

## ANALYSIS

### **of the results of external assessment of the quality of implementation of the educational programme of post-secondary education qualification "Applied Bachelor of Nursing" in medical colleges of the Republic of Kazakhstan**

**Evaluation period:** 2019-2021

**Initiator and executor:** Eurasian Center for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Health care (ECAQA).

**Method of obtaining results:** external evaluation within the framework of institutional and specialized accreditation of Higher Medical Colleges (HMC).

The results were reviewed and discussed at the meeting of the Expert Board on 14.02.2022 (Minutes No.1).

### **Introduction**

In total, 80 medical colleges operate in the Republic of Kazakhstan as of 01.01.2022, including 37 Higher Medical Colleges, where training is conducted on educational programme 09130100 "Nursing", qualification 5AB09130101 "Applied Bachelor of Nursing".

"Applied Bachelor" is a qualification awarded to a graduate who has completed the main educational programme at the "bachelor" level, who has the competence to solve technological problems in various areas of socio-economic activity, ready to start professional activities immediately after graduation. The main goal of the training is to train practice-oriented nursing specialists of a new formation, able to actively and effectively use the knowledge gained during the training period and in practical activities, able to think critically and analytically, effectively manage resources and work in accordance with the principles of patient safety.

As part of the implementation of the state programme "Health" for 2016-2019, specialists of the Ministry of Health, together with colleagues from JAMK and Lahti (Finland) of the University of Applied Sciences, developed a roadmap for improving nursing education in Kazakhstan for 2016-2019. The Applied Baccalaureate programme provides the principles of dual education in accordance with European directives.

The requirements of the European Directives 2005/36/EC for the recognition of professional qualifications:

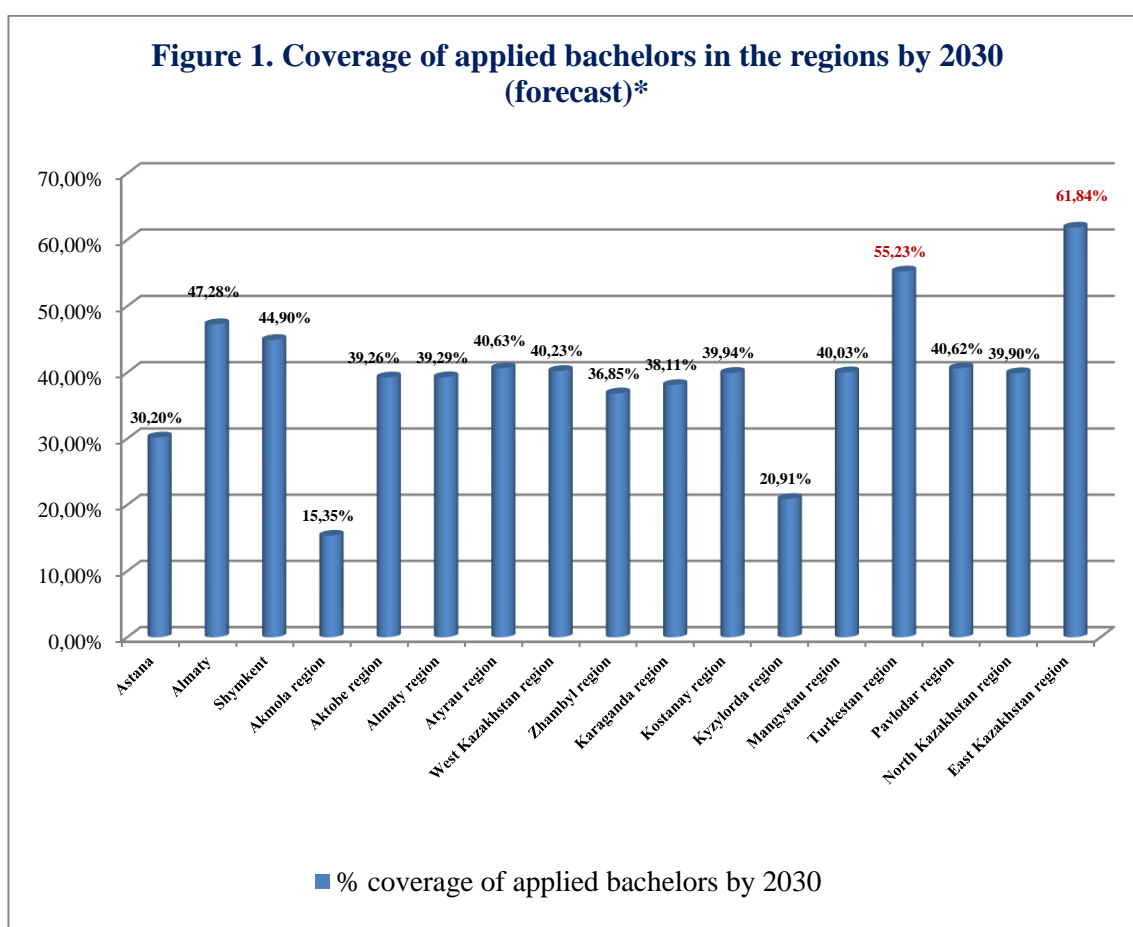
- 4,600 theoretical and clinical training;
- Clinical practice accounts for at least 50% of the total preparation time;
- The curriculum includes theories of nursing, basic and social sciences;
- Clinical practice in general and specialized medicine, general and specialized surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, mental health and psychiatry, nursing and gerontology, nursing at home.

The term of study with an accelerated trajectory is 1 year 6 months, with a total labor intensity of 2,700 hours (60 kz credits) of which the number of hours of clinical practice is 1,080 hours (24 kz credits). The term of study is at least 3.5 years, with a total labor intensity of 6,300 hours (140 kz credits), of which the number of hours of clinical practice is 3,072 hours (68 kz credits). After

completion, the qualification "Applied Bachelor" is awarded in the specialty "Nursing" (*On approval of state mandatory standards and standard professional training programmes in medical and pharmaceutical specialties. Order of the Acting Minister of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated July 31, 2015 No. 647. Registered in the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan on September 2, 2015 No. 12007.*)

The need for applied bachelors is extremely important, since the qualification is higher than that obtained by graduates of medical colleges and have a number of additional competencies. This allows you to delegate to applied bachelors a number of medical functions (nursing diagnosis, management, decision-making). Figure 1 presents a forecast of the need for applied bachelors until 2030 in different regions of Kazakhstan.

The need for Applied Baccalaureate graduates is presented in Figure 1.



Note: \* presentation by Z.A.Baigozhina, 2019

Therefore, assessing the quality of the training of applied bachelors for compliance with accreditation standards developed on the basis of best international practice is very important. Today, only the Eurasian Center for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education and Health applies such standards and has the resource for comprehensive assessment and decision-making (specialized Accreditation Council, including representatives of health care).

### External assessment tools

A specialized assessment of the educational programme was carried out for compliance with the Standards for Accreditation of the Educational Programme of the Applied Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, developed by ECAQA in 2017 and based on the International Standards of the World Federation of Medical Education for Improving the Quality of Basic Medical Education, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015),

who/EuroBureau for the Development of Nursing Education: Strategic Directions for Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery in Europe to Achieve the Goals of Health 2020; Strategic Directions for Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery: 2016–2020. Global standards for primary education of professional nurses and midwives, EU Directives 2013/55/EU on the recognition of professional qualifications, and in accordance with the national and institutional needs and priorities of the health system of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The accreditation standards of the educational programme of the applied bachelor's degree in the specialty "Nursing" of ECAQA have a certificate of state registration of rights to the copyright object No.2771 dated November 20, 2017 of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In the period of 2019-2021 ECAQA has conducted institutional and specialized (programmatic) accreditation of 8 medical colleges, including 8 HMCs, and an external evaluation of 3 medical colleges, including 2 HMCs, is also planned.

Unfortunately, most HMCs have accredited Applied Baccalaureate programmes with other accrediting bodies, with some not having sufficient experience in evaluating health programmes. At the same time, the decision on the status of accreditation is made by the Accreditation Councils, where 1-3 representatives of health care out of 15-17 people are present, and even more so there are no representatives with competencies in the field of nursing education (especially applied bachelor's degree).

Nevertheless, we tried to make a small analysis of the quality of the applied bachelor's programme on the example of the most powerful HMCs, some of which were pilot in the implementation of the applied bachelor's programme. In fact, the accreditation standards were tested and their acceptability (clarity, complexity, convenience, compliance) was assessed during the self-assessment of the external assessment.

In connection with the amendments to the Law on Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated January 4, 2022, the main mechanism for monitoring and ensuring the quality of education in organizations of technical and vocational (TVE) and post-secondary education is state certification (*Article 59. State control in the education system "Educational organizations that implement educational programmes of technical and vocational, post-secondary education and have been accredited by accreditation bodies included in the register of recognized accreditation bodies are exempt from state certification for the period of accreditation" (valid until January 1, 2023).*

The accreditation of the organization of TVE and post-secondary education is a voluntary procedure (Article 9-1. Accreditation of educational organizations <https://online.zakon.kz/Document/>).

This justifies a decrease in the number of colleges applying for institutional and/or specialized accreditation in 2021-2022.

### External evaluation results

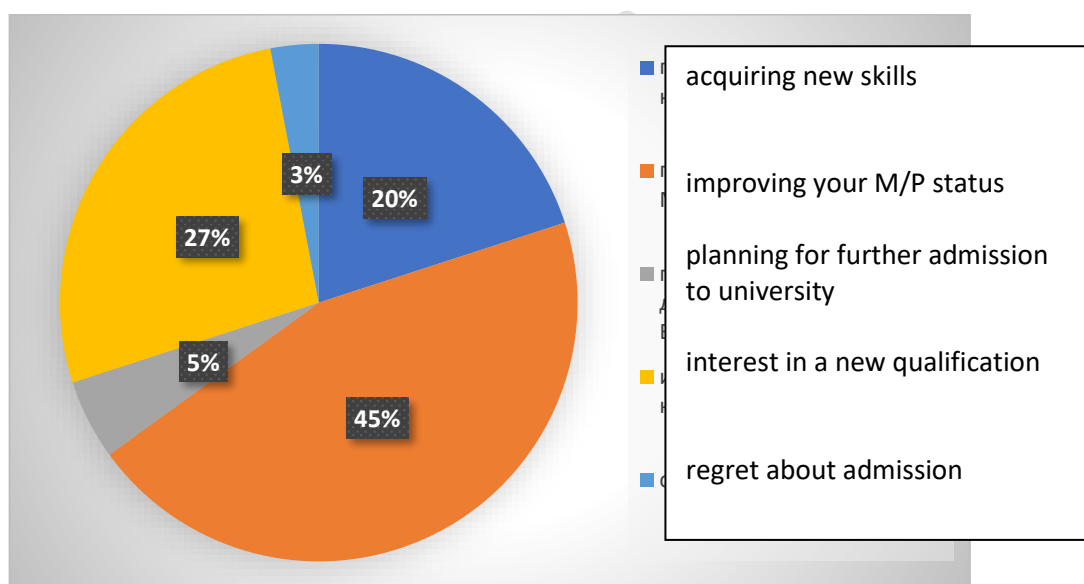
The following table provides quantitative information about accredited and planned for accreditation HMC and medical colleges.

№ no.	Name of the educational organization	IA*	Number of educational programmes		Date of decision on accreditation
			Total accredited	Including 09130100 "Nursing", qualification 5AB09130101 "Applied Bachelor of Nursing" (AB)	
1.	RSE on REM "Medical College" of the Department of Health of the city of Almaty	5 years	5	1	2019
2.	LLP "Republican Higher Medical College"	5 years	9	1	2021
3.	PSE "Kostanay Higher Medical College" of the Department of Health of the Akimat of Kostanay Region:	5 years	7	1	2021
4.	West Kazakhstan Higher Medical College LLP	5 years	7	1	2021
5.	SCE on REM "Pavlodar Higher Medical College" Department of Health of Pavlodar	5 years	7	1	2021
6.	SCE on REM "Taldykorgan Higher Medical College" of the Department of Health of the Akimat of Almaty	5 years	9	1	2021
7.	SCE on REM "Higher Medical College of Nur-Sultan"	5 years	7	1	2022
8.	Ekibastuz Medical College	In 2022, it is planned	In 2022, it is planned - 4	-	2022
9.	NEI "Kazakh-Russian Higher Medical College"	In 2022, it is planned	2	Incl. 1 AB	2020
			In 2022, it is planned - 5		2022

10.	SCE on REM «Talgar Higher Medical College»	In 2022, it is planned	In 2022, it is planned - 6	Incl. 1 AB	2022
-----	--	---------------------------	-------------------------------	------------	------

In the process of external evaluation, ECAQA experts studied the conditions of students' training in colleges, the correspondence of educational and human resources, educational and methodological documentation. Interviews were conducted with the management of colleges and departments, interviews with students, teachers, employers, graduates.

As part of the external assessment, the ECAQA observer conducted a survey of 119 students of the applied bachelor's degree (AB) of 7 HMC, including those who will study for this qualification on motivation issues. The results are shown in Figure 2.



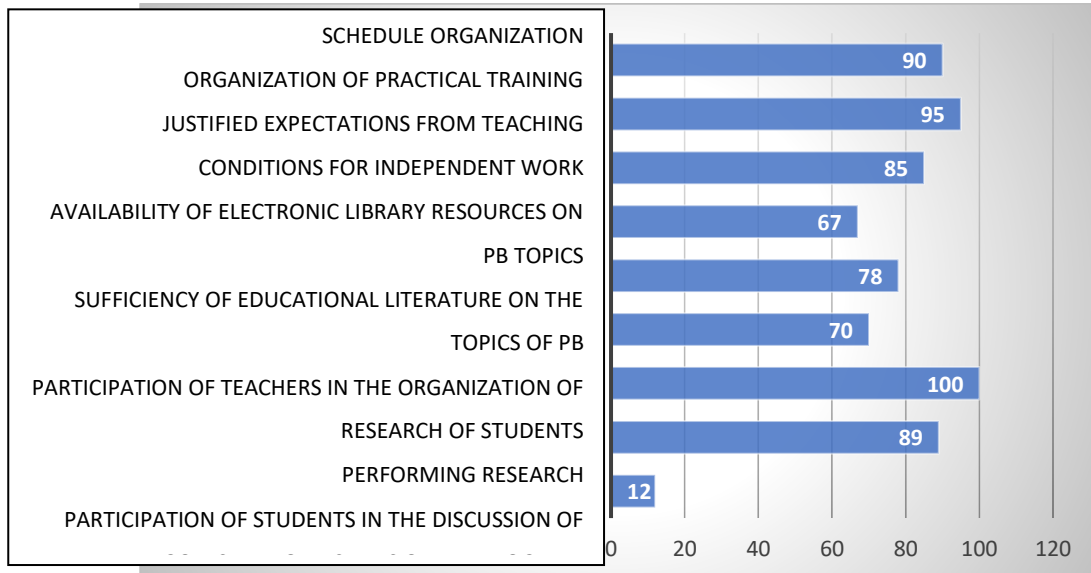
**Figure 2. Motivating college admissions for the AB programme**

The dominant number of respondents (45%) entered the AB programme, having experience as a nurse and planning to develop a career. A third of the respondents (27%) were interested in a new qualification, as it is higher than the qualifications of a paramedic or nurse. A fifth of the respondents (20%) wanted to acquire new skills and engage in scientific work, have publications, which can be useful when entering a university (for 5%) or taking a high-paying job. At the same time, 3% of respondents were somewhat disappointed, as they expected that a diploma with AB qualifications would provide them with a position of a head in a medical educational organization, but according to the feedback of graduates of previous years, this did not happen and many AB graduates returned to their previous position or about the same level (a nurse at the post, a nurse at a polyclinic, etc.).

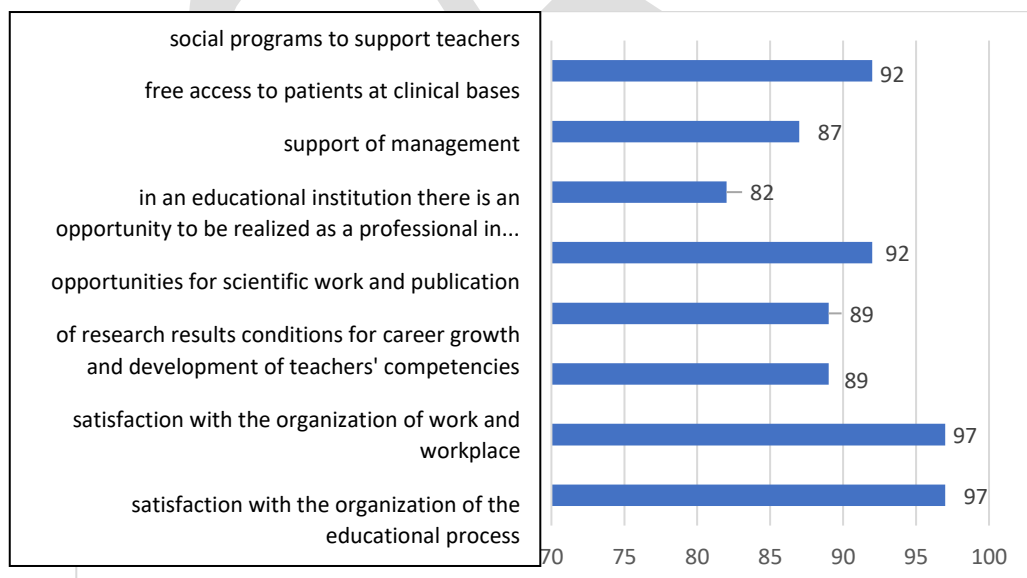
The questionnaire of 119 students (including 70% in the 1 g 6 months programme) of the applied bachelor's degree (AB) included a number of questions, the answers to which are presented in Figure 3.

Schedule, satisfaction with the organization of RW and the participation of teachers in this, the organization of practical training in clinics and polyclinics, teaching methods are appreciated by the respondents quite highly. Conditions for independent work, including in simulation centers, fully satisfy 2/3 of respondents. However, as external experts found, the simulation centers of 4 out of 7 HMC need to be expanded and completed. Not all colleges have the opportunity for students to practice practical skills in simulation centers during extracurricular hours. More than

20-30% of the surveyed students lack educational literature on the topics of the programme and especially literature in electronic form, as well as access to electronic databases of educational literature. A noticeable problem in all HMC whose students participated in the survey is a low level (12%) of students' involvement in discussing the mission, goals and objectives of the educational programme. Approximately 93-98% of respondents are fully satisfied with the activities of mentors, curators, tutors, and the same number of responding students noted the respectful attitude of teachers and college staff to students.



**Figure 3. Questionnaire of students of applied bachelor's degree (n=119) in %**



**Figure 4. Questionnaire of teachers of applied bachelor's degree (n=78) in %**

The survey of 78 teachers of 7 HMC found high satisfaction with almost all organizational, methodological and practical conditions and resources, as well as social programmes to support teachers.

As a result of a comprehensive assessment of 7 educational programmes 09130100 "Nursing", qualification 5AB09130101 "Applied Bachelor of Nursing" for compliance with ECAQA

accreditation standards, external experts developed recommendations for improvement. The table below summarizes areas for improvement.

In total, the implementation of 9 accreditation standards was analyzed:

1. Mission and outcomes
2. Educational programme
3. Student Assessment
4. Learners
5. Academic Staff/Teachers
6. Educational resources
7. Programme evaluation
8. Management and administration
9. Continuous renewal

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Recommendations of external experts</b>
Mission and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To intensify the work on involving students in the development and updating of the mission of the educational programme and college.</li> </ul>
Educational programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Systematize the educational and planning documentation for dual training.</li> <li>– To develop a Regulation defining the procedure for the preparation, quality assessment, development and examination of educational programmes for social partners.</li> <li>– Increase the number of events with the participation of social partners in the form of conferences, round tables, seminars and master classes.</li> <li>– More actively involve students in RW, develop mechanisms for accounting for RW results as individual achievements, including for building a professional trajectory.</li> </ul>
Student Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Replenish and systematize the electronic database of test tasks in all disciplines</li> <li>– Implement the programme "Anti-plagiarism" to check the originality of independent work, homework, writing articles, for admission to the defense of the thesis</li> </ul>
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To intensify the work of student self-government in the organization of the educational process of the college on the basis of glasnost, transparency and selectivity of procedures.</li> <li>– Increase the percentage of student participation in student self-government of the college and interest groups.</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To increase the categorization of teachers of applied bachelor's degree.</li> <li>– To resume the work of the school for the improvement of pedagogical skills</li> <li>– Ensure access of teachers and students to international literature bases to improve professional competencies.</li> <li>– Continue work to provide young teachers with social support</li> <li>– To intensify work on the involvement of teachers of special disciplines in the SRW</li> <li>– To intensify work on the creation and increase in the number of author's educational and methodological manuals.</li> </ul>

Educational resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Continue work on the replenishment and renewal of the library fund in the state and Russian languages and supplement the library fund with electronic educational publications</li> <li>– To equip and update the computer park with computers of modern generations.</li> <li>– More actively use distance learning technologies, including the organization of independent work.</li> <li>– To conclude an agreement with the leading universities and colleges of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the use of library resources.</li> <li>– Increase international cooperation</li> <li>– Update the content of the website in the sections "Applicant", "Student" and simplify navigation through the college site.</li> <li>– Improve access to information about the educational programme posted on the official website of the college.</li> <li>– To replenish training resources with modern simulation equipment for the organization of nursing, taking into account different age categories.</li> <li>– Develop mechanisms for the participation of foreign partners in the processes of improving the educational programme, including in the evaluation and review of programmes, clinical practice within the framework of academic mobility.</li> </ul>
Assessment of the educational programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Wider involvement of students and employers in the development and evaluation of educational programmes.</li> </ul>
Management and administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensure the functioning of the QMS in all activities of the college, including the assessment of educational programmes and documentation maintenance.</li> </ul>
Continuous renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To find an opportunity to organize advanced training courses for graduates of the educational programme in narrow profiles.</li> </ul>

Prior to obtaining the status of “Higher Medical College”, the TVE organization underwent an assessment according to international criteria (Procedure and criteria for assessing medical colleges for reorganization into Higher Nursing Schools/JAMK University of Applied Sciences, 2018).

**Thus**, the recommendations for improving the educational programme reflect areas in need of improvement, in particular, in all 7 HMCs the principle of involvement of students in the development of the mission of the educational programme is not fully implemented (*Standard 1*). To maintain the high quality of the educational programme, HMC needs to strengthen cooperation with external stakeholders and social partners (*Standard 2*). Experts noted the weak implementation of dual training (*Standard 2*).

A weak element of the Applied Baccalaureate programme is the performance of scientific work. Nominally, the planning and implementation of RW, the implementation of the thesis are provided, but in fact, the teachers themselves need advanced training in conducting scientific work (standards 2 and 5).

Given the strengthened scientific basis of the educational programme, which distinguishes it from TVE programmes, the defense of the thesis, the anti-plagiarism programme is slowly being introduced in colleges (*Standard 3*).



Despite the presence of student government in colleges, experts noted the weak role of active students in the organization of educational and social events, and the procedure for selecting students' assets needs greater transparency and transparency (*Standard 4*).

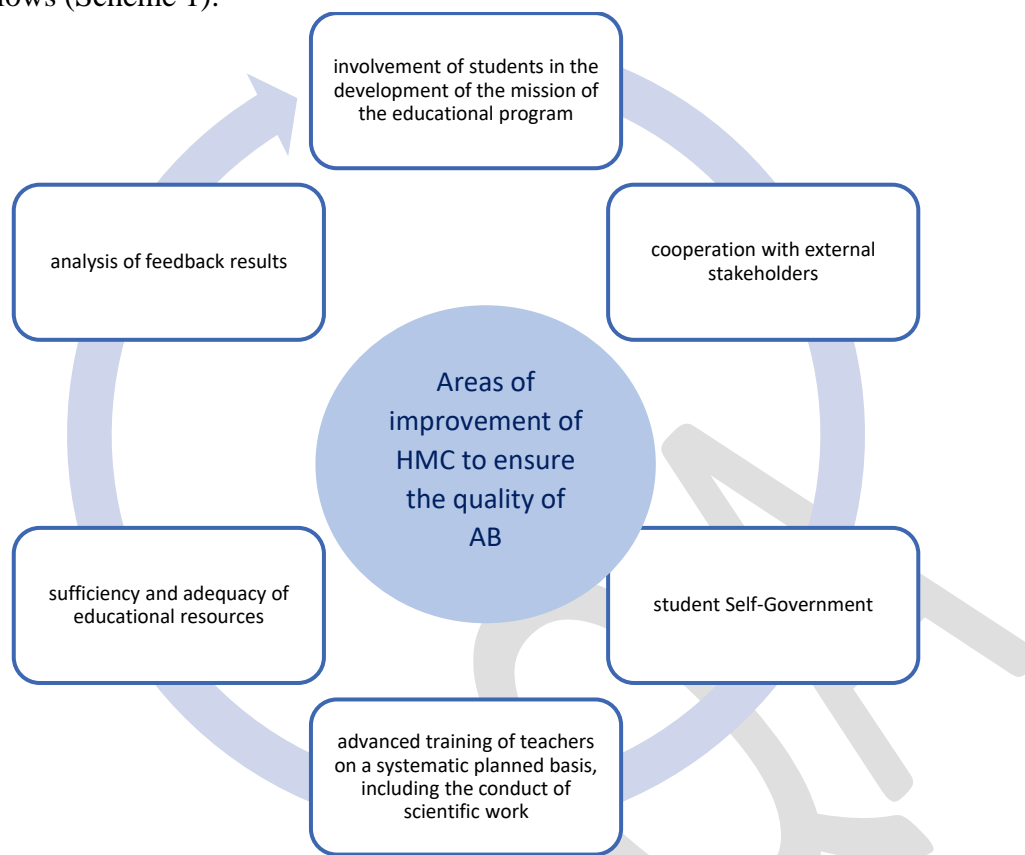
The largest number of recommendations of external experts is made according to Standard 5 "Teachers" and Standard 6 "Educational Resources". The educational programme of the applied bachelor's degree was introduced in all 7 accredited colleges in the period from 2014 (pilot HMC 10, including 5 accredited by ECAQA) to 2018, a sufficiently large number of training events were centrally held for college teachers on the basis of the Republican Center for Health Development of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, ULE "Union of Medical Colleges of Kazakhstan" together with international partners from Finland. At the same time, as before, the qualitative composition of teachers needs to be improved in terms of academic degree, scientific competence, publication activity. Colleges need to carry out teacher development on a systematic planned basis, and this task should be included in the strategic plan (programme) for the development of HMC (*Standard 5*).

With regard to the adequacy and appropriateness of educational resources for the educational programme, most of the recommendations for the completion of the library fund and the simulation center. Formal international cooperation should also have a practical useful result for the preparation of applied bachelors (*Standard 6*).

College websites contain little information that could serve as a motivating factor for potential applicants. HMC continues to inactively involve students and employers in the design and evaluation of the curriculum, reducing their role to formal membership in advisory bodies (*Standard 7*).

The results of feedback (surveys, questionnaires) are also mostly formal, i.e. they are carried out, but analytical information does not have a significant application value. The exclusion of certification of the quality management system of educational organizations from the mandatory procedure led to a decrease in the quality of documentation and interaction between the departments of the educational organization (*Standard 8*).

Thus, the areas of improvement for HMC in the context of the Applied Bachelor's programme are as follows (Scheme 1):



Following the completion of the external peer review, ECAQA conducted a survey of college staff involved in the self-assessment and preparation of reports. The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify problems during the self-assessment and what standards caused difficulties in the preparation of the report.

The results of the assessment of the degree of complexity of accreditation standards on a 10-point scale (1- less difficult, 10- as difficult as possible):

standards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
points	3	8	9	1	1	4	8	3	6

As the results of a survey of HMC employees showed, the most difficult standards were 2 (educational programme), 2 (student assessment), 7 (assessment of the educational programme), 9 (Continuous renewal). The easiest way was to prepare a self-assessment report according to standards 1 (mission and final results), 4 (students), 5 (teachers). In the comments, the respondents wrote that Standard 2 and Standard 7 proved to be difficult due to the number of sections and the need to provide a large amount of evidence (appendices). Standard 9 caused difficulties in preparation, as Standards 1-8 contained information on Continuous renewal and considered that Standard 9 duplicated issues.

Some comments of the respondents showed that the accreditation standards applied more deeply cover the main directions of the implementation of educational programmes than the accreditation standards applied by the college during the previous accreditation.

The opinion about the training seminar preceding the beginning of the self-assessment stage was highly appreciated by all respondents (“a lot of useful information, a clear explanation of the criteria for standards, in detail, in detail”).

**Director General**  
**doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor, MBA**



**Sarsenbayeva S.S.**

ECAQA