all steps with panel's members and after the final acceptance of all panel members report is forwarded to the appropriate PKA's Section.</p> <p>Article 18 of the PKA's Statute states that the programme evaluation process is conducted by an evaluation panel composed of PKA's members, experts</p>



	and a person acting as the panel's secretary. In 2020, PKA designed and implemented a new model of communication and cooperation within the evaluation panel. The basis of the adopted solution is that each member, expert and secretary of the PKA evaluation panel, has an e-mail address in the pka.edu.pl domain with the Microsoft 365 license assigned to it. Since then, documentation and information within the evaluation panel as well as between the team and the HEI have been transferred via virtual disk space MS Teams / MS SharePoint. In addition, evaluation panel prepare reports online using a shared online file where changes are saved in real time. Additional opportunities for ongoing contact and interaction via comments in the file and chat in the MS Teams application have also been provided.
--	---

#### Related documents:

- Law on Higher Education and Science (Article 247 (1)) - [Appendix no. 2](#);
- Statutes of the Polish Accreditation Committee (Article 23 (1-2)) - [Appendix no. 1](#).

### ESG Standard 2.7 Complaints and appeals

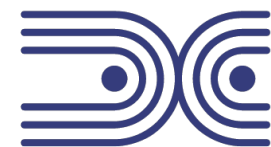
Complaints and appeals process should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

#### Evidence proving that the standard has been met:

- An independent Appeals Body acts under the Law on Higher Education and Science operates within the organisational structure of PKA.
- The appeal process has been defined in the Statutes of PKA and in the quality assurance system published on PKA website.
- Each resolution of PKA features instruction on how and when submit an application for reconsideration of the matter.
- The Section for Complaints and Motions has been formed.
- Complaints procedure is defined and published on PKA's website.

Due to the statutory tasks of the Committee and far-reaching consequences of its decisions, the appeal procedure plays a very important role in the operations of the Polish Accreditation Committee. A HEI dissatisfied with a resolution adopted by the Presidium can submit a request for reconsideration of the matter.

The inclusion of the Appeals Body in the organisational structure of PKA is one of the most important changes concerning the operation of PKA resulting from the amendment of the law in 2014. In the organisational structure of the Polish Accreditation Committee distinguished a separate Appeals Body. The Appeals Body is composed of Committee members, and at least one Body member represents one area of study. Membership in the Appeals Body cannot be combined with membership in a Section, thus the members of the Appeals Body do not participate in the preparation of an initial rating or opinion concerning education quality. Such an approach guarantees that two instances are involved in the appeals process. The Chair of the Appeals Body attends the meetings of PKA Presidium and enjoys a voting right in matters, on which the Section presented its opinions. The Presidium of PKA adopts a



resolution in open voting by a simple majority of votes in the presence of at least 50% of its members. In accordance with the appeals procedure, a resolution on a programme evaluation and on an application submitted to the Committee can be the subject of an appeal. The Presidium decides to modify a rating only in the case where the presented arguments pertain to each charge and remove any doubts that constituted the basis for the original resolution and at the same time are within the admissible limits allowing for the supplementing of information and documentation. A detailed procedure for examining an application for reconsideration of the matter was adopted in the framework of the quality assurance system and published on PKA website. In addition, each resolution of PKA features instruction on how and when submit an application for reconsideration of the matter. The Supreme Administrative Court stated that a resolution of PKA does not constitute a public administration act and as such cannot be governed by administrative jurisdiction and cannot be assessed by an Administrative Court. Therefore, resolutions adopted by the Committee are final and can be altered only by PKA.

PKA feels accountable for the decisions it makes, as they impact on the development of higher education, and strives at enhancing the quality of its work. The complaint procedure was combined with procedure of monitoring feedback from HEIs. This is why in 2021/2022 it modified the procedure for monitoring surveys, complaints and motions submitted by HEIs. The change consists in isolating the complaint procedure and detailing the current complaint procedure in terms of deadlines, its stages and responsibilities. In accordance with the PKA's Statute, PKA's President appointed the Section for Complaints and Motions. A higher education institution that is a party to the proceedings conducted by the Polish Accreditation Committee may file a complaint with regard to the course of the procedure being implemented as part of the programme evaluation or opinions-giving process. The subject of the complaint and examined under this procedure may not be substantive objections to the decisions taken, which the higher education institution may submit as part of ongoing proceedings, including as part of an application for reconsideration of the matter. Complaints may be submitted in the interest of oneself, other persons, and also in the public interest. The lodging of a complaint and / or request in the interest of another person requires their consent. As a rule, the complaint should be submitted in writing via traditional mail or e-mail in the course of the ongoing proceedings. The subject of the complaint motion may not constitute a request for reconsideration of the matter in relation to the resolution contained in the resolution adopted by the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee. Application for reconsideration of the matter are processed in accordance with Art. 245 sec. 4 of the Act of July 20, 2018, Law on Higher Education and Science under a separate procedure. The President of the PKA, after reviewing the subject of the complaint and / or motion, immediately refers the matter to the Section for Complaints and Motions and / or the Section for Ethics, if the case concerns a breach of the PKA Code of Ethics. The Section for Complaints and Motions processes the matter in accordance with the adopted regulations. The Section adopts resolutions on its decisions in open voting by a simple majority of votes cast. If the Section finds that the standards set out in the Code of Ethics have been violated, the matter is referred to the Section for Ethics. A detailed procedure for examining an application for reconsideration of the matter was adopted in the framework of the quality assurance system and published on PKA website.

**Related documents:**

- Law on Higher Education and Science (Article 245) - [Appendix no. 2](#);
- Statutes of PKA – [Appendix no. 1](#);
- Appeals procedure – [Appendix no. 16](#);
- Complain procedure - [Appendix no. 17](#);
- The Code of Ethics [Appendix no. 5](#).

## Recommendation 2018 ENQA

<p>The implementation of the appeals procedure should be improved to avoid creative use of this system and decrease the number of appeals.</p>	<p>PKA strongly disagree with the statement that PKA's criteria are creatively used in the appeal procedure. Taking into account that issues are further proceeded by the Ministry and have legal consequences (e.g. suspension of rights etc.) resolutions taken by PKA were never doubted in further procedure by Ministry or national court in a sense of criteria inconsistency or their creative use. PKA has been investigated several times by National Chamber of Auditors and results of control which were also published and discussed in the Polish Parliament never showed any creative use of PKA criteria. So far consistency use of PKA criteria have been safeguarded by detailed guidelines for members and experts. Since the beginning of 2019 the additional quality checklist have been introduced to each standard that PKA experts and bodies are required to follow. However, following the ENQA review panel recommendation, at the beginning of 2020 the President of PKA appointed the Team responsible for maintaining database of interpretations of the Polish Accreditation Committee. The task of the Team is to develop positions on the interpretation of legal provisions (generally applicable and internal), which constitute the basis for the work of PKA, and in particular regulate the conduct of program evaluations and opinion-giving process. These positions, after consultations and adoption by the Presidium of the PKA, are intended to harmonize the views of the members and experts of the PKA on the issues of understanding the law in cases causing large divergences in interpretation. All positions are also published on PKA website <a href="https://www.pka.edu.pl/baza-orzecznictwa-pka/">https://www.pka.edu.pl/baza-orzecznictwa-pka/</a></p>
<p>PKA should implement a more systematic analysis of received feedback, recommendations, complaints and data from appeals procedures to facilitate IQA and improvements of procedures.</p>	<p>The Appeals Body activity is monitored on an ongoing and regular basis, see the annual report published on PKA's website <a href="https://www.pka.edu.pl/">https://www.pka.edu.pl/</a> The high rate of appeals results mainly from the dynamic changes of the Law on HE or its regulation and rather enhance-oriented approach of PKA than the other faults of the procedure.</p>

## PART III – SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

#### AREA 1: EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT AND SUPPORTING HEIS IN BUILDING QUALITY CULTURE

##### 1.1. EDUCATION ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT

- PKA'S OFFICIAL STATUS IN POLISH HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AS A NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY, COVERING THE SCOPE OF ITS ACTIVITIES ALL HEIS;
- 20 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT IN THE POLISH HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM ALLOWING FOR EVOLUTIONARY IMPROVEMENT OF RELATED PROCESSES;
- PKA'S OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY IN DETERMINING DETAILED CRITERIA, METHODS AND PROCEDURES FOR ACCREDITATION AND IN MAKING EDUCATION QUALITY EVALUATIONS;
- APPROBATION OF THE CURRENT MODEL OF ACCREDITATION AND EDUCATION QUALITY EVALUATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION (ENQA, EQAR, US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION) AND UNDER AGREEMENTS ON RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITATION DECISIONS.

##### 1.2. PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO HEIS IN BUILDING QUALITY CULTURE

- CYCLICAL NATURE OF PROGRAMME EVALUATIONS;
- MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES ABOUT THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN POLAND, ALLOWING TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS IMPORTANT FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION, WHICH ALLOWS IT TO SUPPORT HEIS IN THE PROCESS OF BUILDING QUALITY CULTURE;
- ANNUAL QUALITY FORUM EVENTS ORGANISED BY PKA ENJOY EXCELLENT REPUTATION AND SERVE AS A PLATFORM FOR DISCUSSIONS ABOUT ISSUES OF RELEVANCE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE;
- CREATION OF A RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS TEAM AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF ANALYTICAL AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

#### AREA 2. INTERNAL RESOURCES AND PROCESSES

##### 2.1. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- THE FUNDAMENTAL INFLUENCE OF PKA ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXPERT RESOURCES ENABLING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MISSION, STRATEGY AND STATUTORY TASKS
- BUILT-IN TRAINING SYSTEM RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PKA BUREAU IS A PROFESSIONAL, CONSTANTLY DEVELOPING BUDGETARY UNIT, EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH HIGH COMPETENCES AND MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, WHOSE SUPPORT CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUCCESS OF PKA IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS MISSION, STRATEGY AND STATUTORY TASKS</li> </ul>
2.2. INTERNAL PROCESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDENTIFIED KEY PROCESSES IN THE ACTIVITIES OF PKA AND ESTABLISHED TRANSPARENT AND FUTURE-ORIENTED PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TASKS</li> <li>• KEY PROCESSES OF PKA'S OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND TRANSPARENT PROCEDURES CONCERNING THE PERFORMANCE OF TASKS HAVE BEEN ADOPTED AND PUBLISHED</li> <li>• USE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS THAT ALLOW MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROCESSES IN REAL TIME</li> <li>• STANDARDISATION FOR ALL PKA PROCEDURES</li> <li>• OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND CONTINUITY DESPITE CHANGING REQUIREMENTS OF EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT;</li> <li>• ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANSPARENT TWO-INSTANCE DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE AT PKA, INCLUDING A SEPARATE APPEAL BODY.</li> </ul>
<b>AREA 3. RELATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
3.1. ACADEMIC COMMUNITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ENSURING THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENT AND EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES IN PKA'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PROGRAMME EVALUATION AND OPINIONS-GIVING PROCEDURES</li> <li>• INSTITUTIONALIZED COOPERATION WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS AS WELL AS IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL AREAS OF COOPERATION</li> </ul>
3.2. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESTABLISHED POSITION OF PKA IN AN INTERNATIONAL ARENA RESULTING FROM ITS ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AFFILIATING QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES (ENQA, CEENQA, INQAAHE ETC.), REGISTRATION IN EQAR, IMPLEMENTATION OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS, AND PARTICIPATION IN NUMEROUS TRANSNATIONAL PROJECTS.</li> </ul>
3.3 PKA'S IMAGE <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIGH RECOGNITION IN THE AREA OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM</li> <li>• EFFECTIVE REDEFINITION OF THE ROLE OF PKA FROM CONTROL – ORIENTED TO EVALUATION AND ENHANCEMENT- LED ORGANIZATION SUPPORTING THE BUILDING OF QUALITY CULTURE</li> </ul>



## Weaknesses

### AREA 1. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT AND SUPPORTING HEIS IN BUILDING QUALITY CULTURE

#### 1.1. EDUCATION ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT

- LIMITED PROSPECTS FOR QUICK RESPONDING TO CHANGES IN EXTERNAL REQUIREMENTS, BECAUSE THE MINISTER NEEDS TO PRESENT AN OPINION ABOUT THE STATUTES OF PKA
- LIMITED IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION

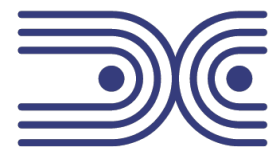
#### 1.2. PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO HEIS IN BUILDING EDUCATION QUALITY CULTURE

- LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORTING HEIS IN BUILDING QUALITY CULTURE OUTSIDE OF STATUTORY OPERATIONS OF PKA
- INSUFFICIENT USE OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE OF PKA MEETINGS IN THE PROCESS INTRODUCING CHANGES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

### AREA 2. INTERNAL RESOURCES AND PROCESSES

#### 2.1. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- LIMITED INFLUENCE ON THE SELECTION OF PKA MEMBERS
- THE SYSTEM OF REMUNERATION OF MEMBERS AND PKA MEMBERS, WHICH IS LIMITED BY LAW, WHICH PREVENTS EFFECTIVE HR POLICY AND FLEXIBLE DESIGN OF REMUNERATION POLICY ENSURING ADEQUATE REMUNERATION TO WORKLOAD
- LINKING PKA OPERATING ACTIVITIES TO A SINGLE SOURCE OF FUNDING (BUDGETARY RESOURCES). THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO PKA'S ACTIVITIES ARE LINKED TO THE STATE'S FINANCIAL POLICY
- LACK OF AN EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR PKA MEMBERS AND EXPERTS LINKED TO THE REMUNERATION AND INCENTIVE SYSTEMS
- THE LEGAL AND ORGANISATIONAL POSITION OF PKA AS AN EXPERT BODY, WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY LIMITS THE BUILDING OF LASTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE INSTITUTION AND HINDERS THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE ORGANISATION SHAPED BY THE SYSTEMATIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES POTENTIAL AND ITS INVOLVEMENT
- ROTATION OF PKA MEMBERS AND EXPERTS FORCED BY ITS TERM OF OFFICE, RESULTING IN DEFLATION OF ACCUMULATED EXPERT CAPITAL AND A COMPETENCE GAP
- INSUFFICIENT COMPETENCES, EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF SOME MEMBERS AND EXPERTS LIMITING THE PROPER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TASKS OF THE EVALUATION PANEL
- DIFFICULTY IN RECRUITING EXPERIENCED EXPERTS TO COOPERATE

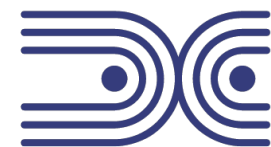


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RESISTANCE TO CHANGE AMONG SOME MEMBERS AND EXPERTS, RESULTING IN LIMITING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IMPROVEMENT PROCESSES</li> </ul>
2.2. INTERNAL PROCESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LOW DEGREE OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF PKA EVALUATION PROCEDURES</li> </ul>
<b>AREA 3. RELATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
3.1. ACADEMIC COMMUNITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LIMITED RECOGNITION OF PKA OUTSIDE—THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM</li> <li>• LOW RECOGNITION OF PKA AND ITS TASKS AMONG HEIS CANDIDATES, STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS</li> <li>• LIMITED EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF DISSEMINATING GOOD PRACTICES AND BUILDING THE VALUE OF EDUCATION EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATES AWARDED BY PKA</li> <li>• LOW LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION OF PKA REPRESENTATIVES AT EVENTS RELEVANT TO ENTITIES REPRESENTING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS</li> </ul>
3.2. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LIMITED COMPETENCE OF PKA MEMBERS AND EXPERTS TO UNDERTAKE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, AND THUS LITTLE INTEREST IN COOPERATION</li> <li>• LIMITED CORRELATION BETWEEN ACCREDITATION ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN THE COUNTRY AND THOSE CARRIED OUT BY AUTHORITATIVE AND MODEL AGENCIES AND ASSOCIATIONS OF ACCREDITATION ENTITIES, E.G. ENQA, EQAR, US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</li> </ul>
3.3 PKA'S IMAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEEPENING IDENTITY CRISIS OF PKA LACK OF CONSISTENCY IN THE VIEWS OF MEMBERS AND EXPERTS ON THE ROLE OF THE POLISH ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE, WHICH TRANSLATES INTO A LACK OF CONSISTENCY IN BUILDING ITS IMAGE OUTSIDE</li> </ul>

## Opportunities

### AREA 1. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT AND SUPPORTING HEIS IN BUILDING QUALITY CULTURE

1.1. EDUCATION ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USE OF ASSESSMENTS AWARDED BY PKA AS PART OF PROGRAMME EVALUATIONS AS AN ELEMENT OF BUILDING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE BY HEIS</li> <li>• CONNECTING THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM WITH THE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT)</li> <li>• STABILIZATION OF THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IN GENERALLY APPLICABLE REGULATIONS</li> <li>• READINESS OF PKA EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP PERMANENT FORMS OF COOPERATION IN ORDER TO BUILD AN OPTIMAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM</li> </ul>
---	---



1.2. PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO HEIS IN BUILDING EDUCATION QUALITY CULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OPENNESS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO DEVELOPING MULTI-AREA COOPERATION WITH PKA IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR CAPABILITIES RELATED TO QUALITY CULTURE BUILDING AND TO BOOST SYNERGY BETWEEN EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES</li> <li>• GROWING NEEDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION RELATED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW EDUCATIONAL PARADIGMS, SOCIAL, TECHNOLOGICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES</li> <li>• OPENNESS OF SOME HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO CLOSE COOPERATION WITH PKA IN THE FIELD OF ENSURING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN RAPIDLY CHANGING CONDITIONS</li> <li>• DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER BETWEEN HEIS AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS AND DIVERSIFIED FORMS OF COOPERATION</li> </ul>
<b>AREA 2. INTERNAL RESOURCES AND PROCESSES</b>	
2.1. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACCESS TO ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF FINANCING FOR PKA'S ACTIVITIES EXTERNAL TO MINISTER</li> <li>• INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF FOREIGN EXPERTS IN PKA'S ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE USE OF REMOTE COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN SITE VISITS</li> </ul>
2.2. INTERNAL PROCESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AVAILABILITY OF MODERN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FACILITATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PKA STATUTORY TASKS</li> <li>• CREATION BY THE MINISTER OF LEGAL AND ORGANISATIONAL POSSIBILITIES AND CONDITIONS ALLOWING FOR THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE PROCEDURES IN FORCE AT PKA</li> <li>• INCREASING THE USE OF ICT TOOLS AMONG INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS OF PKA</li> </ul>
<b>AREA 3. RELATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
3.1. ACADEMIC COMMUNITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEVELOPMENT OF SYSTEMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN HEIS AND BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISES</li> <li>• INCREASED INTEREST OF STAKEHOLDERS IN COOPERATION WITH PKA TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION</li> </ul>
3.2. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IMPLEMENTED INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS</li> <li>• THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONALISATION FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR IN POLAND</li> </ul>
3.3. PKA'S IMAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IMPROVING AND INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITH THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT THANKS TO THE USE OF MODERN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY</li> </ul>

- INCREASED AWARENESS, IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF PKA EVALUATIONS FOR THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN POLAND AMONG INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

## Threats

### AREA 1. EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT AND SUPPORTING HEIS IN BUILDING QUALITY CULTURE

#### 1.1. EDUCATION ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT

- FREQUENT CHANGES IN THE LEGAL CONDITIONS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AND INSTITUTIONS RESULTING IN THE LACK OF STABILITY OF THE EXTERNAL SYSTEM OF ENSURING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN POLAND
- DEEPENING MARGINALISATION OF THE RESULTS OF PKA PROCEDURES
- IGNORING THE EFFECTS OF PKA ACTIVITIES AND KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES IN DESIGNING LEGAL CHANGES CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION
- LIMITING THE ORGANISATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF PKA BY LAW – BOTH IN RELATION TO LEGAL, ORGANISATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL SOLUTIONS

#### 1.2. PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO HEIS IN BUILDING QUALITY CULTURE

- UNDERUSE BY OTHER EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS OF PKA'S EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE
- HIGH MASSIFICATION OF STUDIES RESULTING IN DIFFICULTIES IN STANDARDIZING THE LEVEL OF QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### AREA 2. INTERNAL RESOURCES AND PROCESSES

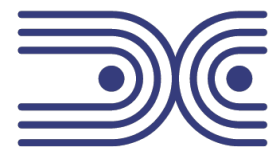
#### 2.1. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- LIMITED FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR OPERATIONS OF PKA, WHICH AMONG OTHER THINGS, RESULT FROM THE FACT THAT THE KEY ROLE OF PKA BUREAU PLAYS IN SUPPORTING PKA IN FULFILLING ITS MISSION IN UNDERAPPRECIATED
- HIGH DEGREE OF EXPERT TURNOVER
- LIMITED ACCESS TO EXTERNAL FINANCING

#### 2.2. INTERNAL PROCESSES

- FREQUENT CHANGES IN GENERALLY APPLICABLE REGULATIONS WEAKEN THE STABILITY OF THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF PKA'S ACTIVITIES
- LOW LEVEL OF CONSULTATION OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

### AREA 3. RELATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS



3.1. ACADEMIC COMMUNITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GROWING VALUE OF INDUSTRY CERTIFICATES, REDUCING THE PROMOTIONAL POTENTIAL OF ASSESSMENTS ISSUED BY PKA</li> <li>• MARGINALIZATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS IN BUSINESS PRACTICE AND BY PART OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY.</li> <li>• LOW LEVEL OF INTEREST OF THE MOST QUALIFIED PERSONS IN ACTIVITIES WITHIN PKA</li> <li>• LACK OF APPROVAL ON PART OF SOME ACADEMIC CIRCLES FOR THE ACCREDITATION MODEL AND EVALUATIONS CARRIED OUT BY PKA</li> <li>• NON-INCLUSION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS IN THE OPINIONS GIVING PROCEDURES ON APPLICATIONS FOR PERMISSION TO ESTABLISH PRACTICAL PROGRAMMES</li> </ul>
3.2. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THE APPEARANCE OF A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL SECTOR ACCREDITATIONS, MANY OF WHICH ARE NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE ESG 2015</li> </ul>
3.3. PKA'S IMAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LACK OF RELIABLE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE RULES/LEGAL REGULATIONS GOVERNING HIGHER EDUCATION, PKA, THE BOLOGNA PROCESS, BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING ASSESSMENTS AND GIVING OPINIONS, WHICH IMPACT ON LEGAL REGULATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE AFFECTING PKA.</li> <li>• CONTINUOUS CHANGES IN LEGAL REGULATIONS RESULTING IN A GROWING LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN PKA</li> <li>• LACK OF PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE VALUE GENERATED BY QUALITY ASSURANCE</li> </ul>

## PART IV – CONCLUSIONS

### Glossary of Terms

**BIP** (Polish: Biuletyn Informacji Publicznej) – Public Information Bulletin;

**DEQAR** - The Database of External Quality Assurance Results

**EQAR** – European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education;

**ENQA** – European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education;

**ESG** – European Standards and Guidelines;

**HEI** - Higher Education Institution;

**ECTS** - The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System ;

**GUS** - (Polish: Główny Urząd Statystyczny) – Statistics Poland;

**IMPEA** – project: Facilitating implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes;

**KAWSZ** (Polish: Komisja Akredytacyjna Wyższego Szkolnictwa Zawodowego) – Accreditation Committee for Non-University Higher Education Institutions;



**LoHES** – Law on Higher Education and Science;

**NQF** – National Qualifications Framework;

**MEiN** (Polish: Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki) - Ministry of Education and Science;

**NCFMEA** - The National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation;

**PDCA** – Plan – Do – Check – Act;

**PKA** (Polish: Polska Komisja Akredytacyjna) – The Polish Accreditation Committee;

**POL-on** (Polish: Zintegrowany System Informacji o Nauce i Szkolnictwie Wyższym) – The Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education;

**PQF** – Polish Qualifications Framework;

**RGNiSW** (Polish: Rada Główna Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego, formerly Rada Główna Szkolnictwa Wyższego (**RGSW**)) – **The General Council of Science and Higher Education;**

**ZUS** (Polish: Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych) - Social Insurance Institution;

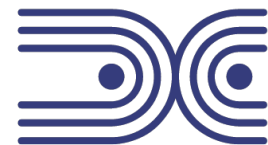
**Complex evaluation** – in whole Self-Assessment Report;

**Comprehensive evaluation** – in the ACT of 20 July 2018 - the Law on Higher Education and Science and in the Statutes of the Polish Accreditation Committee (comprehensive assessment).

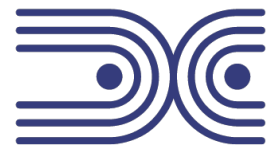
#### Annexes (hyperlinks or links):

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Appendix no. 1</b>  | <a href="#"><u>The Statutes of PKA including evaluation criteria and conditions for awarding ratings</u></a>   |
| <b>Appendix no. 2</b>  | <a href="#"><u>Law on Higher Education (Journal of Laws of 2020; item 85, 374)</u></a>   |
| <b>Appendix no. 3</b>  | <a href="#"><u>Mission Statement</u></a>   |
| <b>Appendix no. 4</b>  | <a href="#"><u>Strategy for the period 2021-2025</u></a>   |
| <b>Appendix no. 5</b>  | <a href="#"><u>Code of Ethics</u></a>  |
| <b>Appendix no. 6</b>  | <a href="#"><u>List of training for PKA members, experts and panel secretaries in the years 2017 - 2022</u></a>  |
| <b>Appendix no. 7</b>  | <a href="#"><u>Quality Management System</u></a>   |
| <b>Appendix no. 8</b>  | <a href="#"><u>Regulations of the Section for Ethics</u></a>   |
| <b>Appendix no. 9</b>  | <a href="#"><u>Detailed mapping programme evaluation criteria and the criteria used in drawing up opinions on applications against standards of ESG</u></a>  |
| <b>Appendix no. 10</b> | <a href="#"><u>Rules for conducting site visits</u></a>  |
| <b>Appendix no. 11</b> | Template for self-evaluation report, Template for site-visit report, Template for review of an application are available on the website:<br><a href="https://www.pka.edu.pl/en/home-page/"><u>https://www.pka.edu.pl/en/home-page/</u></a> |
| <b>Appendix no. 12</b> | <a href="#"><u>Resolution conducting site visits for programme evaluation in the academic year 2022 2023</u></a>   |





- Appendix no. 13**    [Remote assessment procedure](#)
- Appendix no. 14**    [The procedure of the assessment conducted stationary with the use of remote communication tools](#)
- Appendix no. 15**    [Rules and criteria for appointing secretaries of PKA evaluation panels](#)
- Appendix no. 16**    [Appeals procedure](#)



Warsaw, 2022

