

**"APPROVED"**  
Director of "ARQA"  
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**REPORT  
ON THEMATIC ANALYSIS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF  
QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS  
in 2024**

The analysis of the reports on the external visit has shown that there are some regularities in the comments formulated by the experts of the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assessment of Education (hereinafter referred to as the Agency or ARQA). In order to obtain more specific data, the Agency has developed the Regulation on the organisation of thematic analysis within the quality management system<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter the Regulation) and a plan for future regular publications

The Regulation is developed to describe the procedure for organising thematic analysis using materials of institutional and programme accreditation conducted by the Agency. The procedure consists of 5 stages.

The first stage of thematic analysis is to examine the data for broad themes. At this stage it was decided what to code, what to use, and which codes best represented the content. A reflexivity diary was kept to explain how the data was coded, why and what the results were. As for the purposes of our thematic analysis we are limited to the quality assurance framework, the names of HEIs, names of educational programmes, comments from the external visit according to ARQA standards, etc. were used as coding data.

The next steps involve familiarising yourself with the dataset and coding the themes.

Once the coding process was complete, initial themes were identified. This involved analysing the coded segments and grouping them into broader themes or categories. For example, sorting the data by code identified the frequency of themes present in the data, patterns, similarities and relationships between coded segments to identify common themes that captured the essence of the data. The sorting process determined the relevance of a theme, the sample size to be analysed, the need to expand the themes or divide some of them into sub-themes.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulations on the organisation of thematic analysis within the quality management system. - Astana, 2023

## Selection of topics for 2024

Based on the data of the reflexivity diary, information on the experts' recommendations is collected, distributed by HEIs, areas of training according to the Classifier of areas of training with higher and postgraduate education, criteria and sub-criteria of ARQA standards for programme accreditation of higher and postgraduate education organisations<sup>2</sup>, areas for improvement and examples of "best practice".

From the extensive information, we will select data on recommendations to address the observations identified by the experts during the external visit.

Table 1 - Database for analysis

|  | bachelor's degree | magistracy | PhD | total |
|--|-------------------|------------|-----|-------|
| Number of educational programmes (EPs) | 111               | 73         | 22  | 206   |
| Number of comments                     | 350               | 223        | 50  | 623   |

The number of comments in the Bachelor's programme is presented in Table 2, where their share in the total number of comments is given rather than numerical values. This is due to the fact that some standards have so few comments that it is difficult to draw any conclusions from them.

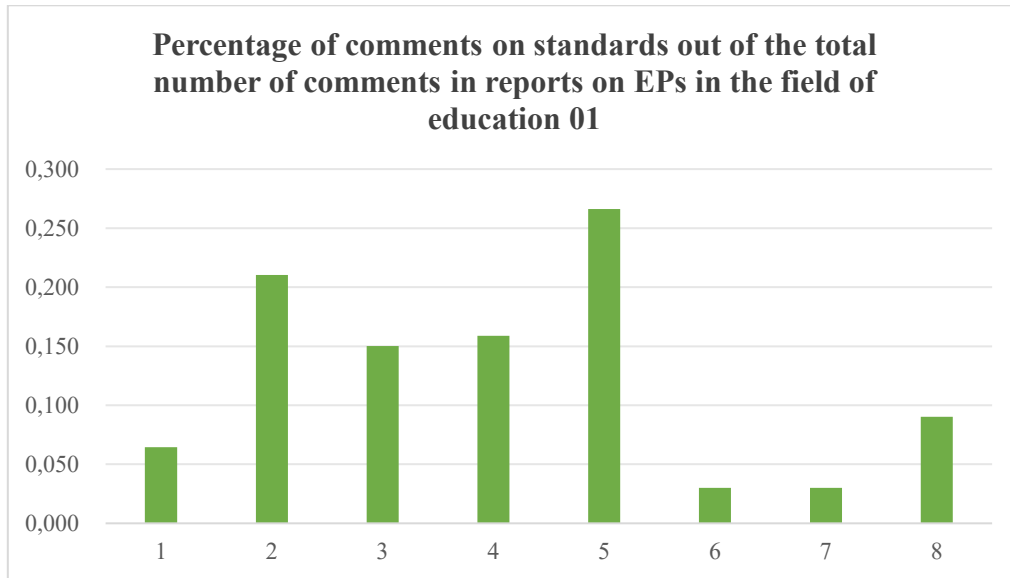
Table 2 - Distribution of comments between standards as a share of the total number of comments

| Field of education                              | standard 1 | standard 2 | standard 3 | standard 4 | standard 5 | standard 6 | standard 7 | standard 8 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 01 Pedagogical Sciences                         | 0,064      | 0,210      | 0,150      | 0,159      | 0,266      | 0,030      | 0,030      | 0,090      |
| 02 Arts and Humanities                          | 0,000      | 0,214      | 0,214      | 0,214      | 0,321      | 0,000      | 0,000      | 0,036      |
| 03 Social sciences, journalism and information  | 0,067      | 0,200      | 0,000      | 0,333      | 0,267      | 0,067      | 0,000      | 0,067      |
| 04 Business, management and law                 | 0,000      | 0,154      | 0,000      | 0,385      | 0,308      | 0,077      | 0,000      | 0,077      |
| 05 Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics | 0,000      | 0,200      | 0,000      | 0,400      | 0,400      | 0,000      | 0,000      | 0,000      |

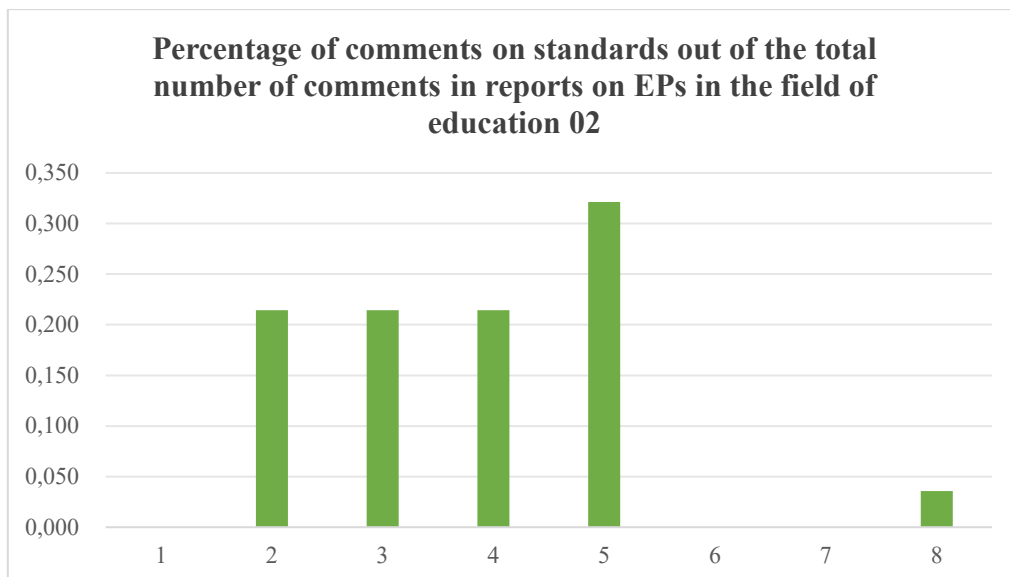
<sup>2</sup> Standards of programme accreditation of educational programmes of higher and postgraduate education organisations. - Nur-Sultan, 2022

|   |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 06 Information and communication technologies             | 0,000 | 0,375 | 0,167 | 0,083 | 0,292 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,083 |
| 07 Engineering, manufacturing and construction industries | 0,167 | 0,167 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,500 | 0,000 | 0,167 | 0,000 |
| 08 Agriculture and bioresources                           | 0,000 | 0,167 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,667 | 0,167 | 0,000 | 0,000 |
| 09 Veterinary Medicine                                    | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,250 | 0,250 | 0,500 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 |
| 6B11 Services   | 0,000 | 0,125 | 0,188 | 0,188 | 0,250 | 0,125 | 0,125 | 0,000 |

Let's look at the distribution of comments/recommendations in undergraduate education by the areas of education that have the highest number of recommendations (Figure 1):



a)



b)

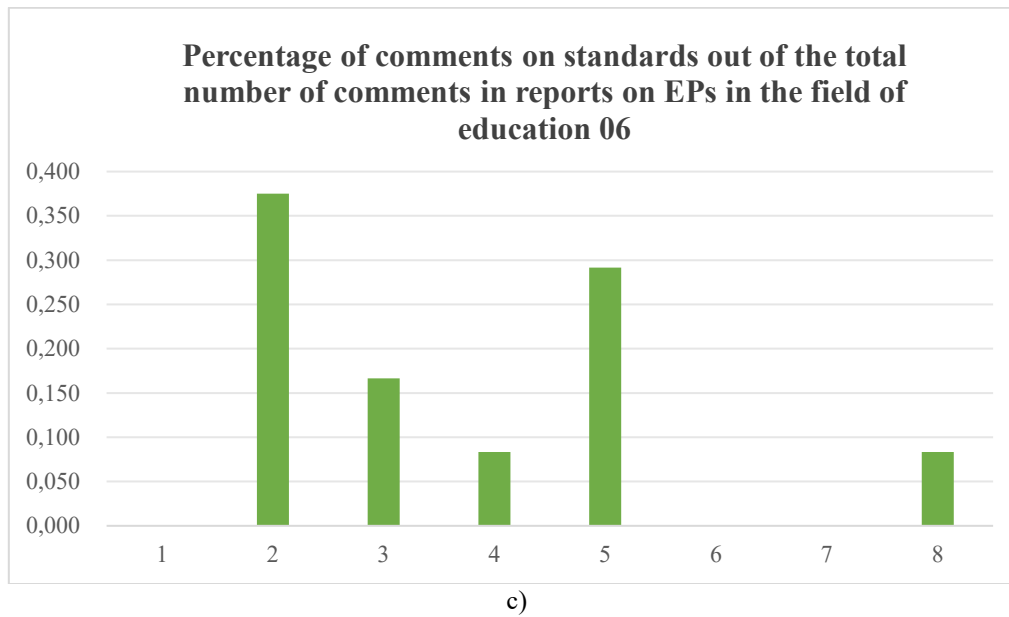


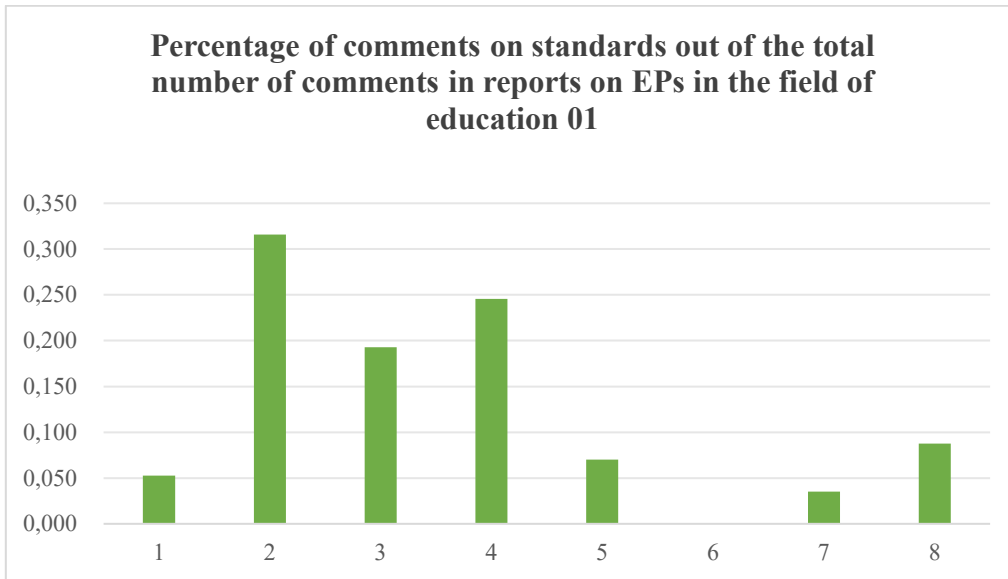
Figure 1: Distribution of comments/recommendations in Bachelor's degree by field of education: a) field 01 - educational sciences; b) field 02 - arts and humanities; c) field 06 - information and communication technologies.

*Note: 1,2, ...,8 - numbers of standards*

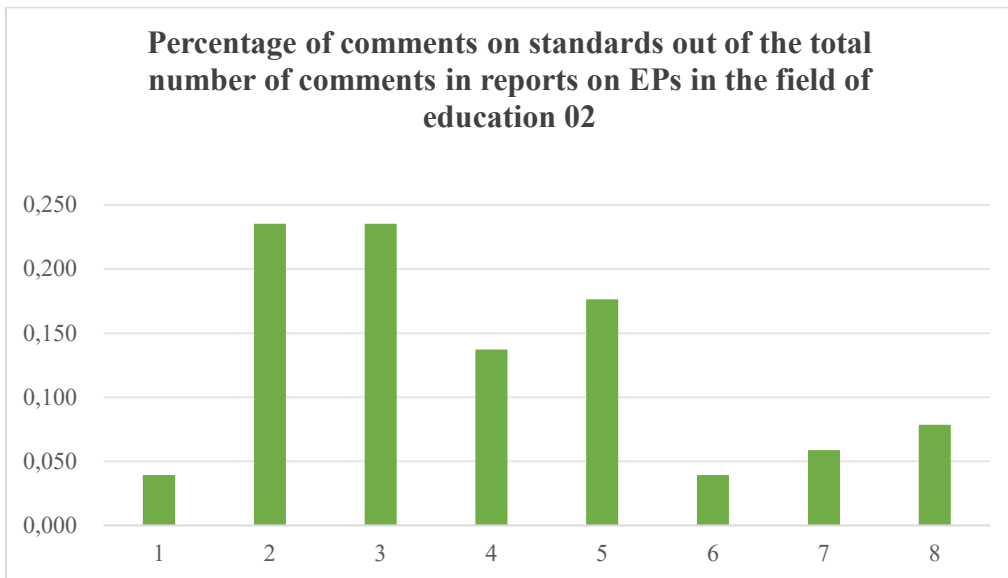
As can be seen from Figure 1, the largest share of comments / recommendations in all three areas of education falls on Standard 2 "Educational programmes: development and approval", Standard 3 "Student-centred learning, teaching and learning assessment", Standard 4 "Students: admission, support for learning achievements, certification", Standard 5 "Faculty".

Experts note that the OP is not regularly updated taking into account the level of development of science, culture, economy, engineering, technology and social sphere, labour market requirements, employers' expectations and individual interests of students; the expected learning outcomes are not clearly formulated both at the level of the entire OP and at the level of individual modules or academic disciplines; programmes of disciplines and modules are not interdisciplinary in nature, providing training at the intersection of a number of areas of knowledge; the focus of assessment procedures is not ensured

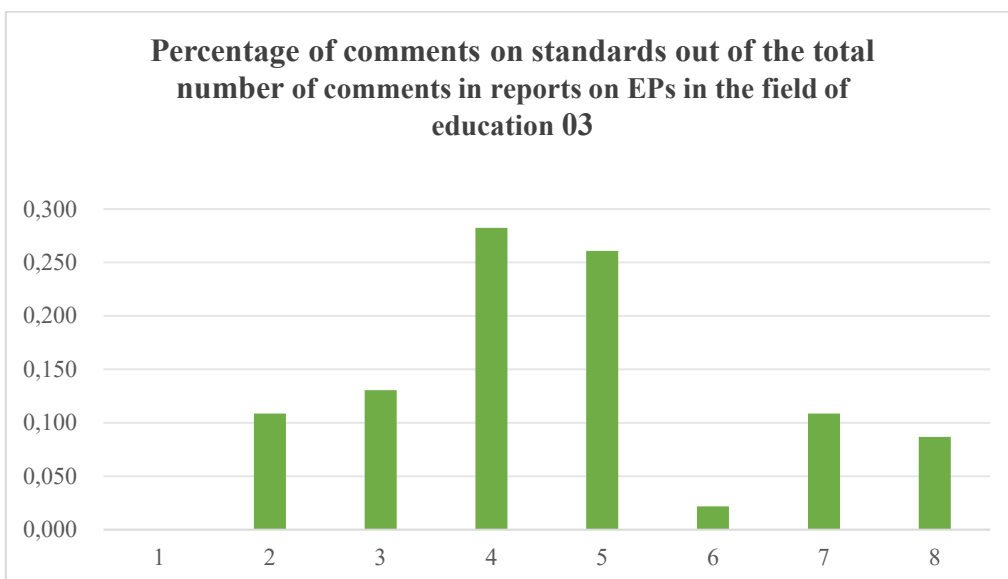
Using the reflexivity diary it was found that a similar pattern is observed in the external visit reports for accreditation of MA and PhD level OPs, although this is not as pronounced for PhDs at standards 3, 4, 5. This is illustrated in Figures 2 and 3.



a)



b)



c)

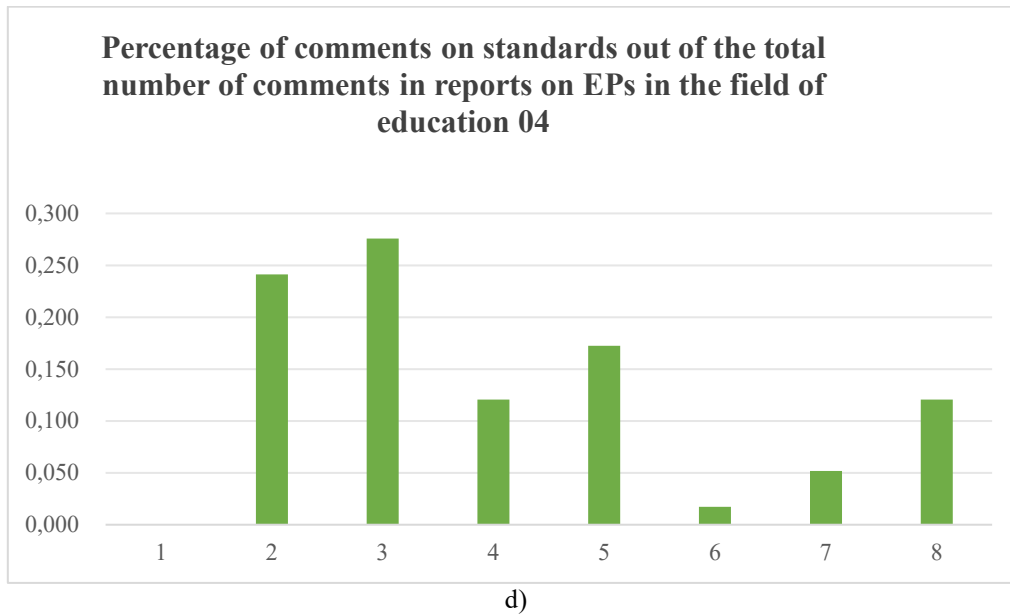
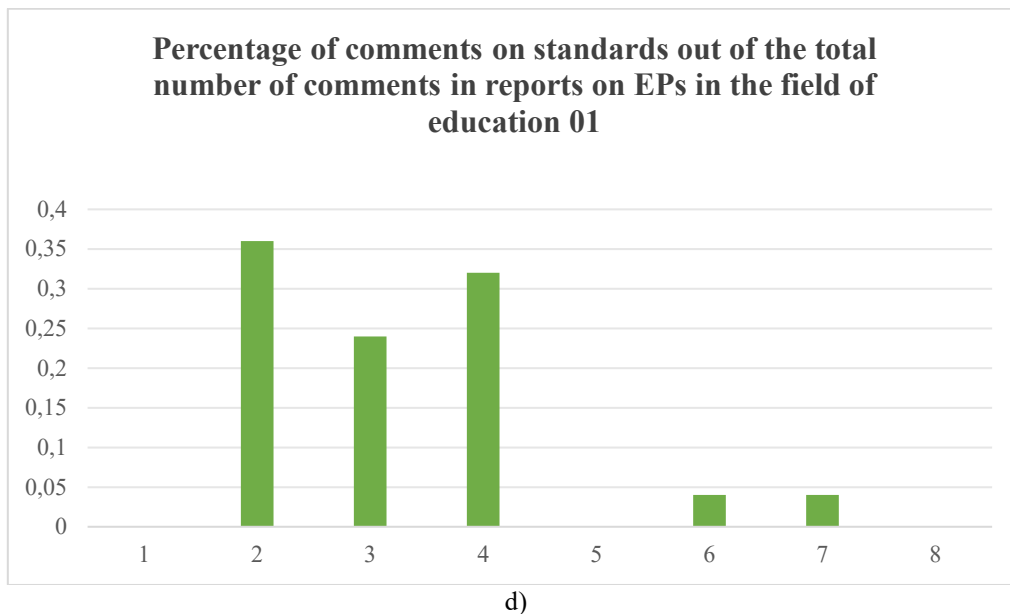
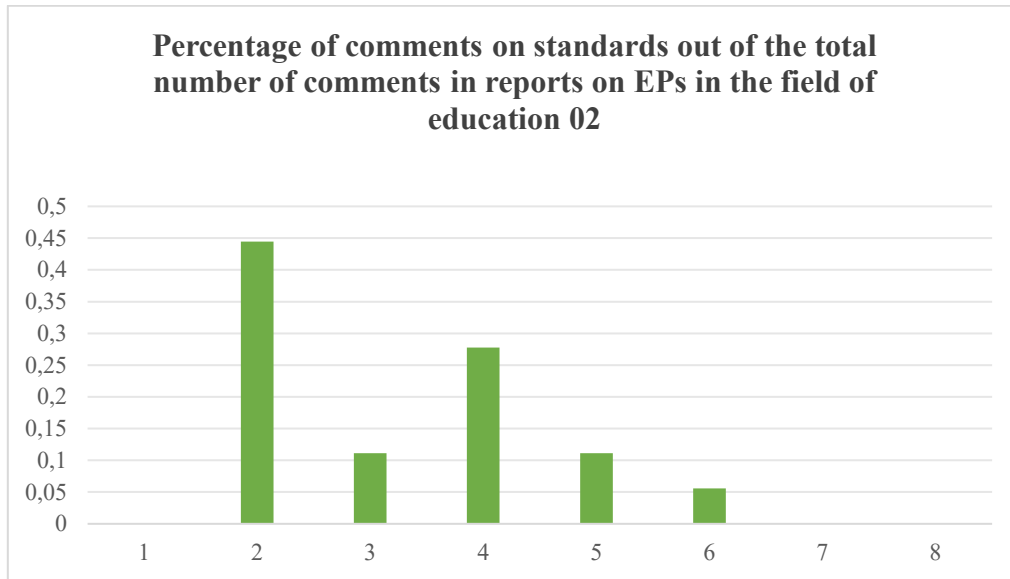


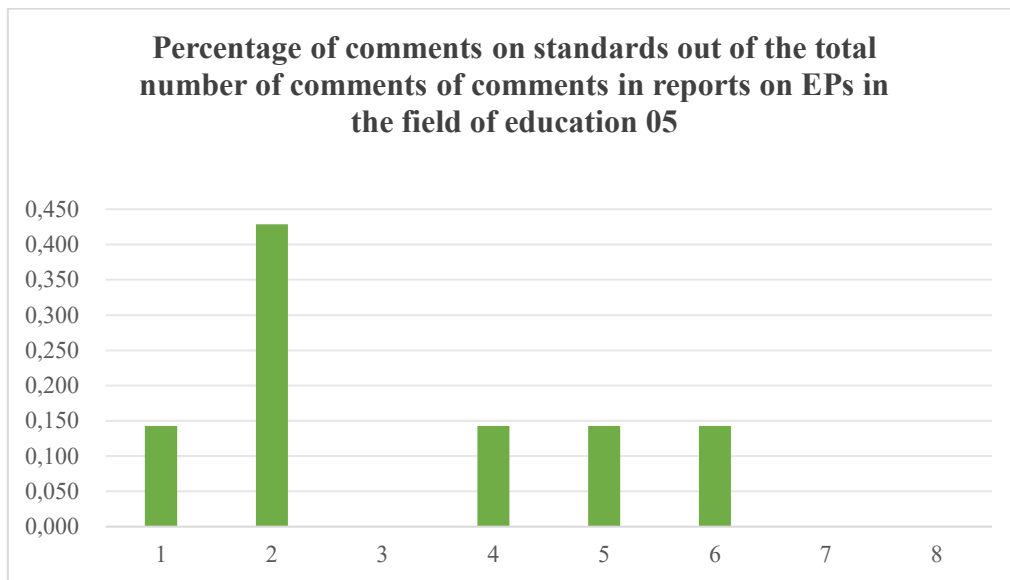
Figure 2: Distribution of comments/recommendations in the Master's programme by field of education: a) field 01 - educational sciences; b) field 02 - arts and humanities; c) field 03 - social sciences, journalism and information; d) field 04 - business, management and law.

*Note: 1,2, ...,8 - numbers of standards*





b)



c)

Figure 3: Distribution of comments/recommendations in PhD studies by field of education: a) field 01 - educational sciences; b) field 02 - arts and humanities; c) field 05 - natural sciences, mathematics and statistics.

*Note: 1,2, ...,8 - numbers of standards*



## **Comparison with data for 2023**

In the report for 2023<sup>3</sup> it was revealed that the greatest number of comments/recommendations experts give on standards 2,4 and 5: they concern whether the profile of the OP, representing its specific features, denoting its belonging to the relevant field of education, as well as taking into account the characteristics of the field of study, level of training, main types of professional activities; provision of the OP with the necessary educational, material, technical and social infrastructure that meets the needs of students and the requirements of the quality of the education system, is met; and whether the profile of the OP, representing its specific features, denoting its belonging to the relevant field of education, as well as taking into account the characteristics of the field of study, the level of training, the main types of professional activities, is respected.

## **Conclusions**

1. This report analyses the recommendations of ARQA experts according to the Agency's standards, so the relevance of this thematic analysis is to study the current experience of Kazakhstani HEIs from the perspective of the expert community and to identify problems in the activities of HEIs taking into account the foreign and national context.

2. The Agency considers that the active participation of experts in making observations, comments and recommendations indicates their willingness to contribute to the quality assurance process.

3. This report will be useful to the academic community, educational governing bodies, experts, employers.

4. The Agency will develop an analytical review on the 2023 and 2024 reports and send to the educational organisations accredited by the Agency.

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<sup>3</sup> Report on thematic analysis within the framework of the quality management system in 2023. Astana, 2024