



**"ARQA"  
Quality Manual**


"ARQA" Independent Agency  
for Recognition and  
Quality Assurance in Education



**«ARQA» QUALITY MANUAL**

**Astana-2018**

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## **Introduction**

Independent Agency for Accreditation and Expertise of Education Quality "ARQA" (hereinafter IA "ARQA" or ARQA) is established in accordance with the Civil Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On non-profit organisations", "On education" and other legal acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The main task of ARQA is to carry out procedures of institutional and specialised accreditation, rating of educational organisations and independent assessment of the level of qualification of specialists and other functions to create an effective system of quality assurance of secondary, technical and vocational education (TVET), higher and postgraduate education.

The application of a quality management system is a strategic decision for ARQA that can help improve its performance and provide a solid basis for sustainability-oriented initiatives.

The potential benefits to ARQA from the application of a quality management system based on this standard are:

- the ability to consistently provide products and services that meet customer requirements and applicable statutory and regulatory legal requirements;
- Creating opportunities to improve customer satisfaction;
- Directing efforts towards risks and opportunities related to the organisation's environment and objectives;
- opportunity to demonstrate compliance with the established requirements of the quality management system.

These guidelines may be used by internal and external parties. The requirements for quality management systems set out in this standard are additional requirements for products and services.

This guide adopts a process approach that incorporates the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle and risk-based thinking.

The process approach allows an organisation to plan its processes and their interactions.

Implementing the PDCA cycle allows ARQA processes to be resourced, managed, and opportunities for improvement to be identified and realised.


Risk-based thinking enables ARQA to identify factors that may lead to deviations from the planned results of processes and the quality management system, and to use preventive controls to minimise negative consequences and maximise the use of emerging opportunities

This manual is based on the principles of quality management as described in the international standard ISO 9000:

- leadership;
- staff engagement;
- process approach;
- Improvement;

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- evidence-based decision-making;
- relationship management.

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## **1 Scope of application**

1.1 This Quality Manual is a generalising document of its quality management system developed in accordance with MS ISO 9001-2015, ST RK ISO 9001-2016.

The Quality Manual of ARQA is intended to be a reference for its managers and staff.

This quality manual establishes QMS requirements where "ARQA":

- needs to demonstrate its ability to present educational services for accreditation of educational organisations and/or educational programmes;
- aims to increase customer satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes of continuous improvement.

1.2 The scope of QMS applies to the implementation of procedures of institutional and specialised accreditation, rating of educational organisations and independent assessment of the level of qualification of specialists and other functions to create an effective system of quality assurance of secondary, technical and vocational education, higher and postgraduate education.

1.3 The ARQA Quality Manual does not include requirements for aspects of other management systems (e.g. financial management), but can be used in the integration of compatible requirements.

1.4 The Quality Manual of ARQA is the main document of the information and reference model of the ARQA quality management system.

This Quality Manual describes the Quality Management System (QMS) of ARQA NA"" which is documented, implemented and maintained.

It is a set of processes, rules and resources necessary to achieve the quality objectives of ARQA. The activity of ARQA IA within the QMS is formed and described mainly in the form of processes and regulated by QMS documents.

1.5 This Quality Manual applies to all employees of the departments involved in the quality management system of ARQA HA.

The QMS applies to the following levels of management:


- "ARQA" as a whole;
- structural subdivisions (departments, services, divisions, sectors).

1.6 The criteria and methods described in subsection 9.1 of this RoC are defined to ensure the effectiveness of the QMS processes of ARQA HA.

1.7 ARQA shall provide the resources and information necessary to support and monitor these processes, as reflected in subsection 7.1 of this SC.

1.8. ARQA QMS is subject to regular internal inspection and evaluation of the performance of its functioning with further adjustment. Continuous improvement is carried out on the basis of systematic verification of the quality of the service provided, periodic monitoring and analysis of the QMS functioning and feedback from stakeholders (Sections 9 and 10 of this Manual).

The Quality Manual is updated by the Quality Manual Representative as necessary within the requirements of the ISO 9001 family of standards.

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## **2 Normative references**

The following normative documents are referenced in this Quality Manual:

- MS ISO 9000:2015 "Quality management system. Basic provisions and vocabulary";
- MS ISO 9001:2015 "Quality management system. Requirements."
- ST RK ISO 9001-2016 "Quality Management System. Requirements";
- QMS 01-12-001-2018 "General requirements for the construction, presentation and layout of QMS documentation";
- QMS 01-12-002-2018 "Development of quality objectives and plans";
- QMS 01-12-003-2018 "Procedures for the development, execution, approval and promulgation of unit regulations";
- QMS 01-12-004-2017 "Procedure for development, coordination and approval of job descriptions";
- QMS 01-12-005-2018 Design and Development;
- QMS 01-12-006-2018 "Management's analysis of the quality management system";
- QMS 01-17-007-2018 Records Management;
- QMS 01-17-008-2018 Records Management;
- QMS 01-17-009-2018 Internal Audit;
- QMS 01-17-010-2018 "Management of Nonconforming Products";
- QMS 01-17-011-2018 Corrective and Preventive Actions;
- QMS 01-17-012-2018 "Quality Management System Planning".

## **3 Terms and definitions**

3.1 The terms and definitions used in this Quality Manual comply with the requirements of MS ISO 9000:2015 and ST RK ISO 9001:2016

3.2 The following abbreviations are used in the quality manual:

- "ARQA" - Independent Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assessment of Education "ARQA";
- WG - Working Group;
- QRP - Quality Management Representative;
- QMS - Quality Management System;
- RK - Quality Manual;
- GOST - State Standard;
- ST RK - Standard of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- GOSO - State Obligatory Standard of Education;
- DI - Job descriptions;
- PI - Plan;
- DP - Documented Procedure;
- C - Standard;
- MES RK - Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- HE - Higher Education;



PO - Postgraduate Education;  
TVET - Technical and Vocational Education;  
QS - Quality Service;  
KP - Process Map;  
LCP - Process Life Cycle.

## **4 The organisation's environment**

### **4.1 Understanding the organisation and its environment**

"ARQA" management monitors and analyses external and internal factors related to the intentions and strategic direction and affecting the ability to achieve the intended results of the quality management system.

The factors or conditions under consideration may be positive or negative.

Understanding the external environment can be facilitated by considering factors related to the legislative, technological, competitive, market, cultural, social and economic environment at the international, national, regional or local level, as well as considering factors related to the values, culture, knowledge and performance of the organisation.

### **4.2 Understanding stakeholder needs and expectations**

In view of the impact that stakeholders have or may have on ARQA's ability to consistently deliver products and services that meet customer requirements and applicable statutory and regulatory legal requirements, ARQA monitors and analyses information on these stakeholders and their respective requirements.

### **4.3 Defining the scope of the quality management system**

"ARQA" defines the boundaries of a quality management system and the activities it covers in order to establish the scope of its application.

In determining the scope of an "ARQA" application, "ARQA" must consider:

- 1) external and internal factors (see 4.1);
- 2) requirements of relevant stakeholders (see 4.2);
- 3) the organisation's products and services.


The scope of the ARQA quality management system shall be available, developed and applied as documented information.

### **4.4 The quality management system and its processes**

4.4.1 "ARQA" develops, implements, maintains and continuously improves the quality management system, including its necessary processes and their interactions, in accordance with the requirements of this standard.

"ARQA" defines the processes required for a quality management system and their application, as well as:

- 1) defines the required inputs and expected outputs of these processes;
- 2) determines the sequence and interaction of these processes;
- (3) Identifies and applies the criteria and methods (including monitoring, measurement and relevant performance indicators) necessary to ensure the effective functioning and management of these processes;

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- 4) Identifies the resources required for these processes and ensures their availability;
- (5) Assigns duties, responsibilities and authority for these processes;
- 6) considers risks and opportunities in accordance with the requirements of subsection 6.1;
- 7) Evaluates the processes and makes any changes necessary to ensure that the processes are achieving the intended outcomes;
- 8) improves processes and the quality management system.

#### 4.4.2. "ARQA" to the extent necessary:

- 1) Develops, updates and applies documented information to support the operation of processes;
- 2) Records and retains documented information to provide assurance that these processes are being carried out as planned.

Internal QMS documents of ARQA are subdivided into three levels.

The first level - Quality Manual, Quality Policy, Quality Objectives, which meet the requirements of the standards MS ISO 9001:2015 and ST RK ISO 9001:2016.

The second level - documented information, which meets the requirements of IS ISO 9001:2015 and ST RK ISO 9001:2016 standards, standards of ARQA (QMS), Regulations on ARQA subdivisions (QMS PP).

The third level - plans of services and departments (QMS PI), job descriptions (QMS DI), process maps (QMS CP).

The list of ARQA QMS documents is given in Appendix A of this manual.

External documents include:

- decrees of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan, resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- State and international standards (ST RK, GOST, GOSO RK, etc.);
- technical regulations (SanPiN, SNiP, etc.);
- Organisational and administrative documents of superior organisations (orders, model curricula, model study programmes, etc.).

Six documented information are developed, documented, implemented and maintained in the quality management system of ARQA in accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015:

- QMS 01-17-007 -2018 "Records Management";
- QMS 01-17-008-2018 Records Management;
- QMS 01-17-009-2018 Internal Audit;
- QMS 01-17-010-2018 "Management of Nonconforming Products";
- QMS 01-17-011-2018 Corrective and Preventive Actions;
- QMS 01-17-012-2018 "Quality Management System Planning".

Records are managed in accordance with the documented information of the QMS 01-17-007-2018.





## 5 Leadership

### 5.1 Leadership and commitment

#### 5.1.1 General provisions

"ARQA" management demonstrates its leadership and commitment through:

- 1) taking responsibility for the performance of the quality management system;
- 2) ensuring that quality policies and objectives are developed that are consistent with the organisation's environment and strategic direction;
- 3) ensuring integration of quality management system requirements into the organisation's business processes;
- 4) promoting a process approach and risk-based thinking;
- 5) ensuring the availability of resources required for the quality management system;
- 6) disseminating in ARQA the understanding of the importance of effective quality management and compliance with the requirements of the quality management system;
- 7) ensuring that the quality management system achieves the intended results;
- 8) involving, guiding and supporting the participation of employees in ensuring the effectiveness of the quality management system;
- 9) improvement support.

#### 5.1.2 Consumer orientation

ARQA NA's senior management ensures leadership and commitment to consumerisation by ensuring that:

- 1) consumer requirements as well as applicable statutory and regulatory legal requirements are defined, understood and consistently fulfilled;
- 2) Risks and opportunities that may affect the suitability of products and services and the ability to improve customer satisfaction are identified and addressed;
- 3) The focus is on improving customer satisfaction.

Satisfaction of customer requirements and expectations is considered as the main purpose of the QMS of ARQA, evaluation of its performance and determination of improvement directions.

ARQA NA's activity is determined by the following consumers who influence it:

- enterprises, organisations, institutions, establishments, firms, companies, private entrepreneurs (as employers of educational organisations);
- students of educational organisations and their parents (as internal consumers);
- State organisations (as supervisory and inspection bodies).

The senior management of ARQA is responsible for achieving the requirements of the VET and TVET GCSEs, consumers and ensuring the increase of their satisfaction. The senior management of "ARQA" ensures that the needs and expectations of consumers are established, translated into requirements for the content of educational programmes of specialties of secondary, technical and vocational, higher and postgraduate education.





## **5.2 Policy**

### **5.2.1 Developing a quality policy**

The senior management of ARQA develops, implements and keeps up to date a quality policy that:

- 1) is consistent with the intent and environment of ARQA itself, and supports its strategic direction;
- (2) Provides the basis for setting quality objectives;
- (3) Includes a commitment to comply with applicable requirements;
- 4) includes a commitment to continuously improve the quality management system.

The quality policy is adapted to existing conditions and is periodically reviewed (every three years) to reflect changing conditions.

The quality policy is open to customers and aims to satisfy their needs and other stakeholders.

The successful implementation of the quality policy is evidenced by ARQA's performance over the last period, the introduction of new specialities, the use of innovative methods of teaching, work and service delivery, and a commitment to further development.

### **5.2.2 Communicating the quality policy**

quality policy must be accessible, understandable, communicated to all personnel and relevant stakeholders and applied as documented information within ARQA.

The policy is communicated to all staff through discussion at meetings of the Accreditation Council, workshops, QMS training. The results of the discussion are formalised in minutes.

Recorded copies of the Quality Policy are placed on the ARQA stands, in the offices of the heads of services and subdivisions, i.e. in accessible places to ensure that all employees are familiarised with the Policy (Annex B).


## **5.3 Functions, responsibilities and authorities in the organisation**

ARQA Senior Management ensures that an understanding of the duties, responsibilities and authority to perform the relevant functions is defined, communicated to staff.

ARQA management assigns duties, responsibilities, and authority for the purpose of:

- 1) ensuring that the intended outcomes of the process are obtained;
- 2) supporting consumerisation throughout ARQA;
- 3) ensuring compliance of the quality management system in ARQA with the requirements of this standard, the results of its operation and opportunities for improvement (10.1), as well as maintaining the integrity of the quality management system when planning and implementing changes to the quality management system.

The distribution of duties and responsibilities of the management and executors, the order of interaction of departments and services in the performance of functions

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and solutions to the problems of quality assurance of educational services defines and describes the documented information of the QMS.

The responsibility of the personnel for the activities within the QMS be established by the Director of ARQA.

The Accreditation Council and ARQA structural units carry out their work in accordance with the Quality Policy and Objectives, the requirements of this Quality Manual, the ARQA Charter and other organisational, legal and regulatory documents of ARQA. They are responsible for the achievement of quality objectives, effective planning, management, assurance and improvement of quality within the scope of their functional responsibilities.

Each ARQA employee is responsible for implementing the Quality Policy and Objectives and fulfilling the requirements of the QMS within the scope of his/her job responsibilities.

The duties, rights, responsibilities and interaction of the personnel are defined and established in the Charter orders of ARQA, Regulations on structural subdivisions, collective and individual contracts, job descriptions of employees. Managers and employees sign a sheet of familiarisation with the relevant documents, indicating the date of familiarisation.

## **6 Planning**

### **6.1 Actions on risks and**


6.1.1 In order to achieve quality objectives, the top management of ARQA organises and ensures the planning of continuous development and improvement of the QMS. Planning in the field of quality is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the documented information of the QMS 01-17-012-2018.

When planning in the quality management system, "ARQA" considers factors (see 4.1) and requirements (see 4.2), identifies risks and opportunities to be considered for:

- 1) providing confidence that the quality management system can achieve its intended results,
- 2) increasing their desired impact, preventing or reducing their undesired impact;
- 3) Achieving improvement.

6.1.2 ARQA shall plan actions to address these risks and opportunities in such a way as to integrate and implement these actions into the quality management system processes (see 4.4) and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions. Actions taken in relation to risks and opportunities shall be proportionate to their possible impact on the conformity of products and services.

Options for responding to risk may include avoiding risk, assuming risk so that opportunities can be traced, eliminating the source of risk, changing the likelihood or consequences, sharing risk, or containing risk by making an informed decision.

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Opportunities can lead to the adoption of new practices, new customers, building partnerships, utilising new technologies and real opportunities to address their needs or customers.

## **6.2 Quality objectives and planning to achieve them**

6.2.1 ARQA establishes quality objectives for the relevant functions, levels, and processes required for the quality management system

The quality objectives of IA "ARQA" (Annex D) are established on the basis of the Quality Policy, documented and approved by the Director of IA "ARQA".

Quality objectives are measurable and are achieved through the implementation of the action plan. The analysis of the fulfilment of the objectives is an integral part of the general analysis of the QMS of ARQA C 01-12-006-2018 by the management (QMS C 01-12-006-2018).

Quality objectives should:

- 1) be consistent with the quality policy;
- 2) be measurable;
- (3) Take into account applicable requirements;
- 4) be related to ensuring conformity of products and services and increasing customer satisfaction;
- 5) To be monitored;
- 6) To be communicated to staff;
- 7) be updated as necessary.

"ARQA shall develop and apply documented information on quality objectives.

6.2.2 When planning actions to achieve quality objectives, ARQA shall determine:

- 1) what needs to be done;
- 2) What resources will be required;
- 3) Who will be held accountable;
- 4) when these actions will be completed;
- 5) How the results will be evaluated.

## **6.3 Planning for change**


Where ARQA identifies the need for changes to the quality management system, these changes should be implemented on a planned basis (see 4.4). In this case ARQA should consider:

- the purpose of the change and the possible consequences of the change;
- integrity of the quality management system;
- resource availability;
- Allocation or redistribution of duties, responsibilities and authority.

## **7 Means of securing**

### **7.1 Resources**

#### **7.1.1 General provisions**

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"ARQA" identifies and ensures that resources are available to develop, implement, maintain and continually improve the quality management system.

"ARQA must consider the opportunities and constraints associated with existing internal resources and what needs to be obtained from external suppliers.

The following types of resources are used in the ARQA NA:

- human (human);
- infrastructural (educational buildings, communications, transport);
- production environment.

The provision of the required resources is made in accordance with the objectives set out in ARQA's development plans.

### **7.1.2 Human resources**

"ARQA shall identify and ensure that the officials necessary for the effective operation of the quality management system and the management of its processes are in place.

The selection of personnel performing work that affects the quality of services provided by the Agency is carried out taking into account the requirements for their competence on the basis of relevant education, training, skill and experience

The purpose of the human resource management process is to recruit and record staff and to establish their competence. The result of the process is to provide the educational process with competent, knowledgeable and trained staff.

Responsible for the process of human resources management is the director of "ARQA", heads of departments, which in their work interact with the structural units of ARQA.

Heads of departments are responsible for guiding and motivating their subordinate staff. In this regard, they should require staff to perform all the necessary activities specified in their job descriptions.

Every employee must:

- recognise the relevance, importance of its activities and contribution to the quality objective.
- understand ARQA's mission, the quality policy adopted, and its role in the quality management system.
- Recognise their responsibility for the potential consequences of deviations from established procedures and standards.


### **7.1.3 Infrastructure**

"ARQA shall define, establish and maintain the infrastructure necessary for the operation of its processes to achieve conformity of products and services.

Infrastructure may include:

- 1) buildings and associated utilities and systems;
- 2) equipment, including technical and software tools;
- 3) transport resources;
- 4) communication and information systems.

"ARQA" has the appropriate material and technical base: training buildings,

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equipment, tools, software, transport and means of communication necessary to ensure production processes.

The suitability of the infrastructure for the QMS is ensured through the preparation of requests and proposals from heads of departments for its improvement based on the results of analyses of the functioning of this system.

Maintenance of infrastructure elements in good condition is provided under contracts with other organisations.

The main strategy for maintaining infrastructure elements is to prevent their failure through the application of preventive maintenance and repair.

#### **7.1.4 Environment for the operation of the processes**

"ARQA shall define, establish and maintain the environment necessary for its processes to function and achieve compliance with product and service requirements.

A suitable environment can be a combination of human and physical factors such as social (non-discrimination, calm, non-conflict), psychological (stress reduction, prevention of emotional burnout, emotional defence) and physical (temperature, heat flow, humidity, lighting, air movement, hygiene, noise).

These factors can vary significantly depending on the products and services supplied.

Production Environment.

The working environment at ARQA is defined by physical parameters to ensure the conduct of the educational process, economic activities, safe working conditions and a favourable surrounding working environment.

#### **7.1.5 Resources for monitoring and measurement**

##### **7.1.5.1 General requirements**

ARQA identifies and provides the resources necessary to ensure enforceable and reliable results when monitoring or measurements are used to confirm the conformity of products and services to requirements.

"ARQA must ensure that the resources provided are suitable for the specific type of monitoring and measurement action being undertaken and are maintained in working order to preserve their suitability for the intended purposes.

"ARQA shall record and retain relevant documented information as evidence of the suitability of resources for monitoring and measurement.

##### **7.1.5.2 Traceability of the measurement**

Where traceability of a measurement is a requirement or is considered by the Agency as an important element to provide confidence in the validity of the measurement results, the measurement equipment shall be:

1) calibrated and (or) verified at specified periods or before its use against standards that convey unit dimensions in comparison with international or national standards. In the absence of such standards, the basis used for calibration or verification shall be recorded and retained as documented information;

(2) Identified for the purpose of establishing their status;



3) protected against damage and deterioration that would invalidate the calibration status and subsequent measurement results.

"ARQA" shall determine the eligibility of previous measurement results where it has been found that the measurement equipment is unfit for its intended use and take appropriate action if necessary.

#### **7.1.6 Knowledge of the organisation**

"ARQA defines the knowledge required for the operation of its processes and for achieving conformity of products and services. Knowledge shall be maintained and made available to the extent necessary.

In considering changing needs and trends, ARQA assesses the current level of knowledge and determines how to obtain or access additional knowledge and its necessary updates.

The basis of an organisation's knowledge can come from internal sources (intellectual property; knowledge gained from experience; lessons learned from failed or successful projects; collection and sharing of undocumented knowledge and experience; results of process, product and service improvements) and external sources (standards, academia, conferences, seminars, knowledge gained from customers and external suppliers).

#### **7.2 Competence**

"ARQA should:

1) to determine the necessary competence of persons performing work under its management, which has an impact on the performance and effectiveness of the quality management system;

2) ensure the competence of these persons on the basis of appropriate education, training and/or experience;

(3) Where applicable, take actions to obtain the required competence and assess the impact of the actions taken. Applicable actions may include, for example, training, mentoring or redistributing responsibilities among existing staff, or hiring individuals with the required competence.

4) Record and retain relevant documented information to demonstrate competence.

#### **7.3 Awareness**

"ARQA shall ensure that appropriate persons carrying out work under its management are aware:

1) on the quality policy;

(2) Relevant quality objectives;

3) their contribution to the performance of the quality management system, including the benefits of improved performance;

4) the consequences of non-compliance with the requirements of the quality management system.

#### **7.4 Exchange of information**





"ARQA" defines the procedures for the internal and external exchange of information relating to the quality management system, including:

- 1) what information will be transmitted;
- 2) When the information will be transmitted;
- 3) To whom the information will be communicated;
- 4) How it will be transmitted;
- 5) Who will pass on the information.

Information on the QMS functioning and its performance is provided through regular meetings of the Accreditation Council, meetings, meetings of structural subdivisions, instructions and direct contacts of heads of interested subdivisions and employees, transfer of information by means of corporate mail, computer network, telephone communication, noticeboards.

Senior management ensures that information on QMS performance is shared at:

- meetings of the Accreditation Council, including the annual final meeting;
- production meetings;
- meetings of structural units;
- training seminars in the field of quality management;
- meetings with quality authorised persons of structural subdivisions.

Responsibility for this type of information sharing rests with the Director, Heads of Service and Department Heads.

## **7.5 Documented information**

### **7.5.1 General provisions**

The quality management system of "ARQA" shall include:

- 1) documented information required by the standard;
- 2) documented information identified as necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the quality management system.

### **7.5.2 Establishing and updating**

When creating or updating documented information, "ARQA" shall appropriately ensure that:

- 1) identification and description (title, date, author, reference number);
- 2) format (language, software version, graphics) and medium (paper or electronic);
- (3) Analyses and formal endorsement in terms of adequacy and suitability.


### **7.5.3 Management of documented information**

7.5.3.1 Documented information required by the quality management system shall be managed to ensure its availability and suitability (where and when it is needed) and its adequate protection (e.g. from lack of confidentiality, misuse or loss of integrity).

7.5.3.2 To manage documented information, provision shall be made for:

- 1) distribution, making it available and retrievable, and utilisation;
- (2) Storage and protection, including preservation of legibility;
- 3) change management (version control);



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4) observance of storage periods and destruction procedures.

Documented information of external origin identified by the Agency as necessary for the planning and operation of the quality management system shall be appropriately identified and managed.

Documented information recorded and retained as evidence of conformity shall be protected against unintentional changes.

Access implies permission to view the documented information only or permission to view with authority to make changes to the documented information.

## **8 Activities in the life cycle stages of products and services**

### **8.1 Planning and management of activities in the life cycle stages of products and services**

ARQA plans and implements the processes (4.4) necessary to fulfil the requirements to deliver the products, provide the services and to perform the actions defined in section 6, to manage these processes by:

- 1) defining requirements for products and services;
- 2) establishing criteria for processes and acceptance of products and services;
- 3) Identifying the resources required to achieve compliance with product and service requirements;
- 4) process management in accordance with established criteria;
- 5) defining, developing, updating and applying, as well as recording and retaining documented information to the extent necessary to provide assurance that processes were performed as planned and to demonstrate that products and services meet requirements.

The results of such planning should be appropriate for ARQA's operations

When implementing services, the planning of processes of the life cycle of educational services in ARQA is carried out taking into account the established measurable quality objectives (section 6.2), quality planning measures, as well as the requirements for the activities performed.

The results of the life cycle of the educational service are presented in the form of work plans of departments for each calendar year, which are developed at all levels of management, the work of team leaders, corrective and preventive actions, audits, process improvement programmes.

The procedures of fulfilment of the main processes of the life cycle of educational services of QMS "ARQA" are described in the process maps.

### **8.2 Requirements for products and services**

#### **8.2.1 Communication with consumers**

Consumer liaison should include:

- 1) Providing information on products and services;
- (2) The processing of requests, contracts or orders, including modifications thereof;



3) receiving feedback on products and services from consumers, including consumer complaints;

(4) The circulation or management of consumer property;

(5) Establishing special requirements for contingency actions where appropriate.

"ARQA" interacts with its consumers by means of telephone communication, e-mails, letters, meetings with students and their parents, organisation of open days. Consumer complaints and claims are studied in order to take specific measures to eliminate the identified shortcomings.

### **8.2.2 Define requirements related to products and services**

In determining the requirements for products and services to be offered to consumers, ARQA must ensure that these product and service requirements are defined, including applicable statutory and regulatory legal requirements and those deemed necessary by the Agency itself. In addition, "ARQA" may satisfy claims for the products and services it offers.

The main consumers of educational services provided by "ARQA" are students, organisations (enterprises)

"ARQA" takes into account the requirements of stakeholders: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

### **8.2.3 Analysing requirements for products and services**

8.2.3.1 "ARQA" shall ensure that it has the capacity to fulfil the requirements for the products and services it offers to consumers and to carry out analyses before committing to supply products or provide services to consumers to take into account:

1) requirements set by the consumer, including requirements for delivery and activities after delivery;

(2) requirements not stated by the consumer but necessary for a specific or intended use, when known;

3) requirements established by the Agency;


4) statutory and regulatory legal requirements applicable to products and services;

5) requirements of the contract or order that differ from those previously articulated.

"ARQA shall ensure that decisions are made on contract or order requirements that differ from those previously established and record, and retain documented information, as applicable, regarding the results of the analyses and any new product and service requirements.

An analysis of the requirements for the services provided by the Agency is carried out prior to the conclusion of a contract with the consumer of the service. This analysis includes consideration of the requirements for the service by all ARQA units concerned. The economic feasibility of the service is analysed in advance by the relevant implementing unit.

ARQA model contracts (contracts with educational organisations, individual employment contracts, etc.) are reviewed and approved by ARQA senior

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management.

#### **8.2.4 Changes in product and service requirements**

If the requirements for products and services are changed, ARQA shall ensure that the relevant documented information is amended and the relevant personnel are made aware of the changed requirements.

### **8.3 Design and development of products and services**

#### **8.3.1 General provisions**

"ARQA" develops, implements and maintains a design and development process suitable to ensure the continued manufacture of a product or provision of a service.

#### **8.3.2 Design and development planning**

In defining the stages and means of design and development management, "ARQA" should consider:

- 1) the nature, duration and complexity of the design and development work;
- (2) The required process steps, including requirements for applicable design and development analyses;
- (3) Required actions regarding verification and validation of design and development;
- (4) Design and development duties, responsibilities and authorities;
- 5) Internal and external resources required for the design and development of products and services;
- 6) The need to manage interactions between individuals involved in the design and development process;
- 7) the need to involve consumers and users in the design and development process;
- 8) requirements for the subsequent production of products and services;
- 9) The level of management of the design and development process expected by customers and other relevant stakeholders;
- 10) Documented information necessary to demonstrate that the design and development requirements have been met.

The design and development process is initiated:

- changes to the Recognition Rules;
- changes in the requirements of the GOSS;
- making suggestions to improve service delivery.

Responsible for the design and development process are the heads of structural units.

The design and development process shall be managed in accordance with QMS 01-12-005-2018.

#### **8.3.3 Input data for design and development**

"ARQA" defines requirements that are essential to the specific type of products and services being designed and developed.

"ARQA" should consider:

- 1) functional and operational requirements;



- 2) Information from previous similar design and development activities;
- 3) statutory and regulatory legal requirements;
- 4) the standards or sets of practices it has committed to apply;
- 5) the possible consequences of failure due to the nature of the products and services.

Input data should be adequate to the design and development objectives and be complete and consistent. Contradictions in design and development input data should be resolved.

The input data for design and development are:

- statutory requirements;
- the general requirements set out in the GOSS;
- requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- information from employers on the requirements for specialists;
- satisfaction of graduates with the educational service;
- requests from community groups (parents or civic groups) and others;
- learning technologies;
- logistics;
- staffing and others;

"ARQA" shall record and retain documented information on design and development inputs.

#### **8.3.4 Design and development management tools**

"ARQA" applies design and development process management tools to provide assurance that:


- 1) the results to be achieved are defined;
- 2) Analyses were conducted to assess the ability of the design and development results to meet the requirements;
- 3) Verification activities have been performed to ensure that the design and development outputs meet the input design and development requirements;
- 4) validation activities have been carried out to ensure that the finished products and services meet the requirements for their intended use or intended use;
- 5) Necessary actions are taken on identified problems during analysis or verification and validation;
- 6) documented information about these actions is recorded and retained.

Project analyses are carried out according to the plan at key stages of design and development. Representatives of structural units relevant to the design and development stage being analysed shall be included in the composition of project analysis participants.

The results of the project analyses are indicated in the records.

Verification is performed by the ARQA Director at the end of the design process.

Validation is performed to confirm the ability of the developed service to meet

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the established requirements. Validation of services in IA "ARQA" is carried out by:

- post-monitoring procedures;
- collecting feedback from stakeholders and employees of educational organisations;
- formation of expert groups of leading specialists and managers.

Design and development analysis, verification and validation have different purposes. They may be performed separately or together as applicable to the organisation's products and services.

### **8.3.5 Design and development outputs**

"ARQA ensures that the design and outputs of the

- 1) met the input requirements;
- 2) were adequate for subsequent product and service processes;
- 3) contain monitoring and measurement requirements, according to the requirements of the quality management system, as well as acceptance criteria or references to them;
- (4) identify characteristics of products and services that are essential to their intended purpose, safe and appropriate provision.

The outputs for design and development are:

- Recognition of MES RK as an accreditation agency with the right to conduct activities in the field of higher, postgraduate, technical and vocational education, secondary;
- institutional/specialised accreditation standards.

Documents containing service design and development outputs shall be approved by the Director of ARQA prior to release and use

"ARQA" shall record and retain documented information on design and development outputs.

### **8.3.6 Design and development changes**


"ARQA shall identify, analyse and manage changes made during or after the design and development of products and services to the extent necessary to ensure that adverse effects on compliance are avoided.

In accordance with the planned activities (p. 7.3.1), changes in projects and developments are carried out as a result of changes in the conditions of the educational process, introduction of new methods, technologies and means of implementation of the educational process, changes in the curriculum for some specialities.

All changes are managed in accordance with the documented QMS procedure 01-17 -007 -2018.

Records of the results of the change analysis include:

- minutes of meetings of the Accreditation Council;
- Minutes of production meetings;
- minutes of meetings of structural subdivisions;
- proposals for amendments and others.

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"ARQA" shall record and retain documented information on design and development changes, results of analyses, authorisation of changes and actions taken to prevent adverse effects.

## **8.4 Management of processes, products and services supplied by external suppliers**

### **8.4.1 General provisions**

"ARQA" ensures that processes, products and services supplied by external suppliers comply with the requirements of the approved public procurement regulations applicable to processes, products and services supplied by external suppliers where, products and services from external suppliers are intended to be included in the products and services offered by the Agency;

"ARQA" defines and applies criteria for evaluating, selecting external suppliers based on their ability to perform processes or deliver products and services as required.

### **8.4.2 Type and degree of management**

"ARQA ensures that processes, products and services supplied by external suppliers do not adversely affect ARQA's ability to consistently deliver appropriate products and services to its customers.

"ARQA takes into account:

the potential impact of processes, products and services supplied by external suppliers on ARQA's ability to continuously ensure compliance with customer requirements and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

### **8.4.3 Information provided to external suppliers**

"ARQA ensures that the requirements are sufficient before they are communicated to an external supplier.

"ARQA communicates to external suppliers its requirements relating to:

- 1) to the processes, products and services supplied;
- 2) to approve:
- 3) products and services;
- 4) Methods, processes and equipment;
- 5) output of products and services;
- (6) to the competence of personnel, including any required measures to validate qualifications;
- 7) to the interaction of the external supplier with the Agency;

## **8.5 Production of products and provision of services**


### **8.5.1 Management of production of products and provision of services**

"ARQA manufactures products and provides services in a managed environment.

Manageable conditions include, to the extent applicable:

- 1) availability of documented information defining:
  - characteristics of the products produced, services provided or activities carried out;



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2) the results to be achieved:

- the availability and application of resources suitable for monitoring and measurement;
- application of appropriate infrastructure and environment for the operation of the processes;
- the appointment of competent staff, including any required qualifications;
- performing actions to prevent human error.

#### **8.5.2 Identification and traceability**

"ARQA uses appropriate means to identify outputs when necessary to ensure compliance of products and services.

"ARQA" identifies the status of outputs in relation to monitoring and measurement related requirements as products are produced and services are provided.

#### **8.5.3 Ownership of consumers or external suppliers**

"ARQA shows care for the property of consumers or outside vendors when it is managed or used by the Agency.

"ARQA retains and protects the property of the consumer or external supplier provided for use or incorporation into products and services.

When the property of the consumer or external supplier has been lost, damaged or found unusable, ARQA will notify the consumer or external supplier.

Note - Customer or external supplier property may include materials, components, tools and equipment, real estate, intellectual property and personal data.

#### **8.5.4 Saving**

"ARQA will retain outputs during the manufacture of products and the presentation of services to the extent necessary to ensure compliance.

#### **8.5.5 Post-delivery activities**

"ARQA ensures that the requirements for activities related to products and services are fulfilled after they have been delivered.

ARQA considers statutory and regulatory legal requirements when determining the scope of required post-delivery activities.

Post-delivery activities may include activities under warranty, contractual obligations (such as maintenance) and additional services.

#### **8.5.6 Change Management**

"ARQA shall analyse and manage changes in the production of products and the provision of services to the extent that they will be necessary to ensure continued compliance.

"ARQA" shall record and retain documented information describing the results of the change analysis, the personnel who authorised the change and any necessary actions resulting from the analysis.

### **8.6 Output of products and services**

ARQA shall implement the planned activities at appropriate stages in order to verify the fulfilment of product and service requirements.





The release of products and services to the consumer should not take place until all planned activities have been completed with satisfactory results, unless authorised by an authorised body and/or person and, where applicable, by the consumer himself.

"ARQA shall record and retain documented information on the release of products and services. The documented information should include evidence demonstrating compliance with acceptance criteria and traceability to the official(s) who authorised the release of products and services.

### **8.7 Management of non-conforming process results**

8.7.1 ARQA shall ensure that the results of non-compliant processes are identified and managed to prevent their unintended use or supply.

"ARQA shall implement one or more of the following actions with respect to nonconforming process results:

- 1) correction;
- 2) separation, restriction of distribution, return or suspension of supply of products and services;
- 3) informing the consumer;

Once the correction of nonconforming process results has been performed, their conformance to requirements shall be verified.

8.7.2 ARQA shall record and retain documented information that:

- 1) describes the inconsistency;
- 2) Describes the actions taken;
- 3) specifies the authorised body and/or person who took the decision to act on the non-compliance.

## **9 Performance evaluation**

### **9.1 Monitoring, measuring, analysing and evaluating**


#### **9.1.1 General provisions**

"ARQA" defines:

- 1) what should be monitored and measured;
- 2) Monitoring, measuring, analysing and evaluating methods necessary to ensure reliable results;
- 3) when monitoring and measurements should be carried out;
- 4) when the results of monitoring and measurements should be analysed and evaluated.

Methods of monitoring and measurement of the service are defined in the regulatory documents (GOSO RK, rules of organisation of ARQA activity), establishing requirements to the service, as well as in the documents of ARQA quality management system, related to the processes, described in the process maps for the organisation and conduct of services.

If monitoring methods are not specified, service provision will not take place until all planned activities have been completed with satisfactory results, unless another arrangement is approved by the authorised person and, where possible, the

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consumer.

"ARQA" shall evaluate the results of activity and performance of the quality management system in order to confirm the conformity of the service to the established requirements, to ensure compliance with the QMS and continuous improvement of its performance, to develop and implement measures for monitoring, measurement, analysis and improvement in "ARQA".

The objects of measures are: services, QMS processes. Responsibility for the organisation and results of this work are regulated by this Manual, job descriptions, documented QMS procedures and process maps.

The ARQA shall record and retain relevant documented information as evidence of the results obtained.

### **9.1.2 Customer Satisfaction**

"ARQA" should monitor data relating to consumer perceptions of the extent to which their needs and expectations are being met and identify methods for obtaining, monitoring and analysing this information.

Examples of customer perception monitoring may include customer surveys, feedback from customers on products and services delivered, customer meetings, market share analyses, acknowledgements, warranty claims, etc.

Satisfaction of customers (both external and internal) are among the most significant criteria for the performance of the quality management system in ARQA.

### **9.1.3 Analysing and evaluating**

"ARQA" should analyse and evaluate relevant data and information obtained during monitoring and measurement. The results of the analyses shall be used for evaluation:

- 1) conformity of products and services;
- 2) the degree of customer satisfaction;
- 3) the results of activity and performance of the quality management system;
- 4) the success of planning;
- 5) the performance of actions taken in relation to risks and opportunities;
- 6) the performance of external suppliers;
- 7) needs for improvements to the quality management system.

Assessment of customer satisfaction is performed during all QMS and work inspections (internal audits, QMS analysis by the management, review of customer complaints) in accordance with the procedures in force in ARQA IA.

Information on customer satisfaction is one of the key inputs for corrective actions and QMS improvement. The information obtained is used in analysing the QMS by management (Section 9.3), ensuring that senior management fulfils all established requirements (Sections 8.2 and 8.3), determining the resources required to improve customer satisfaction (Subsection 7.1), and improving ARQA's performance (Section 10).

Methods for analysing data may include statistical methods.

## **9.2 Internal audit**



9.2.1 ARQA shall conduct internal audits at scheduled intervals to obtain information that the quality management system meets the organisation's own requirements for its quality management system and the requirements of this standard, and is effectively implemented and operating.

9.2.2 "ARQA" shall:

1) plan, develop, implement and keep up-to-date audit programmes, including the frequency and methods of audits, as well as responsibilities, planned audit requirements and reporting. Audit programmes should be developed taking into account the importance of the audited processes, changes affecting the organisation and the results of previous audits;

2) Define the audit criteria and scope of verification for each audit;

3) select auditors and conduct audits in a manner that ensures the objectivity and impartiality of the audit process;

4) ensure that information on the results of audits is communicated to the relevant managers;

(5) Implement appropriate correction and corrective actions without undue delay;

6) record and retain documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results obtained (ISO 19011 for management).

The organisation and procedure of internal audits are defined by the QMS 01-17-009-2018.

The audit is carried out by internal auditors appointed by the order of the Director of ARQA and trained at specialised courses.

The frequency and main control points of internal quality audits are established taking into account the meaning and functions related to services, importance of processes and technology. Audits are carried out according to an approved annual programme.

The results of the audits are documented in the form of appropriate internal audit reports and submitted to the quality management representative for summarisation.

The results of internal audits serve as input data for management's analysis of the QMS.


### **9.3 Management analysis**

#### **9.3.1 General provisions**

The senior management of ARQA 01-12-006-2017 reviews at least once a year the quality management system provided for in the QMS of ARQA 01-12-006-2017 to ensure its continued suitability, adequacy, effectiveness and alignment with the strategic direction of ARQA.

Senior management review is carried out at the ARQA Accreditation Board meetings, where decisions are made on:

- changing the quality policy and objectives;
- improving the performance of the QMS and its processes;
- improvement of the quality of educational services in relation to the

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requirements of consumers;

- needs and resourcing.

The adopted decisions are formalised by the minutes of the Accreditation Council meeting, which are signed by the Director of "ARQA".

The protocols serve as a basis for the development of plans, measures, further actions based on the results of the analysis in order to improve the quality of educational services.

### **9.3.2 Management's inputs to the analysis**

Management analyses should be planned and should include consideration:

- 1) the status of management's actions on the results of previous analyses;
- 2) changes in external and internal factors concerning the quality management system;
- 3) information on the results of activities and performance of the quality management system, including trends related to:
  - customer satisfaction and feedback from relevant stakeholders;
  - the extent to which quality objectives have been achieved;
  - process indicators and conformity of products and services;
  - non-conformances and corrective actions;
  - monitoring and measurement results;
  - the results of the audits;
  - the performance of external suppliers;
- 4) sufficiency of resources;
- 5) the performance of actions taken in relation to risks and opportunities (see 6.1);
- 6) Opportunities for improvement.

### **9.3.3 Management analysis outputs**

The output of the management review should include decisions and actions relating to opportunities for improvement, any necessary changes to the quality management system and resource requirements.

"ARQA" should review the results of analysis and evaluation, management's analysis output, to determine if there are needs or opportunities that require consideration as continuous improvement measures.

"ARQA" should record and retain documented information as evidence of the results of analyses by management.

## **10 Improvement**

### **10.1 General provisions**

"ARQA" identifies and selects opportunities for improvement and implements the necessary actions to fulfil customer requirements and increase customer satisfaction.

This should include:



- improving products and services to fulfil requirements and to meet future needs and expectations;
- correcting, preventing or reducing the impact of undesirable influences;
- improving the performance and efficiency of the quality management system.

Examples of improvements may include: correction, corrective action, continuous improvement, breakthrough change, innovation and reorganisation.

## **10.2 Non-conformities and corrective actions**

10.2.1 Upon identification of a non-compliance, including one related to claims, ARQA shall:

- 1) respond to the non-compliance and to the extent applicable:
  - take action to manage and correct the identified non-conformance;
  - take action on the consequences of the non-compliance;
- (2) assess the need for corrective action to avoid the reoccurrence of the non-conformity or its occurrence elsewhere by means of:
  - to analyse the discrepancy;
  - Determining the causes of the discrepancy;
  - Determining whether a similar non-conformity exists, or whether it is likely to occur elsewhere;
- 3) perform all necessary actions;
- 4) analyse the effectiveness of each corrective action taken;
- 5) Update risks and opportunities identified during the planning process as necessary;
- 6) make changes to the quality management system, if necessary.

Corrective actions are a mandatory part of the cycle of all QMS processes in ARQA.

Corrective actions shall correspond to the consequences of identified non-conformities and shall be aimed at eliminating the causes of non-conformance of services, processes and QMS.

Corrective actions shall be implemented accordance with QMS 01-17-011-2018.

10.2.2 ARQA shall record and retain documented information as evidence of the nature of the non-conformities identified and the subsequent actions taken and the results of all corrective actions.

## **10.3 Continuous improvement**

"ARQA shall continuously improve the suitability, adequacy and performance of the quality management system.

ARQA uses the process of continuous improvement as a tool to improve the internal efficiency and effectiveness of the QMS, as well as the satisfaction of customers and other stakeholders by maximising the experience and knowledge of the personnel involved in the QMS.

Continuous improvement extends to:

- educational services, including knowledge, experience, skills, abilities, skills of graduates;

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- QMS processes;
- production environment.

Responsibility for the process of continuous improvement lies with the heads of structural units.



### Quality Policy of ARQA

Independent Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education "ARQA" (hereinafter ARQA) has developed this Internal Quality Assurance Policy (hereinafter Policy) in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for External Quality Assurance Agencies. The Policy reflects the general approaches, key principles and implementation mechanism established in ARQA for quality assurance and development of a culture of continuous quality improvement.

The **common approaches** are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) endorsed by the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan, 14-15 May 2015.

**The principles of quality assurance** are:

- assurance that all persons involved in the agency's activities are competent, acting professionally and ethically;
- inclusion of internal and external feedback mechanisms leading to continuous improvement of ARQA activities;
- protection against any kind of intolerance or discrimination;
- Establishing the necessary liaison with the relevant bodies under whose jurisdiction ARQA operates (Department of Higher and Postgraduate Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MES RK), Quality Assurance Committee of the MES RK, Ministry of Justice RK)
- assurance that any activities and materials submitted by subcontractors comply with European standards and guidelines (where some or all elements of quality assurance activities are entrusted to subcontractors);
- ARQA's ability to establish the status and recognition of educational institutions where external quality assurance procedures have been carried out;
- Developing a culture of continuous quality improvement;
- responsibility for quality assurance is the shared responsibility of ARQA management and staff.

**The mechanism for implementing the Policy** is set out in ARQA's Standards, Regulations and Rules, job descriptions and other regulations.





### Quality goals and objectives

The Quality Assurance Policy of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education "ARQA" (hereinafter ARQA) has the **following objectives**:

1. To ensure the competitiveness of ARQA services by taking into account the needs of the educational market in the field of quality assurance at institutional, national and international levels;
2. Training, retraining and professional development of ARQA experts and specialists;
3. Labour market analysis to expand the geography of services, increase their quantity and quality;
4. Organisation of cooperation with bodies providing services in the field of education quality assurance, both domestic and foreign, exchange of work experience.

### Quality objectives

ARQA undertakes to promote quality improvement of higher and postgraduate, technical and vocational, secondary education through external evaluation of educational organisations and educational programmes, provision of information within the competence of the agency and performance of other functions in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In this regard, the **tasks** are set:

- adhere to the principles of legality, objectivity, transparency, timeliness and other principles when conducting the procedures of external evaluation of educational organisations, educational programmes and making decisions based on the analysis of data and information;
- provide detailed, timely and reliable information and consultations on issues related to the quality of activities of organisations of higher and postgraduate, technical and vocational, secondary education, implementation of educational programmes;
- seek mutually beneficial co-operation with applicants, partners and stakeholders in the evaluation process;
- take an active part in foreign institutions and organisations that implement quality policy in the field of education;
- implement international experience in its activities;
- provide opportunities for employees to acquire high professional qualifications and competences;
- increase staff satisfaction with their work and encourage them to participate in improving the quality management system and the agency's operations;
- ensure a good working environment and provide the necessary resources to achieve the objectives of the quality policy;

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- provide the public with information about its activities and the realisation of its objectives;
- improve the internal quality management system;
- Ensure that the quality policy is reviewed and evaluated annually to ensure its effectiveness.