

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

**the Education Quality Assurance Agency, The Republic of Azerbaijan**

and

**the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, Ukraine**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is made between the **Education Quality Assurance Agency**, Gara Garayev Avenue 2B, AZ 1060, Baku, Azerbaijan, hereafter referred to as TKTA and

**the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance**, Borysa Hrinchenka, 1, Kyiv 01001, Ukraine, hereafter referred to as NAQA.

### **Whereas**

#### **NAQA**

National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (NAQA) is an independent agency that commenced its operations in Ukraine in February 2019. Operating as a permanent collegial body, it was established by legislation as a public-law entity. The agency consists of 23 members, including two students and three representatives from employers, all appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine based on decisions made by a Competition Commission. These appointments follow a competitive selection process, designed to uphold the principles of gender balance and representation across subject areas.

The NAQA Secretariat is responsible for providing organizational, financial, economic, logistical, technical, and informational support for NAQA's activities. NAQA also includes committees composed of its members to preliminarily consider issues within its jurisdiction. The mission of NAQA is to drive positive transformations in higher education and cultivate a culture of quality.

### **TKTA**

TKTA was established in accordance with a Decree signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 29th December 2019, which reorganized the Accreditation and Nostrification Department of the Ministry of Education into a new entity with the status of a public legal entity.

It is important to note that accreditation of higher education institutions (HEIs) has been carried out in Azerbaijan since 2005, from the moment the country joined the Bologna process. As a specialized and professional body, the TKTA is responsible for conducting independent assessment of the quality of all levels of education in Azerbaijan in line with national and international standards. The agency evaluates education institutions and educational programs to ensure they meet the required standards of quality and collaborates with state bodies, international and non-governmental organizations, legal entities, and individuals in carrying out its duties and exercising its rights.

### **TKTA and NAQA**

Having comparable missions and institutional objectives in the realm of quality assurance in higher education, both parties are keen to establish a closer relationship as equal partners. This collaboration aims to create cooperative and collaborative mechanisms for the mutual benefit of both entities.

### **Key principles: TKTA and NAQA**

Both parties understand and mutually acknowledge their respective independent regulatory responsibilities, authorized by separate national governments and/or recognized as membership organizations by national governments.

Both parties envision the benefits to be achieved through dialogue and cooperation, with advantages accruing to both agencies and HEIs.

Both parties understand the critical necessity of maintaining the confidentiality of information related to institutions, as well as to the agencies themselves, as developed through accreditation activities.

Therefore, both parties agree to the following framework for a mutually supportive and collaborative engagement.

This Memorandum of Understanding is not exhaustive and is not intended to create legal obligations between TKTA and NAQA, except where specifically stated.

### **Aims**

TKTA and NAQA, through this MoU, agree to cooperate for the benefit of both parties and strive to establish a strategic alliance to enhance external quality assurance in their respective jurisdictions. The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of higher education in Azerbaijan and Ukraine. This MoU is not intended to establish legally binding relations between the parties, and neither party has the authority to act on behalf of or bind the other party. However, TKTA and NAQA commit to working together in good faith to implement the provisions of this MoU.

### **Areas of Cooperation and Collaboration**

In pursuit of the shared objectives, TKTA and NAQA, in alignment with the laws and regulations of Azerbaijan and Ukraine, commit to collaborative efforts aiming to enhance the operation of external quality assurance in both jurisdictions and elevate the quality of higher education in Azerbaijan and Ukraine.

#### **(a) Mutual Understanding:**

Both parties will work towards a deeper understanding of each other's approach to quality assurance in higher education, the respective systems in place, and critical aspects related to quality and standards in higher education within both countries.

#### **(b) Information Exchange:**

There will be an exchange of information and professional advice concerning each other's activities, processes, higher education providers, and developments within the higher education systems of both countries. Confidentiality of the information and adherence to relevant Data Protection legislation will be ensured.

#### **(c) Staff Development:**

TKTA and NAQA will support the professional development of staff from both agencies where feasible, through activities such as staff exchange, mutual observation of review processes, and provision of training.

**(d) Utilizing Each Other's Expertise:**

Both parties will leverage each other's expertise, within operational constraints, to enhance the international dimension of institutional reviews and/or accreditations, including assessments of cross-border education.

**(e) Recognition:**

In operations related to quality assurance of higher education within one party's jurisdiction but originating from the other party's jurisdiction, due regard will be given to relevant decisions and judgments of the other party where applicable and feasible.

**(f) Collaboration:**

Both parties will collaborate on mutually agreed projects and activities that benefit both parties, including the quality assurance of transnational education, identification of fraudulent institutions, awarding bodies or accrediting agencies in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, supporting student mobility, and conducting research on quality assurance-related issues.

As part of the MoU's implementation, TKTA and NAQA will hold annual meetings to share information and provide updates on developments in their respective countries and agencies.

**Duration of MoU**

The MoU will come into effect upon its signature and remain valid for five years, unless terminated by either party with a three-month notice. Extension of the MoU is possible through mutual agreement of both parties.

**Alteration of MoU**

This MoU is established on the principles of partnership, equality, respect, transparency, and integrity. Any alterations to the terms of the MoU require the consent of both parties.

**Management and Liaison Arrangements for the MoU**

The Chairperson of the TKTA Management Board (Ms. Ulkar Sattarova at the time of signing) and the Head of NAQA (Mr. Andrii Butenko at the time of signing) will be responsible for managing the implementation of the MoU's terms and reviewing them annually. This responsibility may be delegated to relevant members of the agencies' staff in specific areas of cooperation.

## Resources

Unless alternative arrangements are specifically agreed upon to meet particular project requirements, each agency will typically cover its own costs for implementing the terms of the MoU. Donor funding from other sources may be sought for specific areas of cooperation.

## Schedule of Projects and Activities

Specific details regarding projects or activities initiated under this Memorandum will be negotiated, and the schedule will be decided by the administration of both parties.

**Ms. Ulkar Sattarova**

**Chairperson of the Management Board, TKTA**

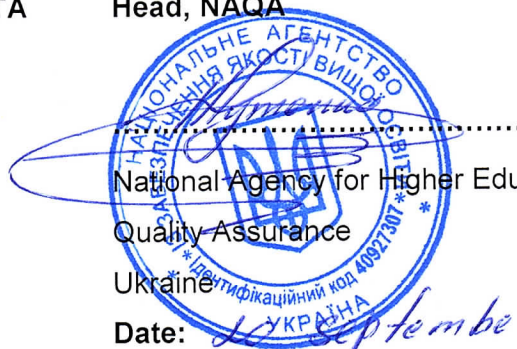


Education Quality Assurance Agency  
The Republic of Azerbaijan

Date: *20 September 2023*

**Mr. Andrii Butenko**

**Head, NAQA**



National Agency for Higher Education  
Quality Assurance  
Ukraine

Date: *20 September 2023*