

**INDEPENDENT KAZAKH AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN
EDUCATION**



THEMATIC ANALYSIS

“THE EXTERNAL REVIEW FEEDBACK RESULTS”



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Thematic analysis
"The external review feedback results"

Table of contents

I. Methodology	3
II. Evaluation of coordinators.....	3
2.1 Analysis and discussion.....	3
2.3 Recommendations	5
III. Evaluation of the head of the expert team.....	5
3.1 Analysis and discussion.....	5
3.2 Conclusions.....	6
3.3 Recommendations	6
IV. Evaluation of external audit experts	6
4.1 Analysis and discussion.....	6
4.2 Conclusions.....	7
4.3 Recommendations:	7
V. Evaluation of the experts, involved in the preparation of an expertise to the self- evaluation report of educational institutions/programs.....	7
5.1 Analysis and discussion.....	7
5. 2 Recommendations:	7
Appendix A.....	8
Appendix B.....	9
Appendix C.....	10
Appendix D.....	11
Appendix E.....	12
Appendix F.....	13
Appendix G.....	14
Appendix H.....	15
Appendix I.....	16
Appendix J.....	17
Appendix K.....	18
Appendix L.....	19
Appendix M.....	20

I. Methodology

In order to improve the quality of external (on-site) visits and IQAA activities in general, the agency systematically conducts a cross-survey of coordinators, experts and representatives of accredited educational institutions (higher education institutions –HEIs/colleges) after each audit. For these purposes following 6 forms of survey were designed by the agency:

- Form 1 for evaluation of coordinators (for external visit experts)
- Form 2 for evaluation of coordinators (for accredited educational institutions)
- Form 3 for evaluation of external visit team chair (for coordinators and experts)
- Form 4 for evaluation of external visit experts (for coordinators)
- Form 5 for evaluation of external visit team (for accredited educational institutions)
- Form 6 for evaluation of experts, dealt with expertise for self-evaluation (for coordinators).

The list of respondents was drawn up in line with the audits schedule and lists of members of expert teams of the external audit.

The survey has been carried out since 2014, however, to gain comparability this thematic analysis presents the results of 2015 (28.03.-26.05.2015 and 09.11- 23. 12. 2015).

Initially, the forms were piloted, during which a number of difficulties were revealed. They were taken into account in the application of the forms.

The survey was conducted via an online questionnaire www.monkeysurvey.com

II. Evaluation of coordinators

The questionnaires (form 1) were sent to 487 experts, who took part in the external audits of specialized accreditation of 18 HEIs and 9 colleges, as well as in institutional accreditation of 10 HEIs and 7 colleges.

As a result, the responses of 245 experts were obtained (50%). The form №2 was sent to 27 representatives of reviewed educational institutions, including 18 HEIs and 9 colleges. The answers were obtained from 16 educational institutions (60%), including 13 HEIs and 3 colleges. Overall, 10 coordinators of the agency were evaluated by external audit experts and representatives of educational institutions in the following activities:

- timely ensure external visit experts with materials.
- conduct webinar
- provide support
- consultation
- follow procedures of on-site visit and ethical norms.

2.1 Analysis and discussion

According to opinion of the vast majority of respondents, coordinators facilitate preparation of experts to audit by providing them with the necessary materials, including:

- the standards and criteria for institutional accreditation of educational institutions (HEIs/colleges) or standards and criteria for specialized (program) accreditation of educational programs;
- the handbook of student-experts, participating in the accreditation procedures

- the handbook of external audit
- the self-evaluation report of educational institution/ educational program
- the code of good practice
- the list of the experts in external visit team.

In addition, coordinators support experts through arranging webinars via communication tools, among which skype or Polycom is the most popular. Below is the list of resources stated in line with their frequency of application by coordinators of the agency:

1. skype/polycom
2. e-mail
3. telephone

During the webinar, the coordinators discuss a number of key issues, related to the activities of the external visit experts. They are:

- the responsibility of experts in the accreditation procedure
- ethical issues in the audit
- interview questions
- requirements for external visit report, terms of preparation and delivery of the report
- a delegation of the functions.

Significant progress has been taken place in the coverage of the main topics, discussed during the preparation of the audit team. Currently, in the opinion of almost all the respondents, the aforementioned aspects are explained fully by the coordinators. For comparison, in the first half of 2015 the coordinators emphasized only these 3 core components of expert activities: the role and responsibility of experts, the requirements for the external audit report and the delegation of authority, while ethics and interview questions were considered least. However, in comparison with the 1 half of 2015 in the 2 half of 2015 the number of experts, saying that the interview questions were preliminarily discussed collectively, increased from 50% to 82%. Moreover, in last year experts and expert team chairs became more active in consideration of the interview questions during the webinar for more than 2,5 times from 24% to 61% and more than 10 times between 2% and 25% respectively. Nevertheless, these results show the need to increase the activity of expert team chairs in the webinar.

In addition, there is a steady improvement in the work of the coordinators in audits particularly in ensuring the voice of the experts and collegiality in decision-making. Experts say that their opinion is taken into account in full (the 1 half of 2015 - 85%, the 2 half of 2015 - 97%). For example, as of the year-end, the recommendations of 91% were fully taken into account. However, some state that in the on-site visit in the frame of the institutional accreditation the view of the experts should be considered regardless the standard they in charge of. Furthermore, experts propose to extend the audit period from 2 to 3 days, which is not always possible. Since the additional audit days lead to more financial and moral burden on the educational institution being accredited, which the agency seeks to avoid. Another suggestion of the experts is to develop communication skills of the coordinators and provide experts with more support, particularly, by answering questions appropriately.

In general, experts and representatives of educational institutions appraised highly the agency's coordinators. According to their opinion, the coordinators arrange the external audits, distribute the responsibilities of all members of expert groups properly, provide the educational institutions with the support in all stages of preparation and conduction of the review. In addition, they believe that coordinators comply with ethical norms. This can be observed in the chart shown below (Appendices A and B).

Despite the significant progress in timeliness delivery of the materials to the experts via the e-mail in comparison with the results of the previous survey, there is a small number of experts who do not receive the audit materials in advance.

In line with the last survey results the coordinators were asked to provide less time to experts to work with the departments where they are left alone with their representatives. In this regard, during the audit in the 2 half of 2015, the experts had less time to work with the departments. Additionally, some measures were taken on the following recommendations of representatives of educational institutions:

- to deliver instruction to the members of the expert team regarding the difference between accreditation and certification.
- provide colleges with more information on the importance of accreditation and give an understanding of the fact that the accreditation is not much of inspection but an assurance of quality.

The first was carried out by coordinators during the webinars while the second was realized through workshops, conducted on the basis of educational institutions. Nevertheless, some experts and representatives of educational institutions do not fully distinguish accreditation from certification, which requires more effort of the agency to work in this area.

2.2. Conclusions

In general, the work of the coordinators was highly appreciated by the experts. Due to the activities of the coordinators, the work of the experts` team was arranged properly. The voice of the experts was assured, however, some suggested to extend it regardless the standard the expert responsible for. In addition, the heads of the teams need to be more active in discussions especially in consideration of interview questions, which is one of the key aspects of data collection of the experts in the audit. The coordinators should pay more attention to preparation of the team leaders for their roles and stimulation their activity.

2.3 Recommendations

- Strengthen the role of the team leaders in the discussions, particularly in consideration of the interview questions.
- Ensure the voice of all experts, regardless of their designated standards.
- Improve the communication skills of the coordinators.
- Provide more support to experts.

III. Evaluation of the head of the expert team

The heads of the experts` teams were evaluated by the coordinators and experts. The survey responses were 208.

3.1 Analysis and discussion

Analysis of the responses showed a generally high level of preparedness of the leaders of the expert teams to the external audit, and their awareness of the process of preparation of the on-site visit report and its main functions. The vast majority (86%) of the received feedback is positive.

However, some leaders of the expert groups were not prepared fully for the external audit (3%). 2% did not meet their duties properly and 4% did not participate in the development of the recommendation. Moreover, 2 of the experts were included in the “black list” of the experts` database and not recommended for further participation in any procedures of accreditation. Nevertheless, there is a significant improvement in the activities of the team leaders within 2015. As we can see from the data presented in the chart and table in Appendices C,D,E team leaders became more aware of the purpose

of the accreditation and their role in the external audit, in addition, they are more often involved in the organization of work with every member of the expert team.

In the 1 half of 2015, it was recommended to provide extra training for team leaders with negative feedback. For example, one of the experts, attracted by the agency as the team head, was suggested to develop her leadership skills:

- in the organization of the work of the panel
- in the distribution of responsibilities to other members of the panel
- in peer discussion of comments and recommendations of the external visit.

However, the vast majority of the coordinators state that the group leaders are good enough to cope with their role.

3.2 Conclusions

Overall, in 2015, the majority of the team leaders fulfilled their functions at the highest level. Substantial progress was observed with regard to several areas of their activities. Team leaders became more aware of the purpose of the accreditation and their role in the external audit. However, some of the team heads are not sufficiently prepared for their role. Nevertheless, the agency coordinators believe that the team chairs met their obligations quite good.

3.3 Recommendations

- to pay attention to leadership skills of candidates to team heads in the recruitment process
- to increase the activity of the team leaders in the webinars.

IV. Evaluation of external audit experts

The main parameters, against which the on-site visit experts were evaluated, are:

- awareness of the external visit procedures, self-evaluation report of the reviewed educational institution and other materials, provided by the agency
- participation in the interviews and relevance of the questions
- timely arrival and departure
- accuracy and timeliness in the preparation of the external audit reports
- participation in the discussion of the on-site visit program
- the amount of contributed effort in the activities of the team
- awareness of the purpose of the accreditation and his/her role in the on-site visit
- following the ethical standards and demonstration of the respectful attitude to the reviewed educational institution
- whether the coordinators recommend experts for further cooperation.

During the survey 10 coordinators of the agency and 19 representatives of reviewed educational institutions evaluated 136 experts, 132 out of 136 answers were full and eligible for analysis.

4.1 Analysis and discussion

Overall, the analysis shows a fairly high level of the experts` work, involved in the external audit (Appendix D). 76% of coordinators and representatives of educational institutions gave a positive feedback to their activities.

In considered year, there is a progress in all major areas of experts` activities (Appendices F,G,H,I). In particular, it should be noted that in comparison with the 1 half of 2015, experts increasingly began to provide audit reports timely. In addition, a significant improvement is can be seen in the experts` preparedness for external audit. As it is known,

the expert preparedness plays an important role in the accreditation of educational institutions and educational programs, as fixed deadlines and high responsibility of the agency, its coordinators and experts for the results of the accreditation require their maximum fitness to the above procedure. Before stated positive results can be explained by to the fact that the experts gained more experience and became more aware of the purpose of the accreditation as well as their role in the external visit, in addition, the work of the coordinators in explaining procedures of the external visit and accreditation, in general, was intensified. However, a small number of surveyed representatives of educational institutions are not satisfied with the quality of the expert preparedness for external audit. Furthermore, 4% of the experts have not been recommended for further cooperation, the reason for this was the lack of understanding of the accreditation`s aim and their role in this process, and the inability to work in a group (Appendix J).

4.2 Conclusions

In general, the work of experts was positively assessed by the coordinators of the agency and the representatives of the reviewed educational institutions. During the year, significant improvements were noted in their activities, in particular, this applies to the timely preparation of the audit report. However, a small number of representatives of reviewed educational institutions are not fully satisfied with the awareness of the experts with external review materials. Moreover, some experts due to a number of reasons are not recommended for further work by coordinators of the agency.

4.3 Recommendations:

- in the selection of the experts, coordinators should pay attention to their ability to work in a group and responsibility
- strengthen the preparation of the experts for an external visit.

V. Evaluation of the experts, involved in the preparation of an expertise to the self-evaluation report of educational institutions/programs

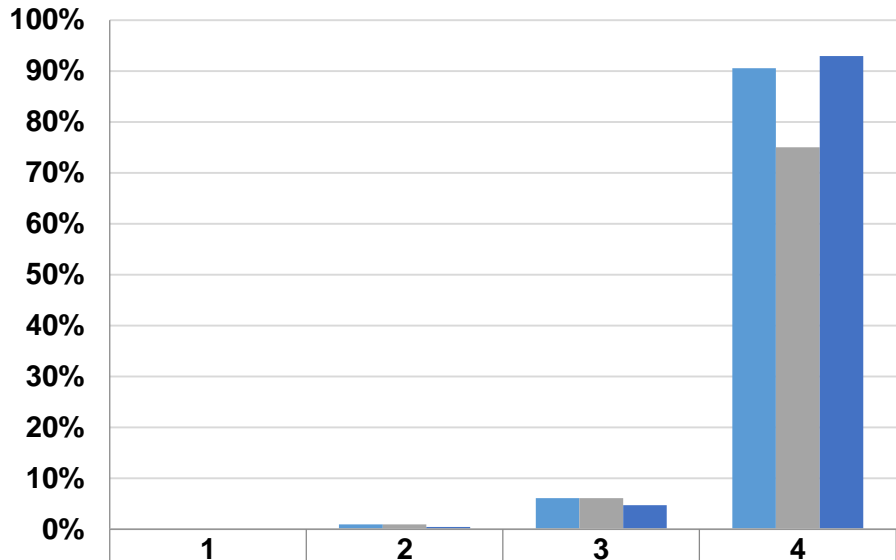
5.1 Analysis and discussion

In 2015, 55 experts, in charge of preparation of the expertise on self-evaluation reports, were assessed by the agency`s coordinators. The results of questionnaire data analysis showed that 100% of the agency coordinators positively evaluated the quality of these experts (Appendices K, L and M). However, according to some of the coordinators the experts, involved in the examination of the self-evaluation report of educational institutions and educational programs, particularly those, attracted for the first time, require additional training.

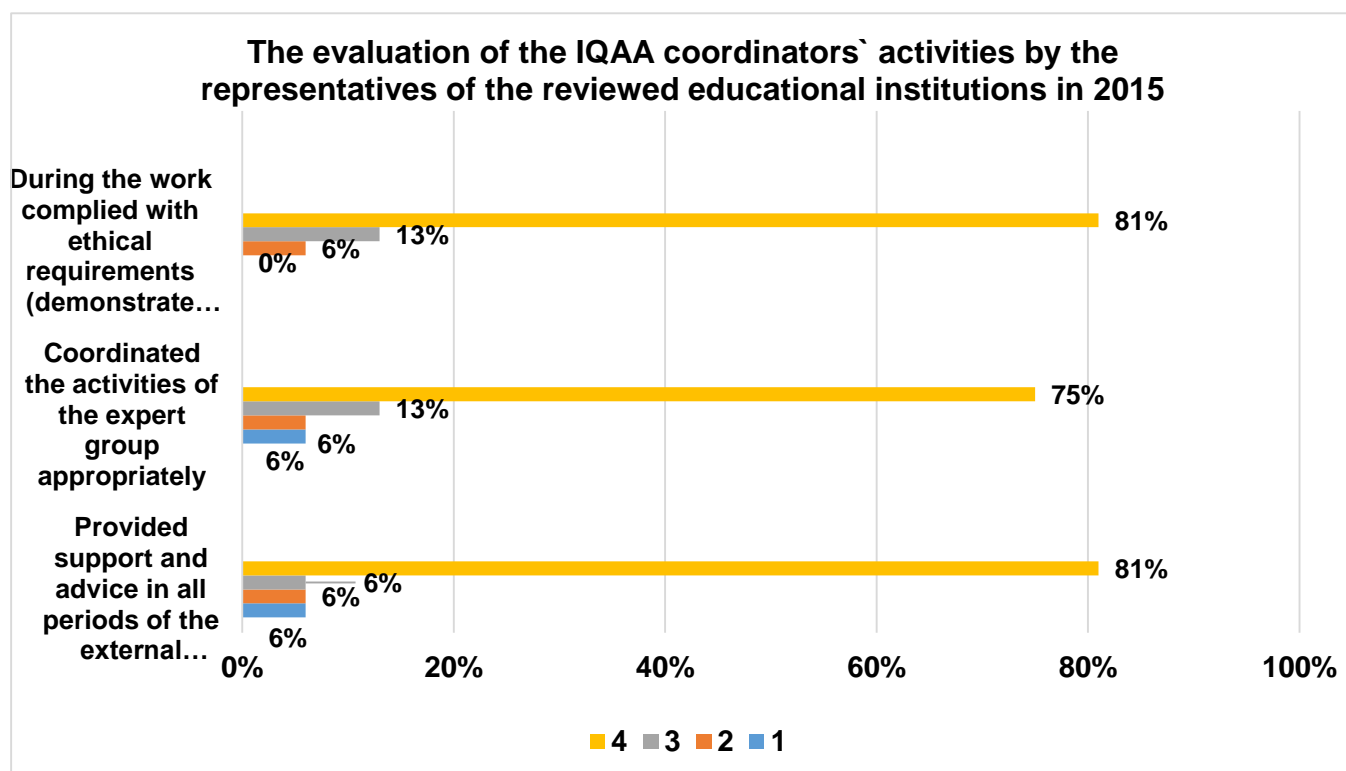
5.2 Recommendations:

consider the possibility of delivering training courses for experts involved in the preparation of an expertise on self-evaluation reports of educational institutions and educational programs.

The evaluation of the IQAA coordinators` activities by the external visit experts in 2015



	1	2	3	4
■ Arranged the external audit appropriately and distributes the responsibilities of the expert team, reasonably and in accordance with their experience and area of expertise	0%	1%	6%	91%
■ Provided support and advice in all periods of the external audit: before the start of the audit, during the audit and after completion of the audit	0%	1%	6%	75%
■ During the audit followed the ethical norms (demonstrated and respectful and respectful attitude to evaluated the educational institution)	0%	0%	5%	93%

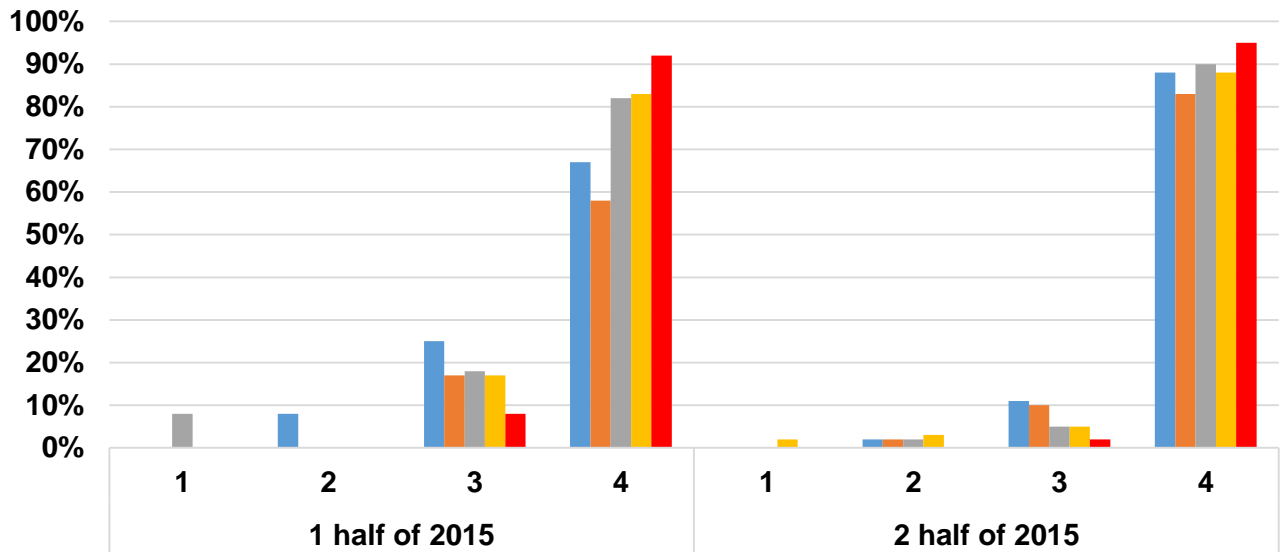


**The evaluation of the IQAA coordinators` activities by the representatives of the reviewed educational institutions in 2015
(1-unsatisfactory, 4-very good)**

Your assessment

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	Response Count
Provided support and advice in all periods of the external audit: before the start of the audit, during the audit and after completion of the audit	1	1	1	13	16
%	6%	6%	6%	81%	
Coordinated the activities of the expert team appropriately	1	1	2	12	16
%	6%	6%	13%	75%	
During the work complied with ethical requirements (demonstrated unbiased and respectful treatment to the reviewed HEI / college)	0	1	2	13	16
%	0%	6%	13%	81%	
					Question Totals
Answered question					16
Skipped question					0

Comparative results of the evaluation of the expert team leaders in 2015, part 1



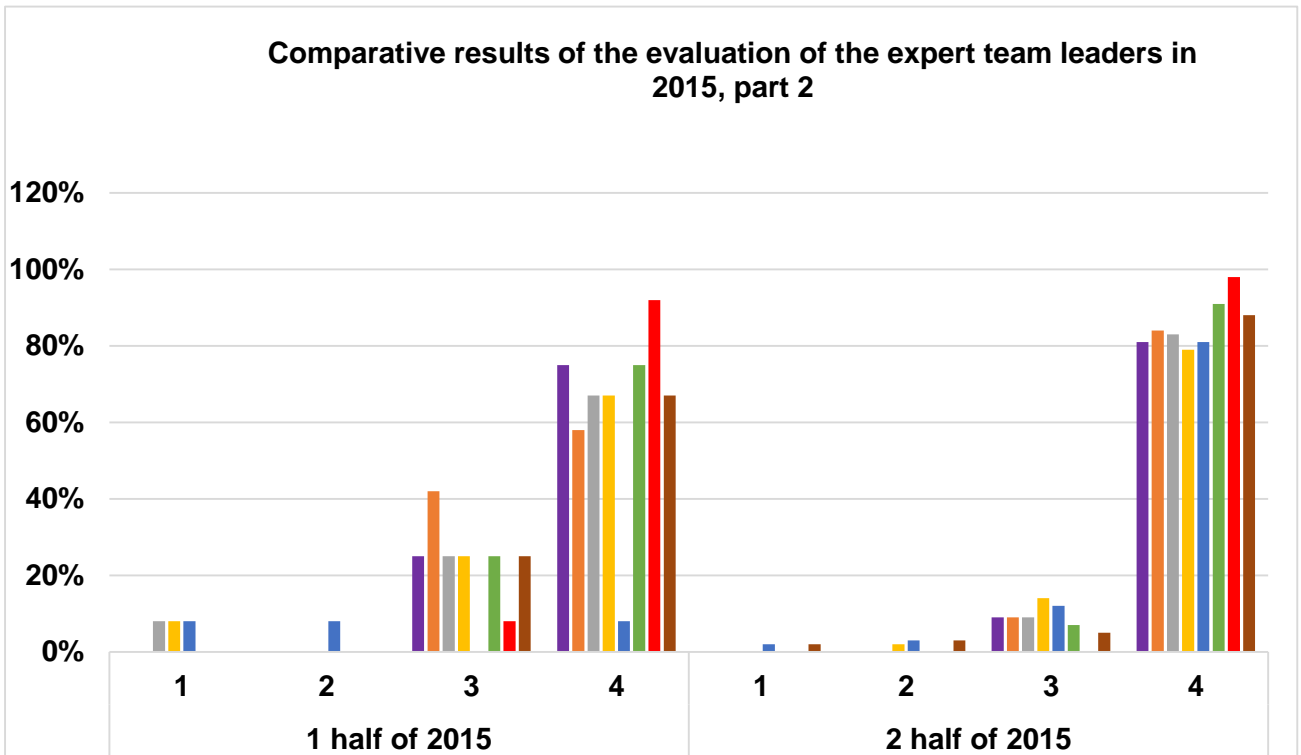
- Demonstrated awareness of procedures of external audit, self-assessment report of the educational institution and other materials, provided by the agency

- Fulfilled his / her obligations properly:

- Together with the coordinator participated in the distribution of responsibilities/ standards among members of the expert team

- Together with the coordinator and members of the expert group participated in discussions of interview questions

- Timely arrived and departed



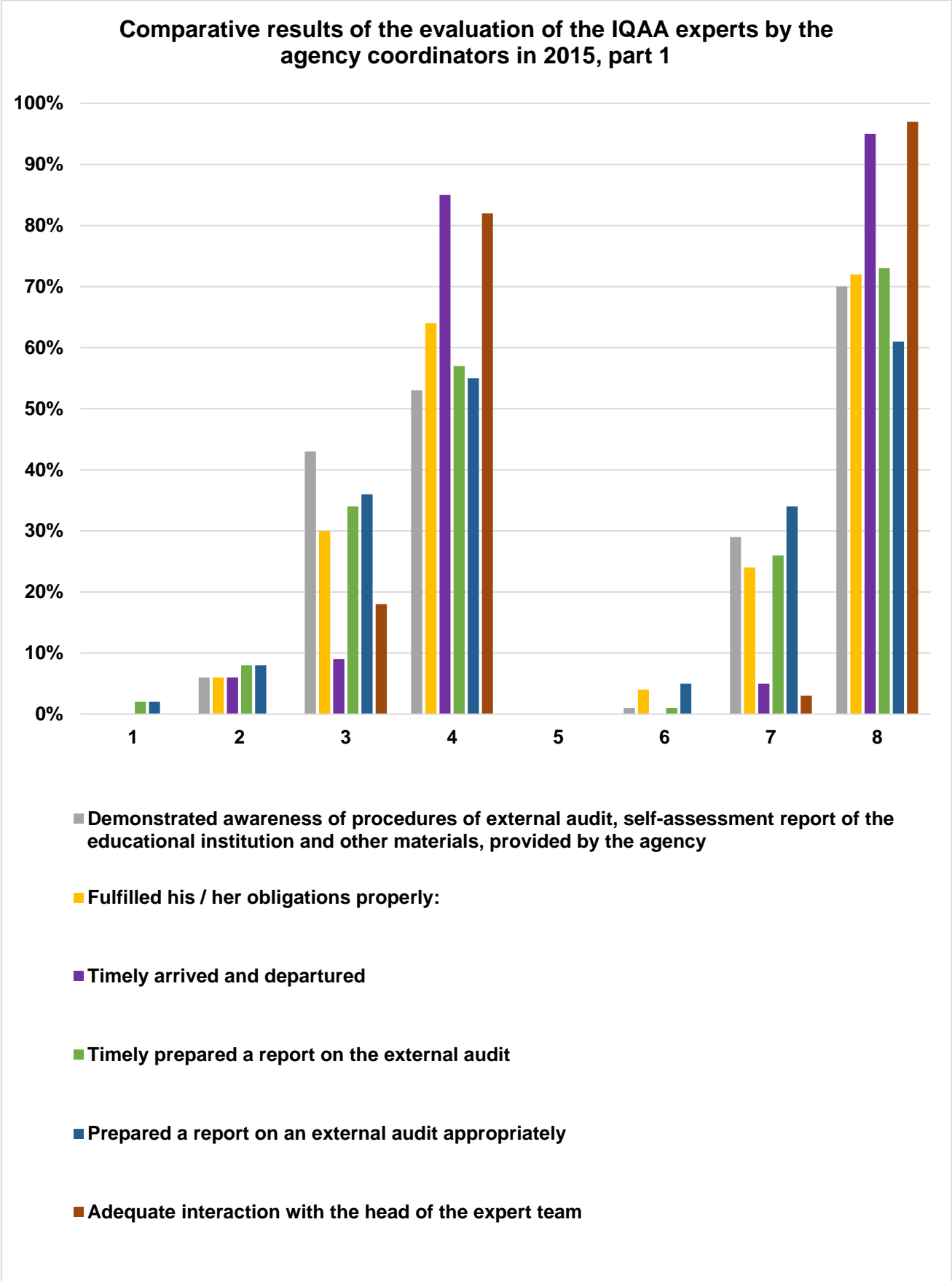
- Timely prepared a report on the external audit
- Prepared a report on an external audit appropriately
- Provided a guidance to the expert team during the external audit
- Organized work with each member of the expert team
- Assisted in recommendation development of the members of the expert team.
- Aware of the purpose of the accreditation, and his / her role in the external audit
- During the audit followed the ethical norms (demonstrated and respectful and respectful attitude to evaluated the educational institution)
- Recommended for further cooperation

Comparative results of the evaluation of the expert team leaders in 2015

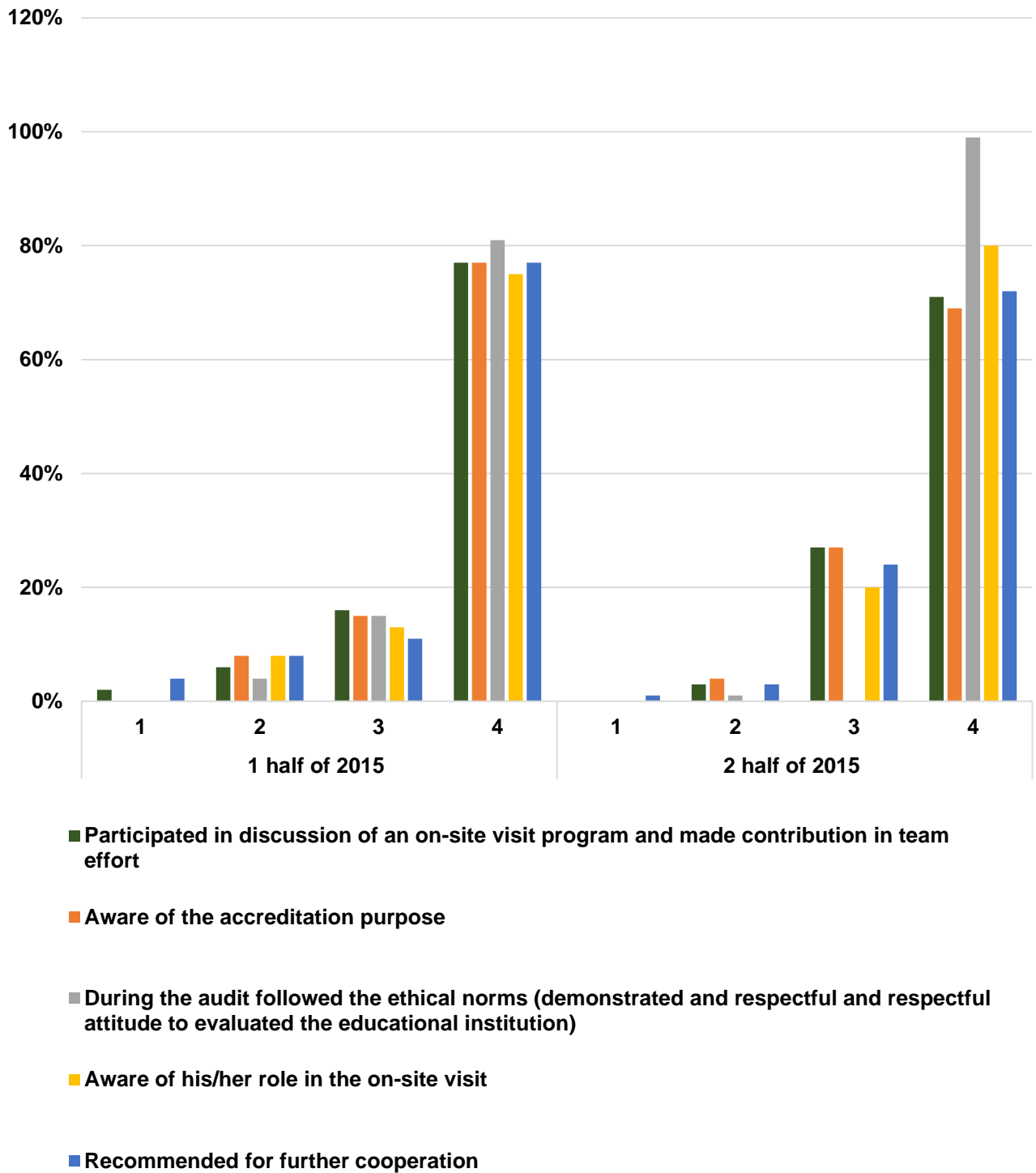
	1 half of 2015				2 half of 2015			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Demonstrated awareness of procedures of external audit, self-assessment report of the educational institution and other materials, provided by the agency	0%	8%	25%	67%	0%	2%	11%	88%
Fulfilled his / her obligations properly:	0%	0%	17%	58%	0%	2%	10%	83%
Together with the coordinator participated in the distribution of responsibilities/ standards among members of the expert team	8%	0%	18%	82%	0%	2%	5%	90%
Together with the coordinator and members of the expert group participated in discussions of interview questions	0%	0%	17%	83%	2%	3%	5%	88%
Timely arrived and departed	0%	0%	8%	92%	0%	0%	2%	95%
Timely prepared a report on the external audit	0%	0%	25%	75%	0%	0%	9%	81%
Prepared a report on an external audit appropriately	0%	0%	42%	58%	0%	0%	9%	84%
Provided a guidance to the expert team during the external audit	8%	0%	25%	67%	0%	0%	9%	83%
Organized work with each member of the expert team	8%	0%	25%	67%	0%	2%	14%	79%
Assisted in recommendation development of the members of the expert team.	8%	8%	0%	8%	2%	3%	12%	81%
Aware of the purpose of the accreditation, and his / her role in the external audit	0%	0%	25%	75%	0%	0%	7%	91%
During the audit followed the ethical norms (demonstrated and respectful and respectful attitude to evaluated the educational institution)	0%	0%	8%	92%	0%	0%	0%	98%
Recommended for further cooperation	0%	0%	25%	67%	2%	3%	5%	88%

Evaluation of IQAA experts by the agency coordinators in 2015

Answer options	1	2	3	4	Response count
Demonstrated awareness of procedures of external audit, self-assessment report of the educational institution and other materials, provided by the agency	0	4	46	82	132
	0%	3%	35%	62%	
Participation in the interview and the relevance of the questions	0	6	35	91	132
	0%	5%	27%	69%	
Timely arrived and departed	0	3	9	119	131
	0%	2%	7%	91%	
Timely prepared a report on the external audit	1	5	38	86	130
	1%	4%	29%	66%	
Prepared a report on an external audit appropriately	1	8	46	77	132
	1%	6%	35%	58%	
Adequate interaction with the head of the expert team	0	0	11	118	129
	0%	0%	9%	91%	
Participated in discussion of an on-site visit program and made contribution in team effort	1	5	29	94	129
	1%	4%	22%	73%	
Aware of the accreditation purpose	0	7	29	95	131
	0%	5%	22%	73%	
During the audit followed the ethical norms (demonstrated and respectful and respectful attitude to evaluated the educational institution)	0	3	8	121	132
	0%	2%	6%	92%	
Aware of his/her role in the on-site visit	0	4	7	105	116
	0%	3%	6%	91%	
Recommended for further cooperation	3	6	25	98	132
	2%	5%	19%	74%	
					Question Totals
	answered question				132
	skipped question				4



Comparative results of the evaluation of the IQAA experts by the agency coordinators in 2015, part 2



Comparative results of the evaluation of the IQAA experts by the agency coordinators in 2015

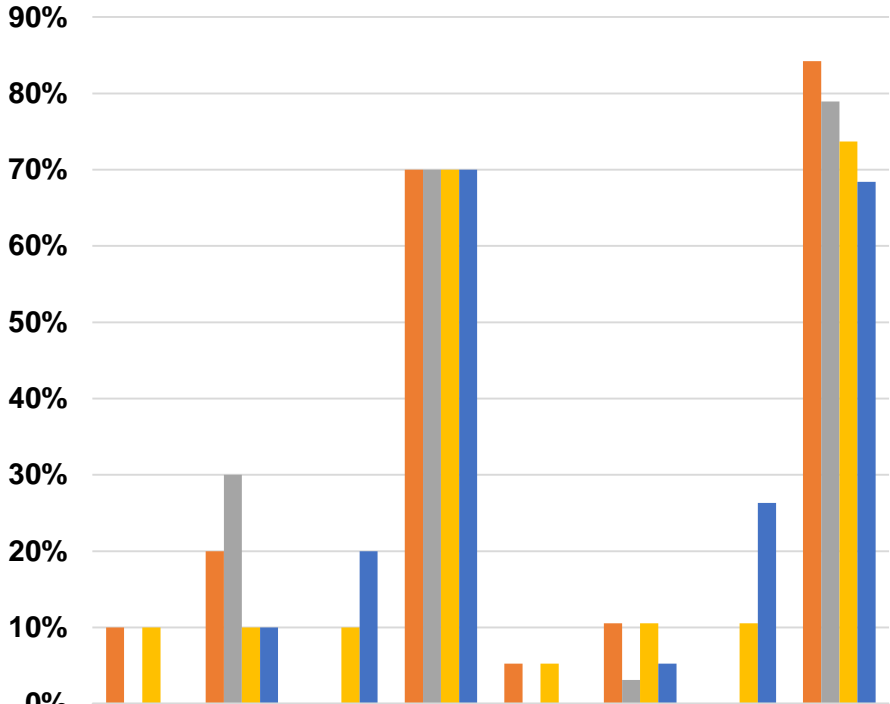
Answer Options	1 half of 2015				2 half of 2015			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Demonstrated awareness of procedures of external audit, self-assessment report of the educational institution and other materials, provided by the agency	0%	6%	43%	53%	0%	1%	29%	70%
Fulfilled his / her obligations properly:	0%	6%	30%	64%	0%	4%	24%	72%
Timely arrived and departed	0%	6%	9%	85%	0%	0%	5%	95%
Timely prepared a report on the external audit	2%	8%	34%	57%	0%	1%	26%	73%
Prepared a report on an external audit appropriately	2%	8%	36%	55%	0%	5%	34%	61%
Adequate interaction with the head of the expert team	0%	0%	18%	82%	0%	0%	3%	97%
Participated in discussion of an on-site visit program and made contribution in team effort	2%	6%	16%	77%	0%	3%	27%	71%
Aware of the accreditation purpose	0%	8%	15%	77%	0%	4%	27%	69%
During the audit followed the ethical norms (demonstrated and respectful and respectful attitude to evaluated the educational institution)	0%	4%	15%	81%	0%	1%	0%	99%
Aware of his/her role in the on-site visit	0%	8%	13%	75%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Recommended for further cooperation	4%	8%	11%	77%	1%	3%	24%	72%

Appendix J

The panel with the eyes of the representatives of the reviewed educational institutions, 2015, total

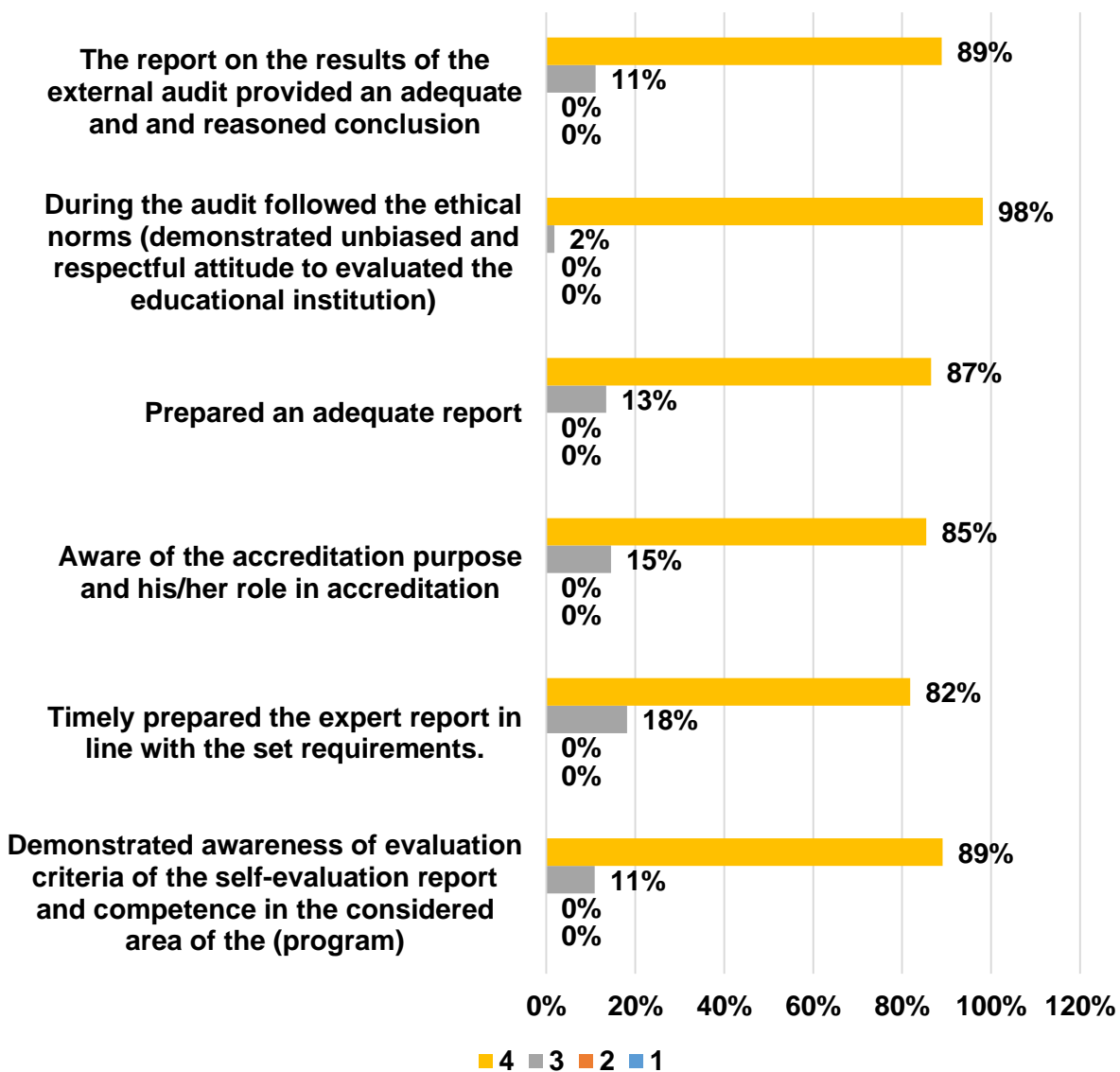
Answer Options	1	2	3	4	Response count
Panel members demonstrated awareness of the external audit procedures and self-evaluation report of the educational institution	1	2	0	16	19
The panel has had an appropriate level of competence	0	4	0	15	19
During the audit followed the ethical norms (demonstrated unbiased and respectful attitude to evaluated the educational institution)	1	2	2	14	19
The report on the results of the external audit provided an adequate and reasoned conclusion.	0	1	5	13	19
					Question Totals
					answered question 19
					skipped question 0

The panel with the eyes of the representatives of the reviewed educational institutions, 2015



	1 half of 2015	2 half of 2015	3	4	5	6	7	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Panel members demonstrated awareness of the external audit procedures and self-evaluation report of the educational institution ■ The panel have had an appropriate level of competence ■ During the audit followed the ethical norms (demonstrated unbiased and respectful attitude to evaluated the educational institution) ■ The report on the results of the external audit provided an adequate and and reasoned conclusion 	10%	20%	0%	70%	5%	11%	0%	84%
	0%	30%	0%	70%	0%	3%	0%	79%
	10%	10%	10%	70%	5%	11%	11%	74%
	0%	10%	20%	70%	0%	5%	26%	68%

Evaluation of the experts, involved in the preparation of expertise to the self-evaluation report, 2015



Evaluation of the experts, involved in the preparation of expertise to the self-evaluation report, 2015

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	Response Count
Demonstrated awareness of evaluation criteria of the self-evaluation report and competence in the considered area of the (program)	0	0	6	49	55
	0%	0%	11%	89%	
Timely prepared the expert report in line with the set requirements.	0	0	10	45	55
	0%	0%	18%	82%	
Aware of the accreditation purpose and his/her role in accreditation	0	0	8	47	55
	0%	0%	15%	85%	
Prepared an adequate report	0	0	7	45	52
	0%	0%	13%	87%	
During the audit followed the ethical norms (demonstrated unbiased and respectful attitude to evaluated the educational institution)	0	0	1	53	54
	0%	0%	2%	98%	
The report on the results of the external audit provided an adequate and and reasoned conclusion	0	0	6	48	54
	0%	0%	11%	89%	
					Question Totals
					answered question
					55
					skipped question
					0