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QUALITY ASSURANCE INSTITUTE

ACQUIN

AWARDS THE SEAL OF APPROVAL



FOR THE

**INSTITUTIONAL CERTIFICATION**

OF THE

**CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**

**NAZARBAYEV INTELLECTUAL SCHOOLS**

*ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN*

**THE ACCREDITATION IS VALID UNTIL 30<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER 2030.**

*BAYREUTH, 06 JUNE 2024*

  
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PROF. DR. SEBASTIAN KEMPGEN  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

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since 2009*

## **Accreditation Report**

Institutional Certification of

**“Center of Excellence” autonomous educational organisation “Nazarbayev Intellectual  
Schools”**

**Astana, Kazakhstan**

### **I Procedure**

**Date of contract:** 25 December 2023

**Date of the submission of self-assessment report:** 16 February 2024

**Date of site visit:** 25-27 March 2024

**Attendance by ACQUIN office:** Giorina Maratsi, Dr. Lyazzat Nugumanova

**Accreditation decision scheduled:** 06 June 2024

**Peer review experts:**

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- **Ruslan Mussabayev**, Deputy Director/Teacher of English, State school 17 named after Lermontov, Shymkent, Kazakhstan

The **Assessment Report** of the peer-review experts is **based on** the self-assessment report of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) and extensive discussions with the HEI management, the board of trustees, representatives of the holding company, deans, heads of study programmes, lecturers, staff representatives, students, and alumni.

The basis of the **Assessment Criteria** is part 1 of the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) in the current official version. Further, the assessment considers criteria for the institutional accreditation of non-state higher education institution of the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR) („Guidelines for the accreditation of non-state higher education institutions” Section B.IV). At the same time the national context, particularly the national regulations regarding the establishment of study programmes, are considered.

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## **II Introduction**

The experts would like to thank the representatives of the “Center of Excellence” (CoE) as well as students who have taken part in the discussions and willingly shared information and their views during the site visit. The discussions are valuable not only for the assessment of the institution, but also for a better understanding of the legal and sociocultural context of the local teacher education system.

Evaluation basis for the peer-review experts is the self-assessment report of the CoE, as well as intensive discussions during the site visit with the CoE Management Board, Director, Deputy directors, educational programmes departments, teaching staff, administrative staff, students, and graduates.

Main objective of the certification procedure is to assess the quality of the study programmes and compliance with the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG). The ESG standards are applied as main assessment criteria in the international certification procedure. They are completed with criteria for the institutional accreditation of non-state higher education institution of the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR) („Guidelines for the accreditation of non-state higher education institutions” Section B.IV). In addition, the respective country-specific criteria and standards are considered.

A group of experts was set up, which ensured that all areas relevant to the certification procedure (e.g. legal, structural, social etc. aspects) as well as the ESG, the WR criteria, and national criteria were considered. The peer-review experts include professors, teachers, representatives of the professional practice and the student representative. A certificate with the ACQUIN seal is awarded upon certification of the institution.

### **1 The Teacher Education System in Kazakhstan**

The education system in Kazakhstan consists of five school levels. The primary school (age 6-10) which is compulsory for all, the middle education (age 10-15) which includes a general academic curriculum in Russian or Kazakh language depending on the location, the secondary education (age 15-17) which includes three options (general education at a lyceum or gymnasium, vocational education at a professional lyceum or vocational school, and professional education at a professional college), the vocational education (age 15-17 for professional lyceum and age 15-19 for professional college), and lastly tertiary education which comprises of universities, academies, institutes, higher schools and colleges, and conservatories. Secondary school teachers are obliged to complete 5-year specialist diplomas at university.

According to OECDiLibrary (2024), Kazakhstan has been moving towards a competency-based pedagogical approach since 2016. This approach includes social and emotional skills, creativity, and critical thinking, as well as a focus on competencies rather than memorisation.

## **2 Short profile of Center of Excellence (CoE)**

*History and profile of the CoE (descriptive), number of departments / branches, staff, financial resources; general objectives of the CoE*

On May 24, 2011, in accordance with the instructions of the Head of State N.A. Nazarbayev, at a meeting of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, conceptual approaches for the development of a professional development system of Kazakh teachers were approved. The autonomous educational organisation "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" was instructed to create a Center of Excellence and, together with foreign partners, develop high-level programmes for professional development of teachers of the Republic of Kazakhstan based on the best domestic and global pedagogical experience.

In accordance with the decision of the Board of Trustees of the AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" (hereinafter – AEO) dated June 15, 2011, the Private entity "Center of Excellence" (hereinafter – CoE) was established. The CoE is a non-profit organisation in the organisational and legal form of a private entity. The private entity "Center of Excellence" is a subsidiary of the Autonomous Educational Organisation AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools".

By the decision of the Board of AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" dated August 5, 2011, the Charter of the CoE was approved, which was registered on August 23, 2011, in the Department of Justice of the city of Astana of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Charter of the CoE was amended and re-registered on August 26, 2021 and October 14, 2022. CoE, in accordance with the Charter of the Entity and in agreement with the founder AEO, has the right to open branches / representative offices.

The organisational structure of the CoE consists of the Central Office and 15 branches. The central office is located in the city of Astana, with a staff of 71 people. The structure of the Central Office includes the management (3 people) and 10 departments (68 people). The staffing of the CoE is adjusted annually. As of February 22, 2023, the staff number is 178 people, of which 15 people have Candidate of Sciences degree, 1 has a PhD degree, 86 have an academic Master of Science degree and 2 scholarship holders of the Bolashak international scholarship established by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who graduated from leading foreign universities. The share of employees with scientific and academic degrees among the staff is 55%.

The subject of the activity of the CoE is additional professional training of teachers within the country and abroad, which allows acquiring new ones, as well as maintaining, expanding, deepening, and improving previously acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Since its foundation, CoE has offered 242 educational programmes for professional teacher development.

The objectives of the activities of the CoE are:

- broadcasting the experience of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools to educational organisations of the Republic of Kazakhstan and abroad;
- improvement and enhancement of professional skills of teachers through additional training.

The main activities of the CoE include:

- development of educational programmes for professional development courses for teaching staff and methodological manuals;
- preparation of coaching staff for the implementation of professional development programmes for teaching staff of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- professional development of teaching staff through the organisation of courses, as well as post-course methodological support;
- monitoring studies to manage the quality of processes related to the development, implementation and integration into school practice of new knowledge and skills based on the results of training in professional development courses;
- cooperation and joint activities with leading Kazakh and foreign educational centres.

The amount of CoE funding depends on the annual number of trainees. Every year, the CoE conducts a pre-course study, based on which the need for advanced training courses for teachers of the country for the next year is determined.

### **III Implementation and assessment of the criteria**

*The peer-review experts assess the quality of the institution and compliance with the ESG standards and the criteria of WR as well as with the national standards. The report must document the assessment of each field of examination which are clustered in the following chapters.*

#### **1 Institutional Profile and Strategy: Strategic Planning, Mission and Vision**

*The HEI has a clear mission statement in which the institutional profile, strategy, and objectives of the HEI are defined. The mission is consistent and complies with international standards. Academic bodies have adopted the mission, which is publicly available. The HEI has adequate resources to fulfil its mission and strategic planning [Examination Area 1].*

##### **Implementation**

The vision of CoE is to: *"be the leading organisation for the professional development of teachers in the Republic of Kazakhstan and actively promote services in the international market"*.

The mission of the CoE is described as follows: *"Use the best domestic and international experience, human and methodological resources of the organisation for the continuous professional development of teachers in order to improve the education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan"*. The mission reflects the CoE pursuit to align with international standards in providing high quality training, teaching and research in the field of additional professional education, strengthening human resources, international relations, material and technical base, and the use of innovative pedagogical approaches. The mission and vision are available for review to employees, students and other interested parties by posting on the official website of the CoE.

The vision and mission of CoE are reflected in the Development Strategy of the CoE for 2020-2024, a strategic document that defines its activities to improve the country's education system based on continuous professional development of teachers. All employees of the organisation, as a consultative and advisory body, took part in the development of the strategy. The basis of the Development Strategy of the Center is the Development Strategy of the AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" until 2030, as well as all the main directions of state policy in the field of education, the instructions of the Head of State, the Address of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the people of Kazakhstan, and other policy documents of the country.



In order to implement the mission and vision of the CoE, the following strategic directions and goals have been defined:

- Implementation of professional development programmes;
- Optimisation and improvement of resources on the way to success;
- Cooperation in the framework of improving the brand and maintaining the high reputation of the CoE;
- Social responsibility for the sustainability of improvements in the professional development of teachers.

Under the teacher development priority, the CoE, together with foreign partners, developed 165 professional development programmes and educational and methodological complexes for teachers in the area of preschool, secondary, secondary specialized and higher education. Since 2012, 437,042 people have been trained under the CoE programmes.

Among the priority tasks outlined in the CoE Strategy for 2020-2024 is the *“Social responsibility for the stability of improvements in the professional development of teachers”*. To accomplish this task, several projects have been and are being implemented. In 2015, the “Network of Leading Schools” was created on the initiative of the CoE for Leading Schools to fulfill their social responsibility. The main goal of creating the Network of Leading Schools is to disseminate the experience and knowledge of teachers trained at the CoE to general education schools. Teachers who study at professional development courses become leaders and distributors of innovative ideas, pedagogical methods and techniques. In 2023 the total number of schools that received the status of leaders was 2000.

In line with its mission, CoE has set among its priorities the implementation of strategic partnerships, the development of CoE image in the regional and international field, as well as its international recognition. In terms of achievements, Kazakhstan as represented by the CoE, became in 2015 a member of the Council of The World Association of Lesson Studies (WALS), to further promote the professional development of teachers in the country. The publishing activity of the CoE is aimed at popularising the results of research projects, methodological and resource support for professional development courses. In total, in the period from 2012 to 2019, the CoE developed 423 publications of an educational, methodological and informational nature. The strategic partnerships include well-known international organisations in the field of education such as University of Cambridge (UK), National Institute for Educational Policy Research (Japan), EduCluster Finland (ECF) from University of Jyväskylä (Finland), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA), Lifelong Learning Center (MTÜ TN ELUKESTVA ÖPPE KESKUS) (Estonia) and the World Association of Women Inventors and Entrepreneurs (WWIEA) (South Korea). In terms of international accreditation procedures,

CoE applies regularly since 2018 for the international accreditation of its newly professional development programmes to ensure their compliance with internationally recognised standards such as the ESG standards in higher education.

The activities of the CoE are not limited to the fulfillment of formal duties enshrined in the Charter of the entity and other official documents. The CoE expands the range of influence on a wide range of the public by initiating various activities aimed at the spiritual and moral health of teachers. An example is the online platform "Mektep Trainers" Project School Trainer which organises a dialogue and broadcasts the experience of members of the methodological asset of schools of the Republic of Kazakhstan on topical issues around intra-school professional development of teachers and the online platform on social networks "Shamshyrak" (Project Shamshyrak) which provides teachers with access to the best educational resources.

To ensure the feasibility of its strategy, CoE actively promotes the awareness of employees about its mission, holds discussions of the main indicators of the strategy during its development at an expanded meeting and monitors the consistent implementation of the set goals through monitoring studies, internal assessment of the quality of management and the effectiveness of ongoing processes. Satisfaction with the quality of the courses is monitored by surveys conducted among students and employees.

In terms of staff policy, CoE adheres to the principle of inclusiveness and strives to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and are evaluated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential. Policies for ensuring the inclusion of special groups such as pregnant women or disabled workers are implemented.

### **Assessment**

The mission statement of CoE is reflected in all areas of its activities, teaching, learning and research. Based on the discussions with the Management Board, the main goals for the upcoming years are the development of new curricula in teacher education, the sharing of practical experience for all teachers in Kazakhstan, as well as the expansion in new regions. The new strategic plan is realistic and adequate in terms of resources allocation (budgetary and staff) for ensuring the implementation of CoE strategic goals both nationally and internationally. CoE puts special emphasis on its role within society and teacher education, being consistent with introducing new ways of teaching and leadership trainings of teachers in different regions of Kazakhstan to achieve the highest possible involvement of all schools.

Research plays a central role in the activities of the CoE since all education offered is research-based. The need for education is identified in pre-course analyses, the courses are research-based, and the quality of the classes and the programmes and the effectiveness of integrating the programmes in school practice are closely monitored. Furthermore, the CoE intends to

increase research on the effectiveness of the education offered over the following years. Thus, the research activities do not only fit into the institution's mission; they are at the heart of it. In the discussions with the academics and the researchers working at the CoE, it became evident that they all subscribe to this primary goal and do their best to implement it step by step. Moreover, they can actively contribute to the concretisation of this goal and provide ideas on how it can be strategically implemented.

The organisational and the management structure is in accordance with the objectives and tasks of the CoE and the structure guarantees the academic freedom in teaching and learning. Rules for the recruitment of academic staff are clearly defined and are based on scientific standards. The CoE's commitment to educational advancement through its governance, organisation, and administration is evident in its pursuit of excellence, shaping the educational hub for generations to come.

### **Conclusion**

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 2 Governance, Organisation and Administration

*Responsibilities, decision-making processes, and decision-making competencies are clearly defined and integrated into statutes. Organisation and management structures are adequate to the tasks and objectives of the institution and assure freedom in teaching and learning [Examination Area 2].*

### Implementation

The CoE is a legal entity that has a separate property on the right of operational management, can acquire and exercise property and personal non-property rights and obligations on its own behalf, be a plaintiff and a defendant in court, in accordance with Article 33 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan. According to its Charter, it is a non-profit organisation established to achieve social, cultural, scientific, educational, charitable, and managerial goals.

Its supreme governing body, the Management Board, is responsible for issues such as: approval and amendment of the Charter of the CoE; determination of priority areas of the organisation, principles of formation and use of its property; formation of the executive body and early termination of its powers; approval of the annual budget; establishment of branches and opening of representative offices; participation in other organisations; reorganisation and liquidation of the CoE. The Management Board is a collegial executive body and decisions are made by voting at a meeting in the form of joint presence or by absentee voting (by collecting signatures on the minutes of the Management Board) and are adopted by a simple majority of votes.

The Director of the CoE, in accordance with the Charter of the CoE, acts on the principles of sole proprietorship and independently decides on the activities of the CoE in accordance with its competence determined by the Charter. The CoE organises its work according to the Work Plan. The Director annually approves the Work Plan, as well as reports on the activities of the structural divisions of the organisation. To implement the Plan and to effectively solve the tasks of the CoE, by order of the director of the organisation, working groups, expert groups and Commissions can be created from among the employees of the CoE and (or) its branches. The procedure for the formation, powers, and organisation of the activities of working and expert groups and Commissions is determined by the Regulations of the Center of Excellence, approved by the order of the director of 22.02.2022 No. 46/OD.

Strategic decisions attributed to the competence of the AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" are considered at meetings of the Management Board of AEO. Issues referred to the competence of the Management Board are subject to mandatory coordination with the structural subdivision of AEO. The decisions of the Management Board are binding on the Executive Body of the CoE the Director, who is appointed by AEO. Other issues of the activities of the CoE,

that are not within the competence of the Management Board, are resolved within the competence and authority of the officials of the CoE. Deputy directors of the CoE, heads of Departments and branches of the CoE, as well as employees of the CoE, are hired in accordance with the Rules of selection for the vacant position of the CoE. The distribution of powers of the Director of the CoE and his deputies, heads of Departments and branches of the CoE, as well as employees of the CoE, when making decisions are reflected in internal regulations and job descriptions. Employees participate in the management and making operational decisions on the production activities of the CoE, depending on the content of the issues discussed.

Key areas of activity of the CoE on which decisions are made include:

1) Issues of social and labour relations for an objective and comprehensive consideration of the decisions taken (or being prepared) regarding social and labour relations. Examples include the Conciliation Commission which is a permanent body established on an equal basis from an equal number of representatives from the employer and employees, the Disciplinary Commission which is a permanent body, the composition of which is formed from among the employees of the organisation with the purpose to ensure compliance by employees with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan and internal labour regulations, and the Commission for the Consideration of Social Issues which is formed from among the employees of the organisation and holds meetings as necessary on the basis of the decision of the Chairman of the Commission. Experts and consultants who are not members of the Commission for the Consideration of Social Issues may be invited to the meetings. Lastly, the Selection Commission for the vacant position whose main tasks are to conduct an interview with a potential candidate and make recommendations on hiring.

2) Issues related to the main activities of the CoE are considered in the Scientific and Methodological Council (SMC). The Scientific and Methodological Council (SMC) is a collegial body established to prepare recommendations on improving the quality of the educational process, the results of the examination of curricula, educational and methodological complexes, and other educational resources. The composition of the SMC is formed from the number of employees of the CoE and its branches who have experience in professional-pedagogical and scientific-methodological activities. Representatives of third-party educational organisations may be introduced into the SMC. Temporary expert groups may be created in the structure of the SMC to monitor methodological activities.

3) Decision-making on production issues that are resolved within the authority of the CoE departments engaged in the main activities. For this purpose, the following bodies were created: the Expert Methodological Council (EMC) which is an advisory body coordinating the creation of programmes of seminars, webinars, master classes and other training events, the Editorial Council (EC), which is a collegial advisory body whose activities are aimed at developing and

implementing uniform requirements and criteria for the examination of the content and design of methodological manuals and the Commission for consideration of appeals and applications of students which considers issues related to the organisation and conduction of courses.

The balance between the interests of the funding body AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" and the academic freedom of the CoE is ensured by making an independent decision to determine the category of the target audience, the orientation of the refresher courses, the duration and format of training. In addition, the CoE has the right to provide paid services for all statutory activities. These services are carried out in accordance with the Regulations on the provision of paid activities for the sale of services (works and goods) CoE and its branches. The profit from paid services, including the CoE reserve, is used in the areas of the educational and production process of the CoE, material incentives and social support for employees and other purposes that do not contradict the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The annual total budget of the organisation is about 3 billion tenge, of which 90% of the budget is financed by the AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools". The remaining 10% of the organisation's budget is a share of the provision of paid services for private companies, as well as individuals who want to undergo advanced training for a fee at their own expense. The annual budget of the CoE is formed based on applications from the structural divisions of the Center in accordance with approved internal norms and regulatory legal acts in the context of relevant budget items (wages, taxes, travel expenses, procurement of goods, works and services, and many others). After that, the draft annual budget goes through the approval procedure and is approved by the AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools". The cost of training a student funded by the AEO for fulfilling a state order, depends on the number of teachers trained per year and the costs associated with their training.

### **Assessment**

The responsibilities within the CoE structure are clearly defined and officially formulated in binding statutes. There is a clear structure and organisation of learning activities. The course programmes reflect the system updates taking place in education, providing teachers with up-to-date professional information, are practice-oriented and are implemented in the following areas: methods and technologies of teaching and learning, the content of education and assessment, research in the practice of a teacher, management and leadership, education, and well-being of students.

The CoE comprises various interconnected areas that work synergistically to uphold the institution's mission of providing high-quality education and fostering innovation. Curriculum development and instructional design focus on developing a rigorous and innovative curriculum tailored to the needs of regions. Teacher professional development is a central aspect of the

CoE's mission aiming to support the ongoing professional growth and development of its teaching staff.

Professional development programmes are designed to enhance teaching effectiveness, incorporate best practices in pedagogy, integrate technology into instruction, and promote cultural competency. These programmes empower teachers to continually refine their skills and stay abreast of emerging trends in education. Student support services provide comprehensive support services to ensure the holistic development and well-being of the students. Technology integration and innovation plays a vital role in enhancing teaching and learning at NIS. The CoE invests in state-of-the-art educational technology tools and infrastructure to facilitate personalised learning experiences, virtual collaboration, and data-driven decision-making. Technology specialists work closely with teachers to integrate innovative digital resources and pedagogical approaches into the curriculum.

Continuous assessment and data analysis are integral components of the CoE's commitment to educational excellence. Effective governance and administration provide the overarching structure and support necessary for the CoE's operations. Administrative professionals oversee budgeting, human resources, facilities management, and compliance with regulatory requirements. Governance bodies, such as the Board of Trustees, provide strategic leadership, policy guidance, and accountability to ensure the CoE's mission and values are upheld.

These interconnected areas within the CoE at NIS work collaboratively to create a dynamic and innovative educational ecosystem that empowers students to excel academically, socially, and personally. By leveraging the strengths of each area and fostering synergy among them, the CoE strives to achieve its overarching goal of preparing students to thrive in a rapidly changing environment. Financing and funds allocated within the CoE are transparent, according to its regulations.

## **Conclusion**

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

### 3 Teaching and Learning

*Objectives and content of study programmes are in accordance with the HEI's mission and strategy. Study programmes have an adequate academic standard, are well structured and have an adequate workload. They comply with national legal regulations. The processes of creating and implementing as well as revision of study programmes are clearly defined. The HEI offers professional support services for students. Support services have adequate staff [Examination Area 4, ESG Standard 1.2, ESG Standard 1.3, ESG Standard 1.4].*

#### Implementation

The CoE develops educational programmes in various thematic areas such as: development of functional literacy of schoolchildren, updating the content of vocational and technical education, updating the content of education, development of leadership and management in educational organisations, organisation of educational work and practical psychology, career guidance, professional development of teachers of preschool organisations, methods and technology of teaching at a university/college /school, and development of inclusive education. Target audience is school principals, deputy school principals, subject teachers, teacher-psychologists, homeroom teachers, depending on the programme.

The development of educational programmes of advanced training courses is carried out by the Department of Educational Programmes (DEP), in accordance with the mission and vision of the CoE Development Strategy. All educational programmes are being developed based on pre-course research (for 2020-2022, 86 programmes of advanced training of teachers were developed, including 26 (30.2%) in 2020, 29 (33.7%) in 2021 and 31 (36%) in 2022). The unified concept of teaching and learning of the CoE is based on the "Regulations for the organisation and conduct of advanced training courses for teachers of educational organisations in the CoE and its Branches", approved by the Order of the Director of the CoE No. 482/OD dated 07.11.2022. The training of teachers of all levels of education is carried out according to the educational programmes of the CoE, which have passed the approval procedure of the Expert Council of the Ministry of Education and are included in the list of programmes (register) posted on the website of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The introduction of new directions of professional development courses is closely related to all modern trends and trends of changes taking place in the socio-economic life of society, including in the field of education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. One of the features of the CoE educational programmes is that they undergo an external evaluation procedure, for which representatives of governmental authorities, scientific and public organisations dealing with the quality of educational services, training, and professional development of teachers, as well as other educational and public organisations are involved.



Educational programmes are being developed, examined, coordinated, and approved in accordance with the regulatory documents of CoE and Ministry of Education. Then, the next step is the procedure of inclusion in the register for which the compliance with national legal norms is required. Decisions on the development of new educational programmes are made by order of the Director of the CoE, whereas decisions on the approval and implementation of new educational programmes are made by the Board of AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" based on a positive Expert opinion on the approval of the educational programmes by the Expert Council of the Ministry of Education. Decisions on the introduction of new programmes in the process of training the trainers and attendees are made based on the Order of the Director of the CoE.

The programme development process includes several stages carried out by the DEP in cooperation with other departments of the CoE:

- 1. Pre-course research:* includes the analysis of legislation and regulatory legal acts for changes in the existing or the emergence of new requirements and then conducting diagnostics by means of questionnaires, focus groups of teachers by the Department of analysis and monitoring (DAM) at the request of the DEP in order to identify professional difficulties and needs.
- 2. Discussion of the results of the pre-course study:* based on the results of the discussion, a decision is made on the development of an educational programme and an order is issued by the Director of the CoE, indicating the terms of development, the name of the programme, the duration and form of training, as well as the composition of a Working Group. The DEP may involve employees of other departments and branches of the CoE, employees of the AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" and other external organisations.
- 3. Public discussion and amendments:* placement of the developed programme on the CoE website in the section "Discussion on educational programmes for professional development courses" as part of public consultation. The period of consultation of the programmes is ten working days from the date of its posting on the CoE website. Based on the results, the DEP makes/does not make changes and additions to the draft programme.
- 4. Approval of the educational programme by the SMC of the CoE:* sending educational programme to the SMC of the CoE and receiving minutes of approval for sending to the Authorised Body of the Ministry of Education.
- 5. Approval of the draft educational programme by the Authorised Body of Ministry of Education:* based on the results of the review, an Expert opinion is issued on approval/revision or refusal of approval.

6. *Final approval of the educational programme:* after receiving a positive Expert opinion of the Authorised Body, the programme is sent to the Board of AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" for a decision. Based on the decision of the Board, the programme is approved by the order of the Director of the CoE.

The demand for new educational programmes is determined by a state order from the Authorised Body of Ministry of Education to improve the skills of teachers of the country through medium-term budget planning, by means of medium-term planning according to the professional needs of teachers of AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" or by order of third-party organisations within the framework of contractual relations.

In terms of delivery, the duration of the courses is from 36 to 108 academic hours for short-term courses and more than 108 academic hours for long courses. All the training courses are structured according to modules, including the topics of the day, and each module ends with an intermediate assessment. Each course ends with a final assessment: internal and external independent assessment. The evaluation results affect the certification of the attendant. Long-term courses necessarily include a stage of internship in educational organisations.

The classes use various technologies, methods and approaches in teaching, workshops, trainings. To identify the attendee's own experience, discussions, solving specific tasks, organising, and implementing various methods of active and interactive learning in classes are used. The schedule of classes is compiled in accordance with the programme and curriculum of the courses. The duration of one academic hour of training in the courses is 45 minutes. The start and end time of classes for course participants can be set from 9:00 to 18:00 hours.

CoE puts special emphasis on the publishing of its activities. The website is one of the main tools for promoting its products, receiving feedback in the form of sociological research, the results of which form the basis for the formation its image and assessing its competitiveness in the domestic market. Students can get acquainted with the current courses on the CoE portal under "Courses showcase" section. Both on the website and in social networks there are announcements of upcoming events, professional development courses, videos and brief information on past events, achievements of CoE and its staff, new developments, and educational products. To date, the number of CoE subscribers in social networks is more than 10 thousand people.

CoE provides equal access to its advanced training courses for all teachers who have a suitable term for completing the next courses. The Authorised Body of Ministry of Education sends a list of these potential students to the CoE two (2) months before the start of the courses, based on funding from the state budget. In addition, all willing teachers, based on the consumer

needs of teachers, as individuals, can apply for the courses on a fee basis. The tuition fees are available on the CoE website in the attendant “Price list” section.

In terms of student support, by order of the Director, a Commission was established to review appeals and applications from students of advanced training courses for teaching staff. The Commission is a collegial advisory body, whose main task is a full and comprehensive consideration of the appeals of attendants. Besides, an online consultant is available on the CoE website to provide advice on any issue of the attendants, as well as teachers of the country.

## **Assessment**

### Study and teaching

In terms of study and teaching, the overall objectives of the study programmes include various thematic areas such as functional literacy development, vocational and technical education enhancement, leadership, and management in educational organisations, among others. Key aspects include improving teaching methodologies, updating educational content, and fostering professional development for educators. Students can acquire competences and knowledge relevant to their respective fields, including leadership skills, pedagogical techniques, subject-specific knowledge, and practical skills necessary for effective teaching and management in educational settings.

The study programmes are designed to align with the mission and vision of the CoE, aiming to enhance the quality of education, promote professional development among educators, and contribute to the advancement of education in society. The CoE offers both broad study programmes covering a wide range of educational topics and specialised programmes focusing on specific areas such as leadership, pedagogy, and inclusive education. There are interlinkages between these programmes to provide a comprehensive educational experience.

The concept of teaching and learning involves a combination of traditional methods, workshops, trainings, and active learning approaches. Academic standards ensure that study programmes maintain a high level of quality and rigor in content delivery and assessment. Teaching and learning methods may include lectures, workshops, group discussions, and hands-on activities. Assessment procedures may involve both formative and summative assessments, including assignments, projects, exams, and practical demonstrations.

The Department of Educational Programmes (DEP) is primarily responsible for designing and implementing new programmes, ensuring that they align with the CoE's profile and educational objectives. Approval processes involve various stakeholders, including the Expert Council of the Ministry of Education. Resources for study programmes are allocated based on budgetary

planning and may include funding for faculty, materials, facilities, and technology necessary for effective teaching and learning.

The CoE aims to maintain an adequate academic staff to student ratio to ensure personalised attention and quality education delivery. Target groups include educators at various levels, and selection criteria are transparent, involving factors such as qualifications, experience, and professional development needs. In overall, study programmes are developed and implemented in compliance with national legal regulations governing education and professional development.

#### Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

The CoE provides student-centred teaching in a very practice-oriented way. Trainings are offered in different formats, from trainings in presence, hybrid trainings to online formats. Thus, there seems to be a wide range that covers all the individual needs of the students.

The CoE trainers apply a wide variety of teaching methods, providing different learning environments, individual works, group works, and training on the job. Methods include, among others, consultation, workshops, and seminars. Case studies also play an important role in the learning process. They are used to create exemplary but also practical teaching situations that have a high learning effect for the participants and ensure a high degree of practicability and adaptability.

The trainings are designed in a sustainable way, starting from a demand-oriented supply of trainings designed to fulfil the needs of the teachers. The practice-oriented way of training programmes ends with an assessment of the learning process. Afterwards, in a phase of ongoing assessment on the job, the CoE evaluates how the acquired skills could be implemented in teaching practice by the participants.

Digital tools are widely used to transfer knowledge in the form of self-study courses and to facilitate interaction between learners and trainers. CoE actively uses digital tools and apps because they work very well in teaching. But before choosing the tools and methods, a survey is conducted to get to know who the participants are and whether digital tools can respond to their needs.

#### Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

The development of the CoE's offer is based on a complex but regulated process. The courses can be viewed by all teachers in the state and can also be booked by all teachers. Bookings are made online and have therefore a very low-threshold.

As far as access to the training courses is concerned, the different needs of teachers at different schools and in different parts of the country are considered, which is reflected in particular

in the choice of course methodology - all common formats are offered, from face-to-face to hybrid to purely online formats.

The CoE offers training at different levels, considering prior knowledge, which is likely to vary from region to region. A progression from beginner to advanced expert level seems to be implemented in the programme offering. The CoE's teacher training courses are also employed in other countries, which is particularly indicative of the high level of training offered by the CoE.

One of the outstanding features of the CoE's training concept is that the quality circle does not end with the completion of a training measure, but that teachers still can contact the trainers afterwards and ask for advice. In addition, studies are carried out to determine the extent to which course participants implement the content they have learned in their daily lessons and to what extent the students benefit from this.

In overall, the CoE clearly fulfils the criteria of a flexible and supportive learning environment with adequate teaching methods and assessment procedures.

## **Conclusion**

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 4 Research

*Research activities fit into the mission of the institution. The structure of the HEI and the general conditions support research activities. The teaching workload allows room for research. Recruitment policy should correspond to the research activities and research strategy of the institution [Examination Area 5, ESG Standard 1.8]*

### Implementation

Research activity is the basis of all the activities of the CoE and is implemented in accordance with the strategic goals, objectives and indicators specified in the Development Strategy of the CoE for 2020-2024 (specifically Goal 1.2: Strengthening the role of research to stimulate the professional development of teachers of the Republic of Kazakhstan). The key subject of the educational process is to:

- carry out monitoring studies of the quality of development and effectiveness of integration into school practice of advanced training programmes;
- actively involve all employees in research projects to study and transform the education system;
- strengthen cooperation with partners in the implementation of research work in the field of the impact of CoE educational programmes on improving the quality of education in schools.

The research in the educational process includes content (educational programmes), organisational (methodological and technological support) and personnel components (professionalism of the training staff). To obtain an objective database, all structural divisions, and employees of the CoE are directly or indirectly involved in conducting research. The coordinating role is performed by a specially created department of analysis and monitoring, acting in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Regulation on the Department of Analysis and Monitoring of CoE. Plans and reports on research work are discussed and agreed upon at meetings of the Scientific and Methodological Council of the CoE.

When conducting research, a set of methods is used: questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, examination of school documentation, and observation of lessons. To obtain objective data confirming the positive dynamics of the impact of key ideas of educational programmes on the ongoing transformations in schools, the triangulation method is used. In this regard, not only teachers and school leaders are actively involved in the number of respondents, but also students, their parents, specialists of regional departments / district, city departments of education, methodological offices. Data from all types of studies is compared to establish cause-

effect and correlation relationships and formulate general conclusions, which, in turn, are compared with the conclusions of modern scientific research and concepts that are recognised in the system of professional development of teachers.

The research results are discussed collectively at meetings of the Scientific and Methodological Council of the CoE, at hardware and workshops and are used to improve the following aspects:

- content of educational programmes;
- the work of trainers and the priority directions of their further professional development;
- organisational conditions for conducting advanced training courses;
- methodological support for teachers who have completed training in advanced training courses;
- resource support of the educational process;
- the thematic focus of new educational programmes for the continuous professional development of teachers of Kazakhstani educational organisations.

The research topics are conventionally structured into three groups: the first is longitudinal research, the second is ongoing research, and the third is regional/local research. Longitudinal studies have been conducted since 2018 and are devoted to the annual monitoring of the success of integrating the ideas of educational programmes of advanced training courses into authentic conditions of schools through a specially created mechanism "Leading Schools". Ongoing research conducted during the calendar year helps to concretise certain aspects of longitudinal research, identify, and typify individual problems through an assessment of the content of educational programmes and the effectiveness of training. Regional/local studies identify individual problematic issues that are specific to each specific region/s. Studies of this group are conducted not only to eliminate point problems, but also to further generalise and popularise the experience of solving/preventing them in other regions.

For the period 2020-2022, 56 studies were conducted, covering 163,808 respondents, the results of which were published in 20 books and 6 brochures. The research results are available on the CoE website under "Research" section.

To support young research staff, the CoE uses the following forms: organisation of corporate training within the framework of the School of Professional Development of the trainer "I am a PRO", annual holding of the republican seminar-meeting "Kazakhstan trainer: experience, cooperation and development prospects", conducting a competition "The Best research trainer", which provides opportunities for each trainer to present the results of individual / group research (Action Research) and lastly, conducting training seminars for CoE trainers by experts of the Council for International Assessment and Education of the University of Cambridge (UK).

CoE actively cooperates with international universities, research institutes and organisations. These include among others the World Association for Lesson Study (WALS), the Faculty of Education of the University of Cambridge, and World Bank studies.

### **Assessment**

The structure of the CoE supports the research activities adequately and consistently through fostering global connections. The Development Strategy of the CoE and local regulatory documents form the legal basis of research; data is collected pre- and post-course using different methods and analysed by the Department of Analysis and Monitoring. The Scientific and Methodological Council of the CoE oversees and evaluates the research. Thus, internal research and research evaluation are separated. Moreover, the CoE cooperates internationally with leading universities, research institutes, and organisations in teacher education, enhancing its global impact and receiving valuable peer review. The CoE is also a very active member of WALS, further strengthening its international network. An essential feature of the structural support for research consists of the payment system of quarterly and personal bonuses for research contributions.

The CoE's young employees are involved in research work and receive support in further developing their research skills, such as preparing articles for highly-ranked journals. Full-time trainers spend, on average, 800 hours in classrooms per year. This allows them to research and allocate time for further professional development. They are also offered a "self-development day" (once per month), providing more possibilities for further training. Yet, as stated in discussions with the CoE's staff, if need be and on demand, CoE's employees can focus exclusively on research during specific periods. Thus, the teaching workload of CoE's employees allows for research. Moreover, young in-service teachers are also trained in conducting research in their classrooms and schools to improve their teaching practices and the management of their schools.

Employees of the CoE, teachers who "train the trainers," and trainers from third-party organisations are selected according to strict quality criteria and in a process that safeguards the success of the research activities and the CoE's research strategy. This demonstrates the viability of the adopted recruitment policy and its implementation.

Members of the CoE implement their research findings in training programmes. They are encouraged to participate in national and international conferences and are financially supported if they do. They actively publish and thereby target different audiences: in-service teachers and national and international academic audiences. Results are published in the series "Monitoring studies of the Center of Excellence," yet also in international journals such as "Pedagogical Dialogue".



As the CoE has extensive research expertise and extremely interesting and rich data that can be transferred also within Kazakhstan, expert group recommends intensifying cooperation with universities, especially the Pedagogical Universities of Kazakhstan, to facilitate research. Furthermore, the CoE could enormously profit from implementing structures to provide opportunities to its employees to participate in Ph.D. programmes and graduate as Ph.D.s.

### **Conclusion**

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 5 Resources

*The HEI has adequate human and financial resources, infrastructure, and equipment to achieve its objectives. The academic staff recruitment process meets academic standards [Examination Area 3, Examination Area 6, Examination Area 7, ESG Standard 1.5, ESG Standard 1.6].*

### 5.1 Human resources

#### Implementation

In accordance with the staff schedule of the CoE, teaching activities (training) are carried out by managers, senior managers and experts in accordance with functional responsibilities and differentiation in remuneration. The production plan of the CoE for 2023 expected an annual training of more than 20,000 students by state order and more than 10,000 on a paid basis. To fulfil the production plan for the training of students, CoE has 105 full-time trainers with higher education work at the CoE and its branches, of which 11 are candidates of sciences and 58 are master's degree holders.

The number of full-time trainers corresponds to the volume of teaching load (on average 800 classroom hours), which allows them to do research and allocate time for their own professional development. The requirements for full-time trainers are regulated by local regulations of the CoE: the typical qualification characteristics of the positions of the CoE employees (describing the requirements of the position), the Professional Trainer Standard and the Job descriptions. The main responsibilities of the trainers are reflected in the job descriptions and include educational work, post-course support for the activities of teachers who have been trained in advanced training courses, methodological work with teaching staff, conducting research, writing methodological manuals and recommendations, as well as their own professional development.

To ensure the quality of teaching and training, CoE trainers undergo mandatory procedures confirming compliance with their professional level. This is conducted through external certification/recertification every two years through the Expert Council of the Center for Pedagogical Measurements AEO Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (Kazakhstan). Recertification includes the preparation of 2 reflexive reports: effective practice (planning, teaching, and evaluation), as well as reflection and development (learning and changing future practice). Trainers also undergo internal once every two years to determine the level of professional training, legal culture, IT skills and business qualities of employees. Based on the results of the certification, a decision is made to increase/maintain the category with the corresponding monthly salary.

Full-time trainers on an ongoing basis publish methodological manuals and recommendations with the assignment of ISBN, publish articles in scientific publications and the journal of the CoE "Pedagogical Dialogue" Pedagogical Dialogue website. Since 2022, to prevent professional and emotional burnout, a Self-Development Day (1 time per month) has been introduced for CoE trainers, which involves visiting libraries, archives, preparing for writing scientific articles, or going to a museum.

For the implementation of the production plan, depending on the category of students (subject teachers, kindergarten teachers), the most experienced practitioners-teachers are additionally involved as an engaged trainer, the number of which is 300 people (data from 2023). These third-party-organisation engaged trainers act as mentors of trainers from educational organisations: they jointly develop plans for training sessions, observe the conduct of classes, give feedback to improve training practice. They undergo a selection procedure based on a regulatory document developed by the CoE involving two (2) stages:

- Stage 1: pre-selection is carried out in the branch of the CoE/Department of methodical work;
- Stage 2: the final selection is carried out in the CoE.

The final selection of the attracted trainers includes the following: portfolio study, the presence of a diploma of education, the presence of certificates confirming the successful activity of the candidate, and an interview (in person or through ZOOM). After passing the designated procedures, the candidate is invited to attend training courses on the educational programme of advanced training of trainers and in the future is involved in the work of educating teachers.

The load of the engaged trainer is 120-240 hours per year (1-2 groups), depending on the educational programme. The training of students, with the participation of attracted trainers, is organised during the holidays, which allows them to combine their activities in the CoE with their main work in the organisation of education.

### **Assessment**

The CoE has 105 full-time trainers and an additional 300 teaching staff who are also involved as trainers for the CoE. Nevertheless, the teaching load of the trainers seems to be rather high, but none of the trainers complained about an excessive workload during the interviews. In this respect, the staffing of the CoE appears to be sufficient to ensure that the teaching requirements can be met. To provide employees with additional opportunities for personal and professional development, trainers are also given one day per month to use freely for individual development.

As far as the qualifications of teaching staff is concerned, an extensive and demanding process of staff selection is described. This ensures that less suitable teaching staff are engaged as trainers at an early stage. Of the 10 full-time trainers, more than 60% also have an academic background. The main responsibilities of the trainers are reflected in a clear way in the job descriptions. The part-time teachers teach 120 to 240 hours per year during the vacations, so that they can also fulfil the obligations of their main job as teachers without scheduling conflicts. The ratio between full-time and part-time teaching staff is approximately 1:3.

The quality of the training work is also ensured by regular external evaluation of the teaching staff. Regular further and advanced training is part of this quality circle. In addition to their teaching duties, the trainers are also required to conduct research in their field and publish the results.

In summary, it can be concluded that the CoE has adequate human resources to achieve the goals derived from its vision and mission.

## **5.2 Financial Resources**

### **Implementation**

The financing of the CoE has been stable for 12 years since the foundation of the organisation. The CoE is funded by the AEO “Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools” for the implementation of activities related to the training of teachers of educational organisations of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Financing (revenue) budget of the CoE depends on the annual number of trainees.

The planning of the CoE budget directly depends on the number of students and the number of advanced training courses. In this regard, the CoE annually conducts a pre-course study which determines the needs for advanced training courses for the next year.

The annual budget of the CoE is formed in accordance with the approved internal norms and regulatory legal acts in the context of the relevant budget items (wages, taxes, travel expenses, procurement of goods, works and services).

To ensure financial stability and economic efficiency of the CoE activities through the mechanism of business planning and economic analysis, there is a Planning and Economic department in the organisational structure of the CoE. The work is carried out by qualified (certified in economics and finance) specialists: the head of the department, 2 senior managers and 1 manager.

The Accounting department is responsible for the system of collecting, registering and summarising information in monetary terms about the property and obligations of the CoE, through continuous and documentary accounting of all business transactions, financial and tax reporting. The department employs qualified (certified in accounting and auditing) specialists: the head of the department, 2 senior managers and 2 managers.

The work on financial and economic activities is headed by the deputy director of the CoE who manages the work on financial management based on the strategic goals and prospects for the development of the CoE, analyses and evaluates financial risks, ensures financial stability, as well as providing the necessary financial information to internal and external users, monitors compliance with financial discipline in the CoE. At the end of the financial year, AEO “Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools” approves the annual financial report of the CoE.

### **Assessment**

In terms of funding, budget is spent on infrastructure development and acquiring the required equipment. The CoE's financial model is stable, sustainable, and transparent. The financing of the CoE has been stable since the foundation of the organisation. CoE continuously prepares a forward-looking financial plan for the development of the CoE, which provides for the minimisation of risks and effective management of the university finances. CoE's strategic and financial development plans demonstrate competent planning for ensuring participant's number and reflecting the needs of the market.

CoE has a solid participants' development plan by the system of motivation: team-buildings, days for the self-development, publishing articles with the best researchers of leading HEIs.

In overall, CoE has a sustainable planning regarding its financial resources in the areas of teaching and learning and research.

## **5.3 Facilities and Equipment**

### **Implementation**

According to the organisational structure, the CoE has branches and representative offices in all 20 regions of Kazakhstan. The presence of CoE branches in each region allows to conduct courses simultaneously both in regional centers and cities of republican significance. Each branch of the CoE has full-time trainers, engaged trainers, which allows for effective work on the training of teachers in courses in each region of Kazakhstan, as well as timely post-course support for the activities of teachers who have been trained in advanced training courses.

CoE and its branches have all the necessary material and technical base of the Video "Center of Excellence" which allows trainers to successfully organise the workflow. All workplaces are equipped with modern computer equipment, an employee's workplace, as well as peripheral equipment and printing devices. There is round-the-clock Internet access with a high speed of 1 Gbit/sec. In cases of work outside the office (remote work, business trips, field courses), employees are given the necessary ICT equipment according to the act of acceptance of the transfer.

The CoE library is a strong and necessary tool for the professional development of employees. The library is located in the building of the AEO NIS in Astana and was established in 2015 in a modern, comfortable and multifunctional hall that enables the familiarisation with educational and methodological literature and the conducting of meetings, conferences, seminars, briefings, trainings, and presentations of various formats. The library is open from 9.00 to 18.00.

The books collected in the library enable employees to study independently and form the culture of a self-learning organisation. Every employee (from the manager to the line staff) has open access to the book fund.

There is a video studio with professional equipment, special acoustic, and light-insulating preparation for creating video films (commercials) and conducting online broadcasts of educational events in the building of the CoE. The studio specialises in creating educational video content for distance learning, conducting webinars, auto webinars, online broadcasts of round tables, meetings, master classes, seminars.

All classrooms are equipped with computer equipment, a trainer's workplace, interactive whiteboards, and bleachers. The classrooms have personal workstations where students can work on a personal computer. The courses are held in classrooms with a capacity of up to 35 people. At the same time, the occupancy of one training group and the audience can be no more than 30 attendants. The classrooms are equipped with appropriate mobile furniture that promotes interactive forms of learning. They are also equipped with an air conditioning system, a water dispenser, and stations for charging various devices. All office supplies are provided free of charge.

For the convenience of non-resident attendants, there is a hotel in the building of the CoE, equipped with everything necessary for a full rest and fruitful work. There are also ATMs in the CoE building, which are located on the first floors of the building and are publicly accessible.

The safety of attendants is ensured by a video surveillance system in various parts of the building, including halls, corridors, entrances, and other public areas. To restrict the access of unauthorised persons in the CoE, an access control system is provided at the entrances and important points of the building by using access cards.

**Assessment**

The infrastructure and equipment of the institution, including its branches, are adequate to achieve the defined goals regarding its mission and strategic plan. The presence of branches in all regions of Kazakhstan ensures widespread accessibility, and the well-equipped facilities support effective training and post-course support for teachers.

The institution appears to have sufficient quantitative and qualitative resources, including modern computer equipment, a video studio, and a well-stocked library, to support the professional development of its employees. Open access to the library and provision of necessary ICT equipment further enhance access to information and literature.

The equipment and media, including the video studio and computer-equipped classrooms with interactive whiteboards, seem to be state-of-the-art, facilitating effective teaching, distance learning, and online broadcasts of educational events.

Access to external resources such as the library, seminar rooms, and information technology is assured. However, the self-assessment report does not explicitly mention contracts for these resources. If contracts are indeed in place, it would ensure the continued availability and use of these resources.

**Conclusion**

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 6 Quality Assurance

*The institution has adequate quality assurance procedures and mechanisms to ensure that the results of quality assurance procedures are for continuous improvement [Examination Area 2, ESG Standard 1.1, ESG Standard 1.7, ESG Standard 1.9, ESG Standard 1.10].*

### Implementation

CoE has developed, approved, and sent to all structural divisions a Quality Management Manual which contains the concept of ensuring the CoE standards and guidelines for quality assurance. The quality management system covers measures to manage high-quality content (methodological developments, specialised network resources), processes, high-quality composition of students, high-quality personnel, employees (by attracting highly qualified specialists), high-quality infrastructure (development of a digital educational system).

The quality assurance policy of the CoE reflects the relationship between training and research, while considering international, domestic, and own experience. All types of core activities of the CoE are systematically subjected to monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure quality. In addition, for a detailed assessment and analysis of the activities of the CoE, monitoring and evaluation of the work of individual structural units is carried out.

The quality assurance of all activities is provided by the strategy, mission, quality assurance policy, goals and the adopted system of documents and processes. The focus of the mission, strategy, and policy in the field of quality assurance of the CoE is teaching and learning based on research.

The quality policy in the CoE is implemented through quality assurance processes and standards, which involve the participation of all departments of the CoE, managers, trainers, and trainees. The quality assurance process in the CoE consists of the following stages: development of procedures and planning, collecting information, information analysis, development of recommendations for improving processes.

The involvement of stakeholders in the quality assurance process is showcased through internal monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the CoE with the involvement of employees, trainers and administrative staff, trainees as experts who assess the results of activities and their compliance with internal quality assurance standards.



The task of quality assurance is assigned by the management of the CoE to the analysis and monitoring department whose main responsibility is to coordinate the management and quality assurance process throughout the CoE. The department itself does not make decisions but expresses its opinion and makes recommendations on improving the quality of the CoE's work.

To manage the processes related to the organisation and conduct of advanced training courses, MS Power BI software has been implemented in the CoE. As part of this work, MS Power BI was integrated with the electronic attendees' registration system, the system of distance learning, the Massive open online course and other working resources. The further automation and optimisation of business processes within the organisation was initiated in June 2022 with a digital audit of the structural divisions, which resulted in the integration of individual activities into a common system, the development of interactive dashboards with up-to-date production indicators for reporting to the Ministry of Education and Science in real time, as well as analysis of the formats of the prepared content of distance courses in 2022, including indicators of development stages.

The monitoring of the effectiveness of the training courses for teachers is carried out in three stages: the educational programme development stage, the stage of completion of training and the stage of integrating the ideas of the educational programmes into the practice within educational organisations. Overarching principles include consistency, integrity, representativeness, methodological unity, and repeatability with the latter referring to a multiple examination of the same categories of persons to identify the continuity of results.

Feedback from attendants is implemented in the form of a questionnaire and the process is implemented in digital format on the ESUS 2.0 platform. The feedback concerns the evaluation of the course content, the process of organising and conducting the course itself and assessment of post-course support. The results are received by system administrators, processed, and transmitted to the analysis and monitoring department for further research and then forwarded to the relevant departments. Each respondent can get acquainted with the results of the survey on their personal account. Tools that are used to collect evidence, analyse, and interpret the data obtained include among others the categorical framework of the Economic and Social Research Council of Great Britain (ESRC), the TALIS International Research questionnaire and theory of change.

A satisfaction survey among employees with regards to management in the CoE is also conducted. The results of the survey are submitted for consideration at the meeting of the Scientific and Methodological Council (SMC).

To ensure the protection of the rights and freedoms of attendants during the collection and processing of their personal data, as well as to ensure the confidentiality of information, the

CoE has developed and approved an Agreement on the processing of personal data. All employees sign a consent form for the collection and processing of personal data when applying for a job.

### **Assessment**

The CoE employs various quality assurance instruments, including a Quality Management Manual, internal monitoring and evaluation procedures, feedback questionnaires on course content and organisation, satisfaction surveys among employees, and digital tools such as the ESUS 2.0 platform for feedback collection.

Both internal and external stakeholders are involved in the quality management of the institution. Internal stakeholders include employees, trainers, administrative staff, and trainees who participate in internal monitoring and evaluation activities. External stakeholders may include representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science who receive reports on production indicators and course outcomes.

Evaluation results are received by system administrators, processed by the analysis and monitoring department, and forwarded to relevant departments for further action. The quality cycle is closed through continuous improvement efforts based on the findings and recommendations from evaluations and feedback mechanisms. Quality goals are closely linked to the mission and strategy of the CoE, which emphasise teaching and learning based on research. The results of quality management procedures are used to verify the objectives of the institution and enhance its overall effectiveness.

The institution has adequate internal procedures for evaluation in teaching and learning, research, and continuous monitoring and enhancement of internal processes. External quality assurance procedures involve feedback from attendants and satisfaction surveys among employees. The CoE has mechanisms in place to ensure that the results of quality assurance procedures are used for continuous enhancement and improvement. These mechanisms include ongoing monitoring, analysis of feedback, and implementation of recommendations for improvement.

### **Conclusion**

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 7 Internationalisation

*This criterion only applies in those cases where internationalisation is part of the institutional strategy [Vision and Objectives on Internationalisation].*

### Implementation

One of the main goals in the Development Strategy of the CoE for 2020-2024 is the cooperation and joint activities with leading Kazakhstani and foreign educational centers in the framework of improving the brand and maintaining the high reputation of the center.

To achieve these goals, CoE organises professional development programmes for teachers from foreign countries to promote its services internationally and conducts at least one professional development course for teachers from other countries every year. The continuous participation in the organisation and holding of International Conferences is also supported as an effective form of pedagogical interaction for discussing various problems in the field of science and education. CoE provides support on professional training, advanced training and mentoring of trainers of the CoE (Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan), cooperates closely with the Council of the University of Cambridge for joint research, conducts monitoring studies and actively participates in the publications of its Journal "Pedagogical Dialogue".

The study of international experience, global trends and their adaptation to domestic practice is among the goals of developing educational programmes at the CoE. As part of the modernisation of pedagogical practice in the republic, the CoE together with foreign partners, developed 165 out of the total number of professional development programmes (about 60% of the total number of educational programmes of the CoE). Before developing an educational programme, developers, and employees of the department of educational programmes are also trained by foreign experts. The management of the CoE has a positive attitude towards the initiatives of employees who wish to take advanced training courses abroad or an international internship.

In relation to external assessment, CoE recognises the importance of international accreditation procedures and participates regularly in peer-reviews based on ESG standards. To date, 11 educational programmes of the CoE have been internationally accredited.

### Assessment

The internationalisation of the CoE is a part of the institutional strategy and is aimed at expanding external and internal collaborations through international activities that include the organisation of international conferences, cooperations with leading HEIs across the world and international seminars for teachers.

All forms of internationalisation are regulated according to the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The CoE has a positive trend of teaching and training under the projects funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Kazakhstan, foreign projects, attracting international scientists. All recruitment conditions are transparent.

**Conclusion**

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

#### IV Recommendation to the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN

##### 1 **Assessment of compliance the Standards and Guidelines in the Higher European Area (ESG) in the actual official version and the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR)**

The institutional structures and performance were assessed on the basis of the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG), criteria for the institutional accreditation of non-state higher education institution of the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR) („Guidelines for the accreditation of non-state higher education institutions" Section B.IV), and the national or other relevant regulations.

The expert group concludes that the **ESG standards** 1.1 (Policy for quality assurance), 1.2 (Design and approval of programmes), 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment), 1.4 (Student admission, progression, recognition and certification), 1.5 (Teaching staff), 1.6 (Learning resources and student support), 1.7 (Information management), 1.8 (Public information), 1.9 (On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes) and 1.10 (Cyclical external quality assurance) are fulfilled.

The expert group concludes that the **WR examination areas** 1 (Institutional conception, profile, and development objectives), 2 (Governance structure, organisation, and quality management), 3 (Staff), 4 (Study and teaching), 5 (Research), 6 (Equipment (rooms and facilities)) and 7 (Funding) are fulfilled.

The assessment criteria are as follows:

##### **Institutional Profile and Strategy (Mission and Vision)**

The HEI has a clear mission statement in which the institutional profile, strategy, and objectives of the HEI are defined. The mission is consistent and complies with international standards. Academic bodies have adopted the mission, which is publicly available. The HEI has adequate resources to fulfil its mission and strategic planning.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

##### **Governance, Organisation and Administration**

Responsibilities, decision-making processes and decision-making competencies are clearly defined and integrated into statutes. Organisation and management structures are adequate to the tasks and objectives of the institution and assure freedom in teaching and learning.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Objectives and content of study programmes are in accordance with the HEI's mission and strategy. Study programmes have an adequate academic standard, are well structured and have an adequate workload. They comply with national legal regulations. The processes of creating and implementing as well as revision of study programmes are clearly defined.

The HEI offers professional support services for students. Support services have adequate staff.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

### **Research**

Research activities fit into the mission of the institution. The structure of the HEI and the general conditions support research activities. The teaching workload allows room for research. Recruitment policy should correspond to the research activities and research strategy of the institution.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

### **Resources**

The institution has adequate human and financial resources, infrastructure, and equipment to achieve its objectives. The academic staff recruitment process meets academic standards.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

### **Quality Assurance**

The institution has adequate quality assurance procedures and mechanisms to ensure that the results of quality assurance procedures are for continuous improvement.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

### **Internationalisation (Optional Criterion)**

The HEI has an internationalisation strategy which is consistent with the strategy of the institution. The activities in the area of internationalisation fit into the internationalisation strategy.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## **2 Accreditation Recommendation**

The peer-review experts recommend unconditional accreditation of Center of Excellence CoE.

**Unconditional accreditation: Compliance with the standards**

The institutional structures and performance fulfil all criteria of the ESG. In case of substantial compliance, the experts may express recommendations for further improvement. These recommendations may be taken into account by the HEI with regard to the further improvement of quality.

The peer group proposes the following accreditation:

- Accreditation without conditions

The peer-review experts recommend the following **recommendations**:

### **Recommendations**

1. CoE should intensify cooperation with universities, especially the Pedagogical Universities of Kazakhstan, to facilitate research.
2. CoE could enormously profit from implementing structures to provide opportunities to its employees to participate in Ph.D. programmes and graduate as Ph.D.s.

**V Decisions of the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN**

Based on the evaluation report of the peer group and the statement of the institution the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN decided on 06 June 2024:

**The “Center of Excellence” is institutionally accredited without conditions. The certification is limited until 30 September 2030.**

The following recommendations are given for the further development:

- “Center of Excellence” should intensify cooperation with universities, especially the Pedagogical Universities of Kazakhstan, to facilitate research.
- “Center of Excellence” could enormously profit from implementing structures to provide opportunities to its employees to participate in Ph.D. programmes and graduate as Ph.D.s.