

# NEAA and Bulgarian higher education

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# Higher education in Bulgaria

- 52 Higher Education institutions:
  - 38 public, 14 private;
  - 30 universities with a large range of specialties;
  - 19 more specialized HEIs (eg. technical/medical universities)
  - 3 professional colleges



# History of NEAA

- Establishment – art. 11, para. 1 of the HEA, adopted on 27 December 1995, ;
- NEAA and the PHARE-BG project “Feasibility study of Bulgarian higher schools’ accreditation”;
- Different amendments in the Higher Education Act, concretizing its functions and procedures – 2004, 2020;
- ENQA membership – from 2008

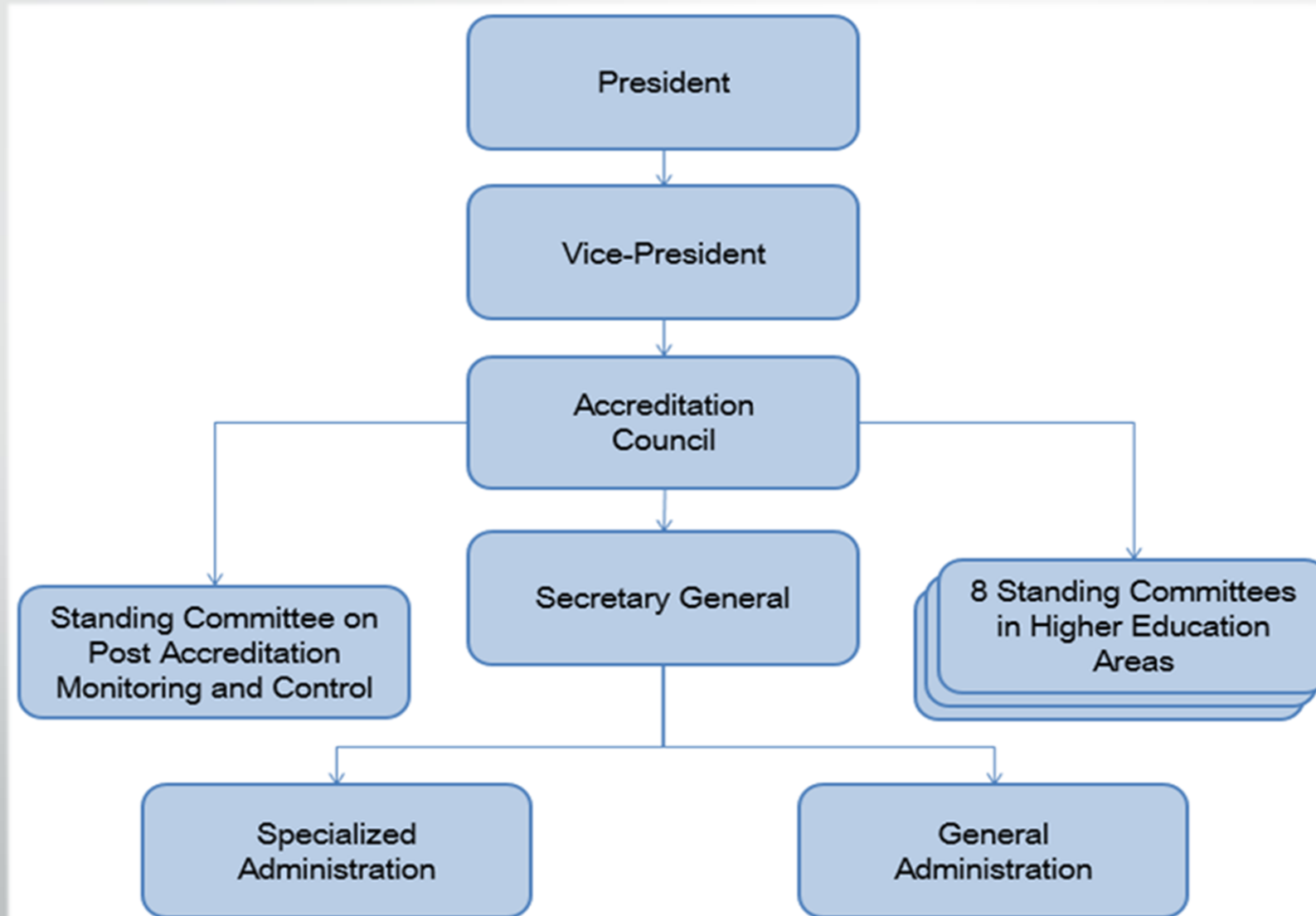


# Mission and Objectives

- NEAA is an independent specialized state body for evaluation, accreditation, and post-accreditation monitoring and control (PAMC) of the quality of the educational process in HEIs in the Republic of Bulgaria
- NEAA's mission is linked to the national goals for raising the role and improving the quality of higher education as a factor for social development.
- HEA, 2020: "The activities of the NEAA shall be aimed at stimulating and controlling the HEI, at ensuring and improving the quality of the education offered by them, as well as conducting it in compliance with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA. The accreditation results shall be taken into account in forming the policy of the state toward the higher education establishment."



# Structure and Functions





# Quality Assurance Procedures

- Institutional accreditation and subsequent institutional accreditation;
- Programme accreditation – PFs, SRPs and doctoral programmes;
- Post-Accreditation Monitoring and Control;
- Evaluation of projects for opening/transformation of HEIs and/or their main units;
- Evaluation of proposals for distance learning and reviews for altering the capacity of the HEI

# Institutional or Programme accreditation?

- Institutional vs. programme accreditation – where do we need to put the focus?
- NEAA's perspective:
- Subsequent institutional accreditation;
- Programme accreditation of a particular PF is to be performed simultaneously in all HEIs providing training in specialties within the field, according to a schedule approved by NEAA. This allows achieving a more objective differentiating assessment of the quality in the respective field in different HEIs.



# Recent procedures of NEAA

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021
Completed procedures				
Institutional accreditation	17	13	7	3
Programme accreditation	371	446	353	440
Evaluation of projects	9	11	9	13
Post-Accreditation Monitoring and Control	111	68	56	74
Total number of procedures by year	508	538	425	530

\*Source: NEAA Self-assessment report, 2022



# Number and composition of EGs during the period 2018-2021

Year		2018	2019	2020	2021
Administrative- Organisational activity					
1.	Number of sessions of Standing Committees	229	254	133	226
2.	Approved Expert Groups	248	246	167	298
3.	Number of habilitated members in the EGs	611	760	393	594
4.	Number of student members in the EGs	95	110	47	63
5.	Number of doctoral student members in the EGs	128	145	111	186
6.	Number of international experts in the EGs	17	18	6	0
7.	Numbers of users of staff in the EGs	13	40	25	21

\*Source: NEAA Self-  
assessment report, 2022

# International Activities and Projects

- Member of ENQA and CEENQA; registered in EQAR; cooperation agreements with other agencies
- Participation in international exchange of experts and staff
- 2019 – 2021: Participation in the international project “Effective involvement of Stakeholders in External Quality Assurance Activities – ESQA”.
- 2022 -2024: Participation in the project “Social Inclusion, Tolerance, Acceptance and Realisation for all sTudents” (START)

# Achievements

- Active involvement in the elaboration of normative and strategic documents for the development of higher education in Bulgaria;
- Increasing significance of the results of the NEAA's activities in determining the policy of state bodies (National Assembly, MES) for the development of higher education;
- •Additional improvements in the criteria system for institutional, programme and doctoral
- programme accreditation that conforms with the ESG and aims at maximizing objectivity in assessment;
- Elaborated and approbated system of procedures and methodological guidelines for the
- work on various types of procedures (PAMC, etc.
- Advisory bodies in place which assist the AC's work (committee on quality assurance, Advisory Board, including representatives of all beneficiaries, Complaints Committee, etc.);





# Challenges

- Launching of a digital platform where HEIs with based on regularly standardized information on the main parameters of the educational process and scientific activity.
- Accreditation of interdisciplinary and joint programmes, especially when the evaluation is organised in specific professional fields.
- Financial challenges - improving the remuneration of both staff and external experts.



# Challenges (contd.)

- Upholding NEAA's international respectability in the European Higher Education Area: active participation of NEAA's experts in evaluations and accreditations of HEIs in the European Higher Education Area, international events of the ENQA, EQAR, CEENQA
- Elaboration of standards for the evaluation of the degree of digitalization
- Facing the future - fundamental change in higher education in the next 20-30 years, related to the imposing artificial intelligence and the unpredictable labor market.





Thank you for your attention!