
GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWS OF
QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES IN THE
EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND ORGANISATION OF THE REVIEW

In accordance with the ENQA membership criteria laid down in the Statutes of ENQA, member agencies are required to undergo external reviews against the membership criteria, and thereby the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) as adopted by the European Ministers in charge of higher education in Bergen in 2005, at least once every five years.

These present Guidelines apply to ENQA coordinated reviews to be conducted periodically, for a first application for Full/Associate membership of ENQA and for inclusion in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)¹. According to the Statutes of ENQA, applications for Full/Associate Membership are considered only if accompanied by an independent external review report on the agency's conformity with the membership criteria.

The membership criteria of ENQA consist of Part III of the ESG and some additional requirements and guidelines. However, due to the specific structure of ESG, agency reviews are not assessing Part III of the ESG only. Indeed, according to the first standard of Part III, agencies are required to demonstrate compliance with ESG Part II. Likewise, the first standard of Part II requires agencies to demonstrate that they take into account the effectiveness of internal quality assurance mechanisms (Part I).

The review against the membership criteria can also include other aspects of the agency's work or organisation (see section 2). In any case, the same principles and processes outlined in these Guidelines are applied.

It is recommended that the second and subsequent rounds of reviews aim at striving for improvement. In addition to judging the compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, the reviews should follow an enhancement-led approach. Agencies are invited to reflect on how they could further improve their compliance with all membership criteria/ESG and to identify areas for development in their self-evaluation report. It is also possible to accommodate a more thorough consideration of some of the criteria if the agency wishes. The specific areas of development will be considered in the next external review of the agency.

REVIEWS COORDINATED BY ENQA/AT NATIONAL LEVEL

As of 1 July 2011, the reviews of all agencies, be they members or applicants for membership, are coordinated by ENQA in order to guarantee a higher level of consistency of the reviews.

Nationally coordinated reviews are still possible in cases where agencies are subjected to national reviews due to national regulations. At national level, external reviews of ENQA member agencies are initiated and coordinated by national authorities, as part of their routine quality assurance arrangements.

It should be noted that there is a clear distinction between the coordination of the review and the review itself. The review coordinator's main responsibility is to arrange the practicalities of the review (see 5.4). This includes the recruitment of the review panel, which must be independent of the review coordinator. The review panel is in charge of evaluating agencies and is responsible for the review itself and its outcomes.

¹ EQAR lists quality assurance agencies that have proven their credibility and reliability in a review against the same core standards as for ENQA membership, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG).

The present Guidelines contain information and guidance to assist agencies to be reviewed, and review panel members, to ensure that the review produces the information needed to satisfy the requirements of ENQA membership.

1.2 PRINCIPLES

The review will be based on the following principles:

- the review is an evidence-based process carried out by independent experts;
- the information provided by the agency is assumed to be factually correct unless other evidence points to the contrary;
- the review is a process of verification of the information provided in the self-evaluation report and other documentation and the exploration of any matters which are omitted from that documentation;
- the level of conformity with the ENQA membership criteria (and thereby, the ESG) that is expected is “substantial compliance”, not rigid adherence (see section 7).

2 REMIT OF THE REVIEW

There are two types of external ENQA coordinated reviews:

- Type A: a review which is intended to be solely for ENQA membership purposes (i.e. to fulfil the periodic external review requirement of ENQA membership / EQAR listing by testing compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG); and
- Type B: a review which has a number of purposes, one of which is to assess compliance with the membership criteria/ESG. The type B review also includes other aspects of the agency's work or organisation, e.g. the demands of national legislation.

Both type A and B reviews are coordinated by ENQA. In case of a type B review, additional resources might be required.

3 KEY FEATURES OF THE REVIEW

Certain elements will be required in a review for it to be acceptable to the ENQA Board to demonstrate that the agency has met the membership criteria/ESG, namely:

- the management of the review process must be completely independent of the agency itself;
- all parts of the review's management and process must be transparent and therefore easily open to examination by the ENQA Board;
- the report produced must be sufficiently detailed to provide satisfactory assurance to the ENQA Board of the robustness of the review;
- the report must provide sufficient, verified information which clearly shows that the ENQA membership criteria/ESG have been met.

It is unlikely that these principles can be adhered to if the agency under review is in an essential process of transition. The panel is expected to review the *current* status of an agency and not upcoming developments which e. g. may affect the legal status of an agency and its operations in a substantive way.

4 REVIEW STEPS

The review will generally consist of seven phases – these are outlined below with a commentary on key features that lend themselves to the fulfilment of the above requirements.

4.1 NOTIFICATION TO THE ENQA BOARD

As soon as a member agency knows that a review is to take place it should inform the ENQA Board, through the ENQA Secretariat.

In the exceptional cases where the review is not conducted by ENQA, the agency should provide the ENQA Secretariat with the identity and contact details of the body coordinating the review, as well as the reasons preventing the review from being coordinated by ENQA. The review coordinator should be approved by the ENQA Board. In addition, it is advisable that the review coordinator (or the review secretary if ENQA coordinates the review) keeps ENQA informed of progress throughout the review (terms of reference, composition of review panel, timetable of the review). This is to help ensure that the outcomes of the review process meet the requirements of the ENQA Board in assessing compliance with membership criteria.

4.2 PRODUCTION OF SELF-EVALUATION DOCUMENTS BY THE AGENCY UNDER REVIEW

An essential part of the review process for the agency is the preparation of its self-evaluation documents. This is the agency's opportunity to reflect on how it measures up to the ENQA membership criteria/ESG and to gather the key documentation which supports its claim of compliance. As the self-evaluation documents normally provide a substantial portion of the evidence which the panel draws on in forming its conclusions, it is also important that the report provides clear information, sufficient reflections, critique and analysis, and that its contents can be corroborated by documentary and/or oral evidence about the ways in which the agency meets the ENQA membership criteria/ESG. This allows the review team to prepare lines of enquiry in advance of the site visit.

FORM AND CONTENT OF THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

The exact form and content of the self-evaluation documents is something which needs to be considered carefully by the agency under review. However, all relevant quality assurance activities to be evaluated by the panel must be properly covered in the self-evaluation documents and annexes.

The major aim of ENQA coordinated reviews is to achieve ENQA membership through proving compliance with the membership criteria. The expected structure of the self-evaluation document should thus follow the order of the ENQA membership criteria, rather than the ESG only (which are not completely identical with the membership criteria).

In case of a type B review, the self-evaluation report contains two separate parts. The first part addresses the membership criteria/ESG, while the second part contains the assessment of the other review purposes/criteria.

It is also important that the self-evaluation report does not only state what has been achieved, but also provides a reflection on the practices that could contribute to enhance the agency's activities.

In order to harmonise the contents of the self-evaluation, in terms of level of detail, thoroughness and evaluative character, a self-evaluation document is expected to address the ESG individually and to contain:

- a brief outline of the national higher education system, the history of the particular agency and of the evaluation of higher education in general;
- a SWOT analysis;
- evidence of the external quality assurance activities undertaken by the agency;
- (in case of a first review or substantial change to the QA system) details of the evaluation method applied by the agency including: the elements of the methodology; an account of the role of the external expert group; documentation of the agency's processes and procedures;
- (in case of a first review or substantial change to the QA system) details of the system of appeal;
- (in case of a first review or substantial change to the QA system) details of the agency's own internal quality assurance procedures;
- information on the agency's international dimension, if applicable (e.g. involvement in international projects, external relations abroad, international reviews, etc.);
- information and opinions on the agency from its key stakeholders.

The agency may enclose as annexes to the report the most crucial documentation (within reason, not more than 10 annexes) it thinks may help support its analysis. Further documents might be prepared by the agency for the site visit.

The self-evaluation report, annexes and additional documents for the site visit should be in English and made easily available to the panel.

If, in the opinion of the panel, the self-evaluation report is deemed to be lacking of relevant, thorough and evaluative information, the review chair and secretary may reserve the right to ask the agency for a revision of the report. In such a case, ENQA must be informed prior to this action.

The agency will publish the completed self-evaluation document on its website and submit it to the review secretary.

4.3 FORMULATION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR THE REVIEW

The review coordinator and the agency draft and agree the terms of reference, protocol and preliminary timetable for the review.

The terms of reference for the review should be drafted well before the site visit and should be published on the agency's website. They should:

- clearly identify whether the review is intended to be solely for ENQA membership purposes (type A review) or if it is also fulfilling eventual additional national requirements (type B review);
- clearly state an outline of how the review is going to run - number of reviewers, administrative arrangements, approximate timings, language issues and arrangements for translation if necessary, etc.
- mention any relevant background information/preceding events (e.g. previous membership applications) about the review.

The terms of reference, protocol and timetable for the review form the basic outline of the review process itself. They are contained as an annex to a contract between the review coordinator and the Agency to be reviewed. The contract specifies the fee

payable and procedures for payment. It also contains information on the procedures to be used in the event of an appeal.

In the exceptional cases where the review is not coordinated by ENQA, the review coordinator submits the terms of reference, protocol and preliminary timetable for the review to the ENQA Board for consideration.

Prior to the appointment of the review panel, the review coordinator will have agreed the terms of reference, protocol and timetable for the review with the agency under review. The review coordinator will supply these documents to the review panel as soon as the latter is appointed.

4.4 PANEL APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE

4.4.1 NOMINATION OF EXPERTS

ENQA members are regularly invited to nominate experts as potential reviewers in ENQA coordinated reviews. The nominator should know the nominee personally and be entitled to make the nomination on behalf of the agency. Nominations are submitted to the ENQA Secretariat together with a curriculum vitae of the nominated person(s).

ENQA nominated experts are professionals of QA such as former or current senior QA agency staff, serving members in Board/Council of an agency and self-employed consultants in QA of HE.

In exceptional cases where the review is not coordinated by ENQA, nominations can be sought from a wide range of sources – including agencies, stakeholders, local authorities, etc.

4.4.2 TRAINING OF EXPERTS

All nominated experts are invited to a training session for agency reviewers organised by ENQA.

In order to ensure that agency reviews are rigorous, fair, transparent and consistent, all potential reviewers of agencies must have attended a training session, independently of the organisation that has nominated them (ENQA, ESU, EUA or EURASHE). Based on the lessons learned, feedback and materials from completed reviews, the training sessions provide experts with the necessary knowledge and guidance on the interpretation of the membership criteria/ESG. Indeed, it is important that review panels are briefed about the way in which the membership criteria/ESG are to be interpreted.

Only reviewers who have attended such training sessions are included in the ENQA pool of experts and may be appointed to panels of ENQA coordinated reviews.

A telephone briefing will normally be organised between the review panel and a member of the ENQA Board to discuss the whole process of the review, and more specifically:

- the purpose of the reviews, roles and responsibilities of panel members and the interpretation of the ESG/ENQA membership criteria
- evidence and information, timeline and management of the site visit
- drafting of the report
- submission of the final review report and the decision-making process

4.4.3 COMPOSITION AND SELECTION OF THE PANEL

Composition of the panel

A review panel can perform its independent function most successfully when it comprises members who between themselves have a wide range of professional experience of higher education and quality assurance; this includes:

- one or two quality assurance experts from outside the national system being reviewed: international member(s) on the panel can provide very valuable insights for the review and help to establish its credibility, and it is therefore required that at least one member of the panel should be a quality assurance expert from beyond the jurisdiction of the agency under review;
- representatives of higher education institutions;
- student members;
- (normally) stakeholder members (for example, an employer).

In the light of this, the review panel normally consists of five or six members: a chair, a secretary and three or four other external reviewers.

In ENQA coordinated reviews, the composition of expert panels is as follows: three of the reviewers (including the review chair and secretary) are nominated by the ENQA Board. The fourth and fifth external reviewers are drawn from nominations provided by the European University Association (EUA) and/or the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European Students' Union (ESU).

Selection of experts

The selection process must be carried out by the review coordinator (and not by the agency being reviewed), to avoid conflict of interests and preserve the integrity of the process.

In ENQA coordinated reviews, appointment of experts are drawn from the ENQA pool of experts, composed of nominated experts who have attended a training session organised by ENQA (including EUA and ESU nominated experts).

The key requirement is that members of the panel should be totally independent of the agency under review and have a sufficient level of knowledge, experience and expertise to conduct the review to a high standard.

When appointing a panel, the following selection criteria are applied:

- all panel members must have been trained (including EUA and ESU nominated experts) (see section 4.4.2);
- at least one panel member never participated in an ENQA review previously;
- panel members must be independent from the agency under review and in a position to make unbiased judgments. Experts are required to notify the review coordinator in writing of any connection or interest, which could result in a conflict, or potential conflict, related to the review. Experts are required to notify the review coordinator as soon as possible of any changes in or additions to the interests already disclosed which occur during the review process. If experts are unsure as to whether an interest should be disclosed, they should discuss the matter with the review coordinator;
- gender and geographical balance are taken into consideration when appointing the panel. The Chair and Secretary may come from the same country. However, it is advisable that they come from different agencies/organisations;
- language skills are taken into consideration. At least one panel member must speak/understand the language of the country where the agency is operating;

- the chair will preferably have previous experience in taking part in a panel, either as chair or secretary;
- the secretary will preferably have previous experience in taking part in a panel;
- at least one panel member must come from outside the country where the agency is operating;
- at least one panel member must be knowledgeable of the national HE system and QA processes of the agency under review;
- no current or recent former member of staff of the agency under review can take part in the review panel;
- current members of the ENQA Board are not eligible to serve as reviewers in the ENQA coordinated reviews;
- nominations by EUA or EURASHE are current academic staff members. Nominations from ESU are current students.

The secretary is a full member of the panel of equal status with the other members, but with specific and different duties from theirs. The work of the secretary requires an experienced person (having a good knowledge of international quality assurance in higher education and of the ESG, as well as excellent communication and English writing skills), with adequate time available to do this job.

Agencies under review must be given the opportunity to comment on the selected panel members and signal any possible conflict of interest or bias.

Panel members are required to follow and respect the ENQA Code of Conduct for review experts.

The review coordinator (if not ENQA) should communicate the composition of the review panel to the ENQA Board for consideration.

4.5 A SITE-VISIT BY THE PANEL TO THE AGENCY UNDER REVIEW

It is important to leave sufficient time available to the panel between the date of receipt of the self-evaluation report by the panel and the actual date of the site visit.

The details of the duration and schedule of the site visit may vary between reviews and may depend on whether the review is of type A or type B.

The length of the visit should be determined at the beginning of the review process when terms and conditions are being decided upon. It is likely that a visit duration of at least two days is necessary for a review panel to reflect on, and validate fully the self-evaluation, as well as to clarify any points at issue. This, however, depends on the country and agency in question.

The site visit has a number of key functions:

- to enable the team to share, face-to-face, the impressions gained from the pre-visit information;
- to explore in meetings and interviews with the key individuals at the agency under review, the agency's compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG;
- to explore through additional documentation more information relating to the agency's compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG;
- to formulate the panel's preliminary findings regarding compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG and communicate these to the agency;
- to produce a material for the draft report as a basis for further development after the site visit.

To enable the site visit to fulfil these key functions, it is essential that the process and the panel's time are managed efficiently and effectively.

Before the site visit

Information available

The agency is required to supply a number of sources of information to the review secretary for distribution to the panel. This information should be in English and easily available. The panel should carefully study them before the site visit.

- Agency's self-evaluation documentation
See section 4.2.
- Any previous reviews or reports
If the agency, or any part of the agency, has undergone any previous external reviews, or has been the subject of research or study, the corresponding reports should be submitted prior to the review. Any progress report written by the agency as a follow-up of the previous review should also be made available to the panel.
- ENQA Board correspondence
The aim of the reviews is not only to assess the agency's compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, but also to assist quality assurance agencies in developing their operations. Where the Board identifies areas for development, it makes recommendations which are expected to be followed up and taken into consideration in a progress report. The specific areas of development are also considered in the next external review of the agency. Therefore, the recommendations given by the ENQA Board are also to be seen as suggestions for improvement and development and indicate the areas where a review panel may wish to focus special attention.
- Publicly available information
Review panel members also need to familiarise themselves with the publicly available information about the agency, primarily its website and published documents.
- Information on the national legal framework
A description of the legal framework of the higher education system in the country where the agency is based is very useful for the review panel to better understand the relation between the agency and national circumstances and the agency's operations. Such information can be made available on the agency's website or distributed by the agency to the review panel upon request.

Panel briefing

It is recommended that the review chair and secretary meet after having both independently read the self-evaluation report. This meeting is useful to tease out issues and prepare a list of matters on which clarification is needed.

This meeting can be dovetailed with a preliminary meeting with the chief executive of the agency under review. In particular, these meetings can be of great assistance to the chair and secretary and may be used to highlight gaps in the self-evaluation report.

The whole panel meets on the day before the site visit. The panel members discuss the schedule of the visit (including panel meetings, meetings/interviews, and time to study documentation), their impressions gained from the pre-visit information, and any highlighted lines of inquiry which the panel wish to focus on, i.e. what areas of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG the site visit may need particularly to focus on. Although the

review needs to address all the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, by developing 'lines of inquiry' the panel will be able to target its efforts where there is most concern about the level of compliance. At this point, the panel might identify any additional documentation which it would like to have access to during the site visit. In contrast, it may be evident from the information available before the site visit that the agency clearly fulfils some of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, and these areas may warrant only a briefer exploration during the site visit.

Either during the panel briefing or the following morning, the panel decides the agenda for the first meeting or interview and formulates tentative outline agendas for the other meetings. The basic structure of the meetings should preferably be decided in advance, i.e. who will ask the questions, and in what order.

For the purpose of developing well-structured lines of inquiry and the schedule for the site visit, it might be useful for the panel members to draft a mapping grid, based on the ENQA membership provisions/ESG (Annex VI).

During the site visit

Meetings or interviews with key agency personnel and stakeholders

There are two major sources of information available during the site visit: interviews with staff and stakeholders and any documentary information the panel asks for or the agency wishes to make available on site. Both of these sources should be used to verify the information presented before the site visit and provide a supplementary source of evidence with which to assess the agency's compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG.

The site visit is normally conducted in English. If the agency wishes to use interpreters in the interviews, it should let the panel know at least one month prior to the visit (see section 4.3). The panel then approves the interpreters, who must be external to the agency's operations. The agency bears the cost of interpretation. When planning the site visit, it should be kept in mind that the use of interpretation may lengthen the duration of the interviews and may also lead to small differences in understanding of detail.

During the site visit, it is strongly advised that the review panel should meet, among others, all staff members who have contributed to writing the self-evaluation report.

At the beginning of each meeting the review chair should:

- introduce the panel members and ask for introductions from those present;
- outline the areas to be covered and in what order;
- agree on the finishing time for the meeting.

After each meeting or interview the panel discusses briefly where the meeting has taken the review - what is now known and what still needs to be investigated. This should assist the review secretary in drawing up a bullet list of, or completing a mapping grid on, the key outcomes of the meeting for later reference. The panel should then refine the list of themes/questions for the subsequent meetings, if necessary.

Final panel meeting

Just before the end of the site visit, the panel meets to draw together its conclusions based on the information presented. At this point it is useful to take the time to work through each aspect of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG and confirm the panel's key findings and any areas of concern.

Final meeting with the agency

The site visit concludes with a final de-briefing meeting involving the panel members and staff and Council/Board members of the agency, as decided by the panel. The chair can outline the panel's opinion on the fulfilment of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG (not its judgement on the granting or (re)confirmation of membership) and explain the next steps in the review process.

After the site visit

It should be noted that as a general rule, the agency should not submit new information to the panel after the site visit. All relevant information should be provided to the review panel either before or during the site visit. After the site visit, only factual comments on the draft review report are possible.

Feedback system

Up to one month after the site visit, the ENQA Secretariat gathers feedback from (i) panel members and (ii) the agency through a feedback questionnaire on the review process.

The chair may provide, if appropriate, in cooperation with the secretary, an informal feedback letter to the ENQA Board on the review process, including feedback upon overall operation of the review; usefulness of preparation activities; frankness and completeness of the documentation provided by the agency; the quality of the dialogue experienced during the site visit; and the report drafting process.

4.6 PRODUCTION AND PUBLICATION OF A FINAL REPORT

The main outcome of the review process is the report. The review report is drafted by the review secretary, in collaboration with the chair and the rest of the panel members, on the basis of the self-evaluation report, site-visit and review panel's findings.

It is essential that before publication, the Secretary provides the agency with a copy of the draft report and sufficient time to check its contents for errors of fact. At this stage, the agency can only ask for corrections of factual errors or essential misunderstandings in the draft report. The agency should not submit any additional material or documentation. A final report is then produced and should not exceed 40 pages in length.

The secretary (or coordinator if not ENQA) submits the review report and any annexes in English to the ENQA Secretariat for the Board's consideration and decision on granting or (re)confirming membership.

In case of coordination by another entity, a report drafted in a language other than English should be translated under the supervision of the chair.

After completion of a successful review process, the final report is published on the websites of ENQA and the reviewed agency.

4.6.1 REPORT STRUCTURE

1	Executive summary
2+	Glossary
3	Introduction (contextual information should be given: reason(s) for the commissioning of the review; the place of the agency in the quality assurance structure of its jurisdiction; the main functions of the agency; the engagement of the agency with the ENQA membership provisions/ESG; how was the review carried out (e.g. what was the work method employed, how was consensus reached within the Review panel, etc.); the national (and international) context of the review, e.g. description of the national higher education system/legal framework)
4	Findings (each membership criterion should be discussed separately)
4.1	a) ENQA criterion 1 / ESG Part 2: External quality assurance processes (the standards in Part II should also be addressed individually) b) ENQA criterion 1 / ESG 3.1, 3.3: Activities
4.2	ENQA criterion 2 / ESG 3.2: Official status
4.3	ENQA criterion 3 / ESG 3.4: Resources
4.4	ENQA criterion 4 / ESG 3.5: Mission statement
4.5	ENQA criterion 5 / ESG 3.6: Independence
4.6	ENQA Criterion 6 / ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members
4.7	ENQA Criterion 7 / ESG 3.8: Accountability procedures
4.8	ENQA criterion 8: Consistency of judgements, appeals system and contributions to aims of ENQA
5+	Any sections relating to additional terms of reference of the review or additional relevant information which is not covered by the ENQA membership criteria/ESG (for type B reviews).
6	Conclusion and development. This section may include an analysis from both the review panel and the agency on how the review was conducted and the way forward, as well as recommendations for improvement.
7	Annexes (Key pieces of evidence - i.e. extracts from legislation, policies and procedures etc. - may be added to the report in the form of appendices)

The form of the review panel's report depends on the type of review that has been carried out (one part for type A reviews, two parts for type B reviews).

The report should also include the following information:

- terms of reference of the review (including a description of the main stages and timescale of the review);
- identity of all panel members and administrative support arrangements;
- timetable for the visit and list of persons/group that the panel met with;
- a description/reflection on the internationalisation of the agency (if applicable).

Review panels are invited to give an explanation of key terms in optional section 2.

For type A reviews, even if the sole purpose of the review is to assess the agency's compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, this does not preclude the review panel from including in its reports any additional reflections or developmental

recommendations that it may wish to offer. If these are extensive, they can be included in the optional section 5 of the report, or if brief, as part of the conclusion.

It should be noted that the ENQA Board requires only the opinion of the review panel on the fulfilment of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, not its judgement on the granting or (re)confirmation of membership. Consequently, the Board reserves the right to deviate from the opinion of the Panel if the review process was not carried out properly and independently and if the evidence in the report did not support the judgements.

Where a review has a wider purpose (type B), it is requested that the report includes a separate, full chapter which deals specifically with other requirements (e.g. national legislation) than the ENQA membership criteria/ESG.

The introductory section and structure of the final review reports template is provided as Annex I – this gives more detailed guidance on what should be included in each of the sections.

4.6.2 WRITING UP FINDINGS

To enable the ENQA Board to make an assessment of the compliance of the agency reviewed with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG and to reach a sound conclusion, it is important that the findings section is written in a way that reveals both the evidence for and the reasoning behind the panel's conclusions.

Structure

The ideal presentation of findings is the following:

- ENQA membership criteria 1-8 (parts II and III of the ESG and ENQA additional membership criteria) should be fully covered;
- Each criterion/ESG standard should be discussed separately;
- Under each ENQA membership criterion/ESG standard, the report should include:
 - (i) EVIDENCE: a short description of the evidence gathered – *making reference to meetings or documentation explored;*
 - (ii) ANALYSIS: a consideration of how far, based on the evidence available, the agency does (or does not) meet the criterion/ESG standard; and
 - (iii) CONCLUSION (judgement on compliance): in the opinion of the panel, how compliant the agency is with the criterion/ESG standard:
 - **fully compliant:** the agency is entirely in accordance with the criterion/ESG standard, which is implemented in an effective manner;
 - **substantially compliant:** the agency is to a large extent in accordance with the criterion/ESG standard, the principle/spirit of which is followed in practice;
 - **partially compliant:** some aspects or parts of the criterion/ESG standard are met while others are not. The interpretation of the criterion/ESG standard is correct, but the manner of implementation is not effective enough;
 - **non-compliant:** the agency fails to comply with the criterion/ESG standard.

The panel is not required to comment on overall compliance, but may do so if it wishes.

(iii) RECOMMENDATION (if any)

Judgements expected

As mentioned above, the judgement on compliance with each criterion/ESG standard is either fully/substantially/partially compliant or non-compliant.

Please note that wordings such as “full compliance has not been achieved” or “not yet fully compliant” are not acceptable.

Where an agency is found to be either partially compliant or non-compliant with a criterion, the reason for this should be explained. Full or substantial compliance may be impossible for some agencies, owing to restrictions placed on them by the very nature of their work and/or legislation in place in their country(ies) of operation. The ENQA Board will take these restrictions into consideration.

This evidence-analysis-conclusion-recommendation format enables the ENQA Board to see how and why conclusions have been reached based on the evidence available to the review panel.

4.6.3 DRAFTING PROCESS

For the sake of both efficiency and accuracy, it is important that the report is drafted throughout the review process rather than just completed at the end of the site visit. Some of section 1, most of section 2, and some of section 3, can be completed to draft form before the site visit takes place. The secretary is also advised to add notes to the report during the course of the site visit building on the outcomes of the meetings and further scrutiny of documentary evidence.

The secretary’s initial draft should be as complete as possible before it is circulated to the chair and panel members. The panel members should carefully proof-read the report and return it to the secretary with any comments or amendments before the set deadline.

After making any changes to the report the secretary produces a revised draft which, after agreement from the chair, is submitted to the agency for comment on its factual accuracy. Any further revisions to the report based on the agency’s comments are agreed between the chair and secretary, in consultation with the panel.

The final text is then submitted by the secretary (or the review coordinator if not ENQA) to the ENQA Secretariat for the attention of the Board, and to the agency.

4.7 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

ENQA’s General Assembly has delegated to the Board the consideration of review reports and subsequent decisions in respect of membership. The Board uses external review reports to reach a conclusion on whether an agency has or has not met the membership criteria/ESG. The process for the scrutiny of member reviews is given in detail in the *Scrutiny form for reconfirmation of or application for Full/Associate Membership* (internal document, Annex V). The outline of the process is, however, as follows:

- The report is distributed by the ENQA Secretariat to a Review Committee of the ENQA Board;
- The Review Committee produces an analysis of the report and a recommendation to the Board in the format of a Scrutiny form;
- The Board makes a decision on the basis of the review report and the scrutiny by the Review Committee. The Board is not, however, obliged to follow the recommendations by the review panel or by the Review Committee. The Board makes its decision in the light of gathered evidence.

The Board’s powers in respect of membership matters, and the rules relating to appeals against a decision of the Board, are contained in the ENQA Statutes.

Request for additional information or site visit

If the report's contents, or the way the review has been conducted, do not, in the Board's opinion, allow it to come to a conclusion, the Board will decide what additional information is required. This may comprise further documentary evidence, additional information from the review panel or the review coordinator, or the agency itself, or information acquired during an additional visit to the agency (lasting normally one day), carried out by the chair and the secretary if need be, to complete the assessment on compliance. In the event of a second site visit required by the Board, the agency will be given the opportunity to accept or refuse the site visit. In case of acceptance, an additional fee and travel and subsistence costs are recoverable from the agency (see section 7)

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each member of the panel is expected to actively contribute to the work. Therefore, experts are advised to carefully consider their workload before accepting the assignment. Failure to actively contribute to the panel and its duties, for whatever reason, is deemed a breach of the ENQA Code of Conduct for Review Experts.

5.1 REVIEW CHAIR

It is the responsibility of the chair of the review panel to:

BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

- Take overall responsibility for the functioning of the review, the assessment of the agency against the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, and production of the report;
- Liaise with the secretary and agency to establish a provisional timetable of activities for the site visit;
- Review the documentation, including the self-evaluation document and any other information available prior to the site visit, to ensure it is complete and adequate for the needs of the panel;
- Agree the lines of inquiry to be pursued during the site visit – undertaken with contributions from the rest of the panel;
- Work with the secretary to produce an outline report.

DURING THE SITE VISIT

- Chair all meetings and discussions;
- Ensure that all lines of inquiry identified are satisfactorily answered.

AFTER THE SITE VISIT

- Comment on the initial draft report produced by the secretary;
- Review any changes suggested by the agency after it has commented on the draft report;
- Sign off on the final report;
- Provide, if appropriate, in cooperation with the secretary, an informal feedback letter to the ENQA Board on the review process, including feedback upon overall operation of the review; usefulness of preparation activities; frankness and completeness of the documentation provided by the agency; the quality of the dialogue experienced during the site visit; and the report drafting process.

AT ALL TIMES

- identify possible misunderstandings of concepts within the review panel.

5.2 REVIEW SECRETARY

It is the responsibility of the secretary of the review panel to:

BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

- Act as chief liaison person in the course of the review process with the review coordinator, the agency and the local technical assistant (if any);
- Liaise with the chair and the agency to set up a provisional timetable of activities for the site visit;

- Distribute documentation, including the self-evaluation report, received from the agency to the rest of the review panel;
- Work with the chair to produce an outline report;
- Produce a short briefing paper for the panel outlining the background to the review and lines of inquiry that have been agreed.

DURING THE SITE VISIT

- Act as the panel's chief liaison person with the agency during the course of the site visit;
- Take notes at the meetings attended and the panel's private discussions;
- Keep a record of matters which require further clarification and draw these to the attention of the panel;
- Make sure that everyone in the agency, especially those having low English skills, feel comfortable during meetings with the members of the review panel.

AFTER THE SITE VISIT

- Produce an initial draft of the review report – based on the documentation provided and the notes taken during the site visit – and circulate it to the other panel members for comment;
- After incorporating any suggested changes, supply the draft report to the agency to check its factual accuracy;
- Include the agency's amendments (if any and if accepted by the review panel) in the draft report, produce a final version of the report and submit it to the review panel, the agency and the review coordinator.
- Draft, if appropriate, together with the chair, an informal feedback letter to the ENQA Board on the review process.

The secretary keeps the review coordinator informed of progress throughout the review.

5.3 PANEL MEMBERS

It is the responsibility of the members of the review panel to:

BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

- Review the documentation, including the self-evaluation report and any other information available prior to the site visit;
- Contribute to developing the lines of inquiry to be pursued during the site visit.

DURING THE SITE VISIT

- Participate in all meetings and discussions and contribute to pursuing agreed lines of inquiry.

AFTER THE SITE VISIT

- Carefully proof-read the initial draft report produced by the secretary and give any comments or amendments before the set deadline;
- Provide support and assistance to the secretary concerning the final report on the external review.

5.4 REVIEW COORDINATOR

In ENQA coordinated reviews, the tasks carried out by the review coordinator are:

- drafting and agreeing the terms of reference and the contract with the agency;
- selecting the review panel (including the elaboration of contracts and of non-conflict-of-interest declarations) following the ENQA Board consideration and decision on the panel's composition;
- initial liaison between the review panel and the agency under review;
- receiving and filing of the final review report;
- forwarding the review report to a Review Committee;
- paying reviewers' fees and travel and accommodation expenses.

In exceptional cases where the review is not coordinated by ENQA, the review coordinator is responsible for:

- liaising with the ENQA Board in the course of the review process;
- submitting the terms of reference and the contract to the ENQA Board;
- sending the final review report to the ENQA Secretariat for scrutiny by a Review Committee of the ENQA Board;

The review coordinator should have a high and verifiable level of independence of the agency under review in order to avoid any risk of conflict of interests. A reciprocal review process, where two agencies organise the review of each other, is not permissible because this method is unlikely to meet the requirements of externality and independence and may give rise to conflicts of interest.

6 TIMELINE

The following timeline gives an indication of the schedule that a review might follow. A specific timetable is established for each review undertaken.

BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

ACTION	TIME
The agency informs the ENQA Board, through the ENQA Secretariat, that a review is to take place. The agency should provide the ENQA Secretariat with the identity and contact details of the body coordinating the review, as well as the reasons why the review cannot be coordinated by ENQA.	12 months before the visit
The ENQA Board approves the review coordinator (if not ENQA).	9-12 months before the visit
The agency produces its self-evaluation report.	12 months before the visit
Terms of reference, protocol and preliminary timetable for the review are drafted by and agreed between the review coordinator and the agency.	5-8 months before the visit
The review coordinator (if not ENQA) submits the terms of reference, protocol and preliminary timetable for the review to the ENQA Board for consideration.	3-6 months before the visit
The review coordinator (if not ENQA) nominates the review panel and submit the panel's composition to the ENQA Board for consideration.	3-7 months before the visit
The review coordinator appoints the review panel in accordance with ENQA policy.	2-6 months before the visit
The secretary agrees the site visit schedule with the chair and agency.	6-10 weeks before the visit
The agency submits its self-evaluation report along with any other documentation of relevance to the review coordinator – this is then passed to the secretary, along with the present Guidelines, for distribution to the other panel members.	8-12 weeks before the visit
If appropriate, a telephone briefing gathering the review panel and the review coordinator takes place to discuss the process of the whole review. The review coordinator submits to the panel any background information and documents about the review.	6-8 weeks before the visit
The chair reviews the documentation provided by the agency and makes an initial identification of lines of inquiry with reference to the terms of reference of the review and the information received from the agency. These are developed further in consultation with the rest of the review panel.	4-6 weeks before the visit
The secretary produces an outline report in collaboration with the chair and a briefing paper – outlining the background, schedule and draft lines of inquiry for the review and circulates this to the review panel.	2-4 weeks before the visit
Briefing meeting of the panel. The panel members discuss the schedule of the visit and agree how the lines of inquiry will be dealt with.	Day before the visit

DURING THE SITE VISIT (2-3 DAYS)

ACTION	TIME
A panel meeting takes place as the penultimate session of the site visit. At this meeting the team reviews the evidence presented, and draw preliminary findings and, if possible, put these into the "skeleton" report.	Last day of the visit
The panel has a final meeting with the representatives of the agency in which the preliminary findings of the review are communicated.	Last day of the visit

AFTER THE SITE VISIT

ACTION	TIME
The secretary produces the initial draft review report and circulates it to the chair and panel members.	2 weeks after the visit
The panel members review the draft and suggest any comments, or amendments, and provide these to the secretary.	3 weeks after the visit
The ENQA Secretariat asks the panel members and the agency to fill in a feedback questionnaire on the review process.	3-4 weeks after the visit
The secretary produces a revised draft which, after agreement from the panel, is submitted to the agency for comment on its factual accuracy.	4-6 weeks after the visit
The agency submits any amendments to the report relating to factual accuracy to the secretary for consideration.	6-8 weeks after the visit
The secretary produces a final version of the report.	8-10 weeks after the visit
The secretary submits the final review report to the panel, the agency and the review coordinator.	10-12 weeks after the visit
The coordinator (if not ENQA) submits the final review report to the ENQA Secretariat.	10-12 weeks after the visit

7 FINANCIAL ISSUES

ENQA charges a fee to meet the full costs of the review. This includes elements to cover expert fees, travel and accommodation expenses, an administrative fee for coordinating the review, and put money into the expert training fund.

The amount of the fee is stated in the review contract between ENQA and each panel member. The expert fees and ENQA administrative overhead are determined by the ENQA Board; travel and accommodation expenses are charged at cost. The approximate total of the whole review is payable by the agency to ENQA on signature of the contract. ENQA does not undertake any further preparations for the review until the payment has been received.

The current (2012) fees for ENQA-coordinated reviews (both for type A and B), with a review team of five experts, are the following:

Fee of the chair	4,750 EUR
Fee of the secretary	4,750 EUR
Fee of each panel member (2,750 x 3 experts)	8,250 EUR
Administrative overhead	5,000 EUR
Expert training fund	1,250 EUR
Approximate travel expenses (if the travel and subsistence costs go under this estimate, ENQA will refund the difference to the agency; if they are exceeded, ENQA can claim from the agency the difference after the completion of the review)	6,000 EUR
Approximate total	30,000 EUR

In the event of a second short site visit aiming at completing the assessment of compliance (see section 4.7), an additional fee of 500 EUR per expert is recoverable from the agency to compensate the additional work, as well as all travel and subsistence costs.

8 INTERPRETING THE ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA/EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (ESG)

It is important that all ENQA membership reviews are undertaken rigorously, fairly, transparently and consistently. It is therefore necessary that review panels are briefed about the way in which the membership criteria/ESG are to be interpreted. To this end, ENQA organises training courses for experts of agency reviews (see section 4.4.2).

The principal criterion for membership of ENQA is compliance with the membership criteria/ESG, listed in more detail in Annex IV. However, the ESG have a number of purposes and were not originally intended as a checklist for establishing compliance for ENQA or other membership purposes.

There may, as a result, be occasions where a strict reading of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG would indicate substantial rather than full compliance with one or more standards, but the panel may come to the conclusion that this should not jeopardise an overall judgement of compliance. This may occur when national legislation requires a different approach, or where an alternative way of achieving an objective is used, or because of other justifiable reasons.

The review panel needs to exercise its judgement, in the light of all the evidence before it, and the intentions of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, as to whether substantial compliance is being achieved, taking account of the circumstances in which the agency is required to operate (see section 4.6.2). There is little point in adopting a “hard line” position in respect of compliance with the ESG if, by doing so, trustworthy and credible agencies are prevented from gaining membership of ENQA.

ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA / EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (ESG)

The ESG are available in Annex IV of the present Guidelines. Please note that the ENQA membership criteria comprise Part III of the ESG and some additional requirements and guidelines. The below mentioned criteria contain additional parts (in *italics*) to the ESG.

▶ ENQA CRITERION 3 / ESG 3.4 – RESOURCES

Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes, procedures *and staff*.

▶ ENQA CRITERION 7 / ESG 3.8 – ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES

[...] iii. *a mandatory cyclical external review of the agency’s activities at least once every five years which includes a report on its conformity with the membership criteria of ENQA.*

► ENQA CRITERION 8 – CONSISTENCY OF JUDGEMENTS, APPEALS SYSTEM AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO AIMS OF ENQA

- i. *The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgments and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups;*
- ii. *If the agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of the agency;*
- iii. *The agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.*

9 APPEALS PROCEDURE

If an agency wishes to appeal against the decision of the Board or the judgement by the review panel that it is not meeting the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, the ENQA Appeals and Complaints Committee will hear the appeal. Current ENQA Board members are not eligible to serve as members of the Appeals and Complaints Committee, but one of them should normally be a former member of the Board. The appeals procedure itself is specified in the ENQA Statutes.

The ENQA Board reserves the right to modify the present Guidelines at its discretion.

Adopted by the ENQA Board

14 September 2012

ANNEXES

ANNEX I – INTRODUCTORY SECTION AND STRUCTURE OF THE FINAL REVIEW REPORT

REPORT OF THE PANEL OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCY X

Introduction (draft standard text)

This is the report of the review of [Agency X] undertaken in [month, year, of site visit] for the purpose of determining whether the agency meets the criteria for Full/Associate membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

1. BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

The Statutes of ENQA require all member agencies to undergo an external cyclical review, at least once every five years, in order to verify that they fulfil the membership provisions.

In November 2004, the General Assembly of ENQA agreed that the third part of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) should be incorporated into the membership provisions of its (then) regulations (now statutes). Substantial compliance with the ESG thus became the principal criterion for membership of ENQA. The ESG were subsequently adopted at the Bergen ministerial meeting of the Bologna Process in 2005.

The third part of the ESG covers the cyclical external review of quality assurance and accreditation agencies.

The external review of [Agency X] was conducted in line with the process described in *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area* and in accordance with the timeline set out in the Terms of Reference. The review panel for the external review of [Agency X] was composed of the following members:

N.N, role, organisation, country (Chairman)

N.N, role, organisation, country (Secretary)

N.N, role, organisation, country

N.N, role, organisation, country

N.N, role, organisation, country

In addition to fulfilling the periodic external review requirement of ENQA membership, the review of [Agency X] had the following purposes: [...]

[Agency X] produced a self-evaluation report which provided a substantial portion of the evidence that the panel used to form its conclusions. The panel conducted a site-visit to validate fully the self-evaluation and clarify any points at issue. Finally, the review panel produced the present final report on the basis of the self-evaluation report, site-visit and its findings. In doing so, it provided an opportunity for [Agency X] to comment on the factual accuracy of the draft report. The review panel confirms that it was given access to all documents and people it wished to consult throughout the review.

2. GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

3. INTRODUCTION

Contextual information should be given:

- i. reason(s) for the commissioning of the review;
- ii. the place of the agency in the quality assurance structure of its jurisdiction;
- iii. the main functions of the agency, its current main areas of responsibility and work, including the review methods it uses;
- iv. the engagement of the agency with the ENQA membership provisions/ ESG;
- v. how the review was carried out (e.g. what was the work method employed, how was consensus reached within the Review panel, etc.);
- vi. the national (and international) context of the review

4. FINDINGS (EACH MEMBERSHIP CRITERION SHOULD BE DISCUSSED SEPARATELY)

4.1

- a. ENQA criterion 1 / ESG Part 2: External quality assurance processes
- b. ENQA criterion 1 / ESG 3.1, 3.3: Activities

4.2

ENQA criterion 2 / ESG 3.2: Official status

4.3

ENQA criterion 3 / ESG 3.4: Resources

4.4

ENQA criterion 4 / ESG 3.5: Mission statement

4.5

ENQA criterion 5 / ESG 3.6: Independence

4.6

ENQA Criterion 6 / ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members

4.7

ENQA Criterion 7 / ESG 3.8: Accountability procedures

4.8

ENQA criterion 8: Consistency of judgements, appeals system and contribution to ENQA aims

5+ ANY SECTIONS RELATING TO ADDITIONAL TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW OR ADDITIONAL RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION WHICH IS NOT COVERED BY THE ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA/ESG

6 CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT

The panel is not required to comment on overall compliance, but may do so if it wishes. If the Review panel wishes to, this section might also include an analysis from both the Review panel and the Agency on how the review was conducted and the way forward.

OVERALL FINDINGS

In the light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the Review Panel is satisfied that, in the performance of its functions, [Agency X] is in compliance with the *ENQA Membership Provisions*. The Panel therefore recommends to the Board of ENQA that [name of agency] should have its Full/Associate Membership of ENQA confirmed for a [further] period of five years.

OR

In the light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the Panel does not consider that, in the performance of its functions, [Agency X] complies with the *ENQA Membership Provisions* for the following reasons:

- xxx
- xxx
- xxx

OR

In the light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the Review Panel is of the opinion that, in the performance of its functions, [Agency X] is not fully compliant with the *ENQA Membership Provisions*. The Agency is, nonetheless, in the opinion of the Review Panel, sufficiently compliant to justify Full/Associate membership of ENQA.

The criteria where full compliance has [have] not been achieved is [are]:

XXX

and the agency is recommended to take appropriate action, so far as it is empowered to do so, to achieve full compliance with these [this] criteria at the earliest opportunity.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

(These can be made even if the Panel is satisfied that the Agency complies, but they should then not be points which would contradict that recommendation)

7 ANNEXES

Key pieces of evidence – i.e. extracts from legislation, policies and procedures etc. – may be added to the report in the form of appendices.

ANNEX II – FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR ENQA COORDINATED REVIEWS

FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

ENQA coordinated reviews

GENERAL INFORMATION

The ENQA Secretariat is responsible for the financial management of the ENQA coordinated reviews. The contact details of the Secretariat are as follows:

Maria Kelo, Director
European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
Avenue de Tervuren 36-38, bte 4
BE-1040 Brussels
E-mail: maria.kelo@enqa.eu
Internet: www.enqa.eu
Phone: +32 2 735 00 18
Mobile: +32 492 31 10 52
Fax: +32 2 735 61 53

All claims for payment, or official invoices where the organisation of the expert has pre-financed his/her travel, of travel expenses should be submitted, together with original receipts and boarding passes related to the project, to the following address:

ENQA Secretariat
Avenue de Tervuren 36-38, bte 4
BE-1040 Brussels

2. REIMBURSEMENT OF THE TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION COSTS

The secretary of the review, in agreement with the chair and the whole team, is responsible for agreeing the actual dates of the site visit and for making practical arrangements (i.e. the site-visit programme and the hotel bookings) with the agency under review. **The agency helps in arranging accommodation**, via local contacts, for the expert team during the site visit, **but the experts are expected to pre-finance their accommodation, meals and travel costs themselves** (not paid for by the agency under review), and to **claim them from the ENQA Secretariat after the visit**. When this pre-financing is not possible (e.g. student members), the expert should contact the ENQA Secretariat to investigate alternative arrangements.

The Secretariat reimburses the experts only for the direct travel, accommodation, insurance and meal costs upon receiving the relevant documentation. The ENQA Secretariat cannot reimburse any costs for which the receipts are missing. No per diems are provided and therefore the expert should remember to retain all receipts. Only travel, accommodation, meals and insurance costs directly relating to the activities of the project are considered eligible for reimbursement. Travel and insurance costs are based on the actual costs incurred. Economy class fares must be used when travelling by air, while business class is acceptable only when travelling by train and for long-distance flights. The meal and accommodation costs should be kept reasonable.

There are **two** ways in which **to claim for** travel expenses:

- c. **Official invoice.** An official invoice has to be used in the case where the organisation of the expert has paid for his/her travel and accommodation expenses and **these expenses will be reimbursed to the account of the organisation**, not to the expert. The official invoice from the organisation has to include **specification of costs and copies of the travel documentation and of the receipts** (the originals are not needed in the case of an official invoice). The invoice can be sent to the ENQA secretariat as an email attachment or by post.
- d. **Travel claim form.** Expert should use the travel claim form provided by the ENQA Secretariat when s/he has paid the travel and accommodation expenses him/herself and they **will be reimbursed to his/her private account**. In this case, the **original receipts and boarding passes** have to be attached to the travel claim form, it has to be signed by the expert and sent by post. If the original documentation is missing, the ENQA secretariat, due to its accounting procedures, will not be able to make the reimbursement. All other currencies used must be converted into Euros by the expert him/herself. The expert should state the appropriate currency rate on the travel claim form.

Both the travel claim and the official invoice **have to include the following bank details:**

- Name of the bank;
- Address of the bank;
- Name of the account holder;
- Bank account number;
- SWIFT and IBAN codes.

3. PAYMENT OF THE EXPERT FEES

The fee is paid by the ENQA Secretariat after the successful completion of the review, i.e. after the submission by the review team of the final review report (and, if any, of the feedback letter to the ENQA Board), through the Secretariat. A form is provided by the ENQA Secretariat for claiming the fee.

4. DEADLINE FOR CLAIMING THE EXPENSES

All the expenses have to be claimed from the ENQA secretariat **within 30 days after the site visit**. ENQA Secretariat **cannot reimburse claims that arrive after this deadline**.

ANNEX III – STATUTES OF ENQA

STATUTES OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

PREAMBLE

On 30 March 2011, before Maître Corine Dupont, the Founding Assembly of the European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education AISBL (ENQA), represented by Achim Hopbach, has formed an international non-profit association and has agreed upon the following statutes of the Association.

ENQA is the legal successor of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

TITLE I. NAME AND SEAT

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The international non-profit Association is established under the name “European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education AISBL”. Its acronym is ENQA. Hereafter it is referred to as “the Association”.

The Association falls under the provisions of title III of the Belgian law of June twenty seventh, nineteen hundred and twenty one, concerning the non-profit associations, the international non-profit associations and the foundations.

ARTICLE 2 – REGISTERED OFFICE

The Association’s registered office is located in Avenue de Tervuren 36-38, 1040 Brussels, Belgium

TITLE II. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

ARTICLE 3 – MISSION AND PURPOSES

The **mission** of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) is to contribute significantly to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education at a high level, and to act as a major driving force for the development of quality assurance across all the Bologna signatory countries.

As the association of European quality assurance agencies, ENQA contributes to this goal especially by promoting European co-operation in the field of quality assurance (QA) in higher education in order to develop and share good practice in QA and to foster the European dimension of QA.

ENQA’S PURPOSES

ENQA’s purposes are essentially threefold:

- to represent its members at the European level and internationally, especially in political decision making processes and in co-operations with stakeholder organisations;
- to function as a think tank for developing further quality assurance processes and systems in the EHEA;
- to function as a communication platform for sharing and disseminating information and expertise in quality assurance among members and towards stakeholders.

ARTICLE 4 - ACTIVITIES

In order to achieve its objectives, ENQA disseminates information on experience, good practice and new developments in the field of quality assessment and quality assurance in higher education to stakeholders, namely to public authorities, higher education institutions, students and quality assurance agencies. ENQA's activities comprise events such as conferences, workshops and seminars as well as transnational quality assurance projects, publication of reports, cooperation with stakeholders and development and maintenance of its website. ENQA is a membership organisation which represents its members at the European level.

TITLE III. INVOLVEMENT IN ENQA

Involvement in ENQA can be obtained through:

- Membership (Full Member and Associate Member)
- Affiliate status

MEMBERSHIP

ARTICLE 5 - TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

ENQA has two types of membership: Full Membership and Associate Membership. Membership is granted at the discretion of the Board of the Association. The admission of new members is subject to the following conditions:

(1) FULL MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership of ENQA is open to European quality assurance agencies or other quality assurance organisations in the field of higher education that have been operating and conducting actual quality assurance activities for at least two years.

Before being accepted as a Full Member, an applicant agency must satisfy the Board that it meets the criteria for Full Membership, listed below. The applicant agency will thereby also meet the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)² as adopted by the European Ministers in charge of higher education in Bergen in 2005. The Board may modify the details of the procedures at its discretion.

Each criterion is followed by guidelines (in *italics*) which provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the criteria. Although the guidelines are not part of the criteria themselves, the criteria should be considered in conjunction with them.

(2) ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Associate Membership of ENQA is open to European quality assurance agencies or other quality assurance organisations in the field of higher education that have been operating and conducting actual quality assurance activities for at least two years.

Before being accepted as an Associate Member, an applicant agency must satisfy the Board that it meets the criteria for Full Membership, listed below, apart from Criterion 2 - Official status (ESG 3.2). The applicant agency will thereby also meet the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), except ESG 3.2, as adopted by the European Ministers in charge of higher education in Bergen in 2005. The Board may modify the details of the procedures at its discretion.

² Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, ISBN 952-5539-04-0, Helsinki: ENQA, 2009

Each criterion is followed by guidelines (in *italics*) which provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the criteria. Although the guidelines are not part of the criteria themselves, the criteria should be considered in conjunction with them.

COMMON PROVISION FOR FULL AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

As indicated in membership criterion 7 below, it is a condition of membership that all Full and Associate Members of ENQA undergo an external review coordinated by ENQA at least once every five years. If a member does not undergo an external review within five years of Full or Associate Membership being granted or reconfirmed, it will, by decision of the General Assembly, cease to be a member of ENQA. If, as a result of an external review, a member is judged not to meet the criteria for Full/Associate Membership by the Board, it will be given two years to conform with the criteria, during which time the agency will be designated as a "Full/Associate Member under review". A further review will be carried out by the Board, or its nominated reviewers, at the end of the two-year period (or sooner, if the member agency so requests) and shall focus on the deficiencies mentioned in the report of the first review. An agency that, in the opinion of the Board, and following the further review, still does not comply with ENQA's criteria for Full/Associate Membership will, by confirmation of the General Assembly, be debarred from ENQA. A debarred agency will be permitted to reapply for membership after a further period of two years.

During this period the agency or organisation will, if it wishes so, remain on the ENQA mailing list to ensure information dissemination on the activities of ENQA.

ENQA CRITERION 1 - ACTIVITIES (ESG 3.1, 3.3)

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis. The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

The external quality assurance activities may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the member.

ENQA CRITERION 2 - OFFICIAL STATUS (ESG 3.2)

Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

ENQA CRITERION 3 - RESOURCES (ESG 3.4)

Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes, procedures and staff.

ENQA CRITERION 4 - MISSION STATEMENT (ESG 3.5)

Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

This statement should describe the goals and objectives of the member's quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of its work. The statement should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the member and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statement is translated into a clear policy and management plan.

ENQA CRITERION 5 - INDEPENDENCE (ESG 3.6)

Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- *its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts);*
- *the definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence;*
- *while relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.*

ENQA CRITERION 6 - EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA AND PROCESSES USED BY THE MEMBERS (ESG 3.7)

- i. The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available.
- ii. These processes will normally be expected to include:
 - a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
 - an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
 - publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
 - a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes. Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people. Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

ENQA CRITERION 7 - ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES (ESG 3.8)

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

These procedures are expected to include the following:

- i. *a published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;*
- ii. *documentation which demonstrates that:*
 - *the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;*
 - *the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts, Committee/Council/Board and staff members;*
 - *the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;*
 - *the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. a means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.*
- iii. *a mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years which includes a report on its conformity with the membership criteria of ENQA.*

ENQA CRITERION 8 - CONSISTENCY OF JUDGEMENTS, APPEALS SYSTEM AND CONTRIBUTION TO ENQA AIMS

- i. The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgments and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups
- ii. If the agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of the agency.
- iii. The agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.

ARTICLE 6 - APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

APPLICATION FORM AND DOCUMENTATION

Applications for membership of ENQA shall be in the form specified by the Board. Applications for membership are considered and decided upon by the Board on the basis either of submitted documentation alone, or of submitted documentation and a visit to the applicant body.

Applications for Full or Associate Membership will only be considered where an independent external review report on the agency's conformity with the respective membership criteria, carried out in a manner and to a standard acceptable to the Board, is received (see membership criterion 7iii above).

NOTIFICATION

Applicants that are not accepted for membership shall be notified of the reasons by the President of ENQA and shall be informed of the areas where the Board considers that further development or changes are required or advised.

ARTICLE 7 – MEMBERSHIP FEE

Full and Associate Members are required to pay an annual membership fee. The amount of the annual, non-refundable membership fee shall be established by the General Assembly.

AFFILIATE BODIES

ARTICLE 8

In addition to membership, ENQA has another type of formalised relationship with other bodies, Affiliation. Affiliates of ENQA are not members of the Association. Bodies that do not wish to, or for whatever reason are unable to, apply to become members of ENQA may request affiliate status within ENQA.

ARTICLE 9 – AFFILIATES

An Affiliate body shall be a bona fide organisation or agency with a demonstrable interest in the quality assurance of higher education.

ARTICLE 10 – APPLICATION PROCEDURE

An application for affiliation with ENQA should be made in the form of a letter addressed to the ENQA Board. This should include a brief introduction to the body concerned, key contact details, and a statement formally requesting Affiliate status. A decision shall then be made by the Board as to whether ENQA agrees to the request; the decision shall be communicated by letter. The Board may request further information before making its decision. The Board's decision shall be brought to the General Assembly for final endorsement.

ARTICLE 11 – BENEFITS

Affiliates shall be entitled to receive ENQA publications and attend events, and be given access to the password protected parts of the ENQA website. They shall not however, be entitled to call themselves 'members' of ENQA and shall have no voting or eligibility rights.

ARTICLE 12 – FEE

Affiliates shall pay a non-refundable fee which corresponds to one half of the Full membership fee.

COMMON PROVISIONS FOR MEMBERS AND AFFILIATES

ARTICLE 13

Members and Affiliates agree to abide by the statutes of ENQA.

ARTICLE 14

Members and Affiliates of ENQA may be asked to pay a fee to participate in workshops, projects and other activities organised by ENQA.

ARTICLE 15

The procedure for dealing with a Member or Affiliate whose fees are in arrears shall be decided by the Board.

ARTICLE 16 – RESIGNATION AND EXCLUSION

Members and Affiliates may resign from ENQA membership and ENQA affiliate status at any time by submitting a written notification of resignation to the President of ENQA. The resignation becomes effective immediately. The President shall notify the General Assembly and the Board of the resignation of the Member or the Affiliate.

Members and Affiliates may be excluded by decision of the Board in case of breach of the present statutes, of the Membership Provisions or in the event of any action which is likely to cause prejudice to the Association's reputation or effectiveness.

The membership and affiliate fees will not be reimbursed to the Agency in the case of resignation or of exclusion.

TITLE IV. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The bodies of ENQA shall be:

- The General Assembly
- The Board
- The Secretariat
- The Appeals and Complaints Committee

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ARTICLE 17 – FUNCTIONS

The General Assembly is the sovereign policy- and decision-making body of ENQA.

The responsibilities of the General Assembly are to:

- elect and dismiss the members of the Board;
- elect the President and Vice-Presidents of ENQA from amongst the members of the Board;
- amend ENQA's statutes;
- approve ENQA's annual work plan;
- receive, consider and approve the annual reports of the President and the Director on the activities of the Association;
- receive, consider and approve ENQA's annual financial statements, including the annual external audit report;
- discharge the Board and the other accountable parties from liability for the accounts after approving the annual external audit report;
- identify and approve the external auditor and the number of chartered accountants who are to be involved in the annual external audit of ENQA's accounts;
- consider and determine the annual budget;
- establish the level of the annual membership fee to be paid by Full and Associate members;
- establish the level of the annual fee to be paid by Affiliates;
- elect the members for the Appeals and Complaints Committee;
- following a decision of the Board, ratify the admission of new members/affiliates or the exclusion of members/affiliates who are in breach of the present statutes;
- decide upon the relocation of the Secretariat to another country, giving half-year's notice;

- take any decisions or make any recommendations to the Board that are necessary for the satisfactory functioning of ENQA within the framework of these statutes.

ARTICLE 18 – MEETING AND INVITATION

The General Assembly shall meet at least once a year. The date and place of the meeting shall be decided by the Board. The President of ENQA shall convene the meeting, giving at least 40 days' notice. Meetings of the General Assembly shall be chaired by the President of ENQA or, in the unavoidable absence of the President, by a Vice-President, to be nominated by the Board.

ARTICLE 19 – COMPOSITION

The General Assembly is composed of the representatives of Full and Associate Members of ENQA.

ARTICLE 20 – ELECTION AND VOTING PROCEDURES

Members have the right to vote and speak at the General Assembly. Members have the right to nominate candidates representing agencies in Full Membership of ENQA for election to the Board. Each Member agency represented in the General Assembly may cast one vote. Decisions of the General Assembly shall be adopted by simple majority of all Members present and, in addition, by simple majority of Full Members present. The Full Members present at a meeting of the General Assembly constitute a quorum for the meeting (provided that representatives of more than half of the Full Members are present).

In the event of a vote, other than for the election of members of the Board, the President and the Vice-Presidents (see article 27), the voting procedure used may be either open or closed (secret). A closed ballot shall be used if one or more Full Members present so requests.

Affiliates have the right to attend the General Assembly, except any closed parts of the meeting, and to speak at the invitation of the Chair.

ARTICLE 21 – NOTIFICATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECISIONS

The decisions taken by the General Assembly are entered in the minutes and notified to all members by means of publication on the restricted part of the website, accessible for the members only. The minutes are kept at the registered office. The register of decisions can be consulted by the members of the Association.

ARTICLE 22 – OBSERVERS

Key partner organisations, namely the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the European Students' Union (ESU), Education International (EI), BusinessEurope and the European Commission (EC) shall be invited to the General Assembly as observers. The Board may also invite other observers. Observers may speak in open discussions of the General Assembly at the invitation of the Chair, but may not vote.

THE BOARD

ARTICLE 23 – FUNCTIONS

The responsibilities of the Board are to:

- prepare and supervise a yearly work plan, to be discussed and approved by the General Assembly;
- prepare activities as defined in the work plan;
- ensure that any specific mandate determined by the General Assembly is carried out;
- decide on the admission of new members/affiliates or the exclusion of members/affiliates in breach of these statutes;
- make recommendations to the General Assembly on any modification of these statutes;
- appoint the Director;
- instruct and evaluate the work of the Director in charge of the Secretariat, and the work of the Secretariat of ENQA;
- oversee the financial arrangements of ENQA and provide for the auditing of the accounts;
- decide upon the location of the Secretariat in cases not covered by Article 17;
- take such other action as it may deem necessary in the interests of ENQA.

The Board is accountable to the General Assembly.

ARTICLE 24 - COMPOSITION

The Board comprises nine members, including the President and Vice-Presidents of ENQA, and has discretionary powers to co-opt a maximum of two further members. The minimum number of Board members shall thus be nine. The elected members of the Board consist of representatives of agencies in Full Membership of ENQA. Co-opted members are appointed to serve until the next General Assembly.

ARTICLE 25 - OPERATION

The Board shall meet at least four times a year. The meetings shall be convened by the President giving at least 10 days' notice. Five elected members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE 26 - NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

Members of ENQA nominate candidates from amongst the Full Members for election to the Board. Nominations for the Board should be made to the Secretariat 40 days prior to the General Assembly. These should include a short CV of the nominees. Details of candidates shall be circulated to all member agencies prior to the General Assembly.

The principles of balanced gender distribution and balanced geographical distribution should be kept in mind while nominating candidates to the Board. A maximum number of two persons from any single member state of the EHEA shall be accepted for membership of the Board. The Board itself may indicate which candidates, if any, it encourages to be elected to the Board, keeping in mind the goals of balanced gender and geographical distribution and the limit on the maximum number of members permitted from any one EHEA state.

ARTICLE 27 - ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

The members of the Board are elected by the General Assembly. Three Board members retire each year, and three new members are elected. The regular term lasts for three years. However, in case of an election pursuant to Article 30, the term is shortened accordingly. Board members may not serve continuously for more than two terms.

The elections of Board members, President and Vice-Presidents shall take place using a secret ballot of members. A simple majority of members present at the General Assembly and, in addition, a simple majority of Full Members present at the General Assembly shall determine the successful candidates. Each member agency shall have one vote per Board vacancy, one vote in the Presidential election, and two votes (one for each position) in the election of the Vice-Presidents.

The election of the Board as a whole shall take place by ballot and the results shall be announced to the General Assembly.

If, in the election of Board members, one member is to be elected for a shorter term pursuant to Article 30, the elected Board member with the smallest number of votes will be assigned for the shorter term, unless another elected Board member volunteers for it.

If, in the election of Board members, two or more candidates receive the same number of votes, and the number of vacancies is insufficient to allow all to be elected, then the election between those candidates shall be rerun. If, in the second round of election, two or more candidates receive the same number of votes, the affected candidates shall be asked to agree among them which of them shall serve on the Board. If agreement cannot be reached among the candidates, the President at the time shall decide who shall be designated as a Board member. The election shall be re-run each time that an equal number of winning votes are cast for two or more candidates in the Presidential elections. Similarly, the election shall be re-run each time that an equal number of winning votes are cast for one of the positions of the Vice-President.

ARTICLE 28 – NOTIFICATION OF BOARD DECISIONS

The decisions taken by the Board are entered in the minutes and notified to all members by means of publication on the restricted part of the website, accessible for the members only. The minutes are kept at the registered office. The register of decisions can be consulted by the members of the Association.

ARTICLE 29 – REPRESENTATION OF ENQA

Members of the Board represent ENQA by:

- fostering relations with other similar organisations;
- promoting the activities of ENQA;
- representing ENQA in relevant events;
- carrying out any specific mandates given by the General Assembly, the Board or the President, within the terms of these statutes.

ARTICLE 30

In the case of resignation, retirement, dismissal, death or termination of Full Membership of the agency of a Board member, the next General Assembly elects a new Board member for the remaining time of the original term of the retired member.

In the case of resignation, retirement, dismissal, death or termination of Full ENQA membership of the agency of the President or a Vice President, the Board shall fill the vacancy and appoint a Board member as Acting President or Acting Vice President respectively, until the next General Assembly.

ARTICLE 31 - RESIGNATION AND DISMISSAL

Board members can be dismissed for stated reasons by the General Assembly by qualified, two-thirds majority of those present at the Assembly meeting (provided that more than half of the Full Members are present).

Board members may resign at any time by submitting a written indication of resignation to the President of ENQA. The resignation becomes effective immediately.

In the case of termination of Full Membership in ENQA of an agency of a Board member, the Board membership ends automatically. The President shall notify the General Assembly and the Board of the resignation of the Board member.

THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

ARTICLE 32

Three of the Board's members are elected by the General Assembly to act as President and Vice-Presidents of ENQA. The term of service for the President lasts till the end of his/her term as a Board member. The term of service for the Vice-Presidents is one year, but may be renewed.

After the election of Board members has taken place the new Board shall seek nominations from among its membership for the position of President. The election shall take place and the result shall be announced to the General Assembly. The Board shall then seek nominations from among its membership for the positions of Vice-President. The election shall take place and the result shall be announced to the General Assembly.

ARTICLE 33 – THE PRESIDENT

The President of ENQA is also the Chair of the Board. He/she:

- presides over the meetings of the Board and casts the deciding vote in the Board when no majority decision can be reached;
- plans, together with the Vice-Presidents and the Director, the agendas of the Board meetings as well as the order of items and the documentation to be discussed at those meetings;
- checks with the Director the material for the Board meetings and for any other events;
- is responsible, together with the Secretariat, for the follow-up to the Board meetings (communication of decisions, etc.).

- As the President of the Association, he/she:

- presides over the meetings of the General Assembly;
- does, together with the Vice-Presidents and the Director, the strategic planning of the General Assembly meetings, and executes their follow-up;
- represents the Association to third parties and in court;
- represents ENQA externally;
- carries out any resolutions, decisions or specific mandates given by the General Assembly or the Board;
- conducts day-to-day work with the Secretariat;
- observes the financial situation of the Association;
- ensures, together with the Director, that the annual work plans and budgets are followed;
- assumes any other reasonable responsibilities deemed necessary by the Board;
- submits an annual President's report to the General Assembly;
- is accountable to the General Assembly.

ARTICLE 34 – THE VICE-PRESIDENTS

The Vice-Presidents:

- carry out such reasonable duties as the President may request;
- deputise for the President, at the President's request or in his or her absence;
- carry out the strategic planning of the Board, the General Assembly and any other meetings and events together with the President and the Director;
- are accountable to the General Assembly.

THE SECRETARIAT

ARTICLE 35 - FUNCTIONS

ENQA shall have a Secretariat supporting the Association. The Secretariat shall provide such administrative assistance as may be required from it.

ARTICLE 36 - THE DIRECTOR

The Head of the Secretariat shall be the Director. The responsibilities of the Director of ENQA are specifically to:

- maintain ENQA's records (including the files, minutes, databases and financial records);
- prepare an annual Director's report, financial statements, and any other relevant documentation to be approved by the General Assembly;
- prepare the publications of ENQA;
- foresee that the ENQA website is regularly updated;
- convene, prepare, organise and record ENQA's meetings, including those of the Board;
- manage projects carried out under the aegis of ENQA, including grant applications and reporting;
- prepare annual budgets and work plans and ensure, together with the President, that they are followed;
- instruct and supervise the work of the Secretariat;
- collect the annual membership fees, as well as the fees from Affiliates;
- collect any other financial contributions to the activities of ENQA;
- maintain ENQA's accounts and financial statements and submit these to the Board and the General Assembly;
- prepare, together with the accountancy agency, for the annual financial audit;
- function as a liaison between the Board, the Secretariat, the Members, the Affiliates and the main co-operation partners of ENQA;
- appoint, in consultation with the President, the staff of the Secretariat and foresee for its job training;
- represent ENQA externally in the absence of Board members;
- undertake such other reasonable duties as the President may request;
- assume any other responsibilities deemed necessary by the Board, not provided for in these statutes.

THE APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

ARTICLE 37 - FUNCTIONS

There shall be an Appeals and Complaints Committee, which shall hear appeals and complaints against decisions of the Board and the conduct of procedures in respect of membership matters.

The appeal shall be submitted in writing to the Board within two calendar months from the date of receipt of the Board's decision and shall specify the basis of the appeal. The Board shall ask the Appeals and Complaints Committee to review the decision, and the Board's decision on the appeal shall be taken in the light of the Committee's report. The Board's decision on appeals is final.

ARTICLE 38 – COMPOSITION

The Appeals and Complaints Committee shall comprise four representatives of Full Members, one of whom will be designated as an alternate member. In cases of conflicts of interest involving one of the members of the Committee, the alternate member will be asked to replace the member affected by the conflict of interest. The Appeals and Complaints Committee shall take decisions with a simple majority. The members of the Committee are appointed by the ENQA General Assembly for a three-year term. No member of the Committee shall serve continuously for more than six years. No member of the Committee shall also be a member of the Board, but at least one of the members shall normally be a former member of the Board.

TITLE V. COOPERATION WITH KEY PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

ARTICLE 39

In accordance with its broad objective to function as a policy forum developing and proposing standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance in the EHEA, and to maintain and develop co-operation with other appropriate European stakeholder organisations, ENQA is committed to a continuing cooperation with key European partner organisations. These include the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the European Students' Union (ESU), Education International (EI), BusinessEurope and the European Commission (EC), and the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG).

TITLE VI. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 40

The financial year of the Association shall run from the first of January to the thirty-first of December.

ARTICLE 41

The finances of ENQA shall be subject to an annual external audit. The President shall propose the name of the external auditor each year to the General Assembly for approval.

ARTICLE 42

When proposing the budget, full accounts shall be submitted to the General Assembly, including a detailed report of the current financial position.

ARTICLE 43

In order to fund specific activities, ENQA may apply for financial support from other sources than the annual membership fees for purposes as described in Title II (Objectives and Activities).

ARTICLE 44

The President and the Director, or, in the absence of the President, the Vice-Presidents, are authorised to sign formal documents on behalf of the Association.

TITLE VII. OTHER PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 45 - DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

A proposal to dissolve the Association can be made by the Board or by more than half of the Full Members. The General Assembly can approve the proposal of dissolution by a two-thirds majority of the Full Members present. In the event of dissolution of the Association in one country and re-establishment in another country, the assets and liabilities of ENQA shall be transferred to the new Association. In the event of permanent dissolution, any assets of ENQA shall be divided equally among agencies that are Full Members of ENQA at the time of its dissolution. Similarly, any liabilities of ENQA shall be met equally by agencies that are Full Members of ENQA at the time of its dissolution.

ARTICLE 46 - AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES

The present statutes may be modified by the General Assembly, except for article 2, upon proposal by Full or Associate Members or by the Board. An amendment can be made only if two-thirds of the members present at a General Assembly and two-thirds of the Full Members of ENQA present at a General Assembly vote in favour of the proposal provided also that representatives of more than half of the Full Members are present and that the Full Members have been given 21 days' notice of the proposed amendments before the General Assembly. Recommendations for amendments shall be presented by the Board for the General Assembly's consideration. Article 2 may be amended by the Board with a two-thirds majority.

ARTICLE 47 - DISPUTES

Any dispute over the interpretation and/or the application of these statutes shall be resolved by the General Assembly, advised by the Board.

ARTICLE 48 - TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Agencies that, at the time of this amendment of the Statutes, are Candidate Members may, upon request, keep their status as determined in the relevant decision.

ANNEX IV – STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (PARTS I, II AND III)

PART 1: EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

1.1 POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

STANDARD:

Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality.

The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

GUIDELINES:

Formal policies and procedures provide a framework within which higher education institutions can develop and monitor the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems. They also help to provide public confidence in institutional autonomy. Policies contain the statements of intentions and the principal means by which these will be achieved. Procedural guidance can give more detailed information about the ways in which the policy is implemented and provides a useful reference point for those who need to know about the practical aspects of carrying out the procedures.

The policy statement is expected to include:

- the relationship between teaching and research in the institution;
- the institution's strategy for quality and standards;
- the organisation of the quality assurance system;
- the responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units and individuals for the assurance of quality;
- the involvement of students in quality assurance;
- the ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised.

The realisation of the EHEA depends crucially on a commitment at all levels of an institution to ensuring that its programmes have clear and explicit intended outcomes; that its staff are ready, willing and able to provide teaching and learner support that will help its students achieve those outcomes; and that there is full, timely and tangible recognition of the contribution to its work by those of its staff who demonstrate particular excellence, expertise and dedication. All higher education institutions should aspire to improve and enhance the education they offer their students.

1.2 APPROVAL, MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS

STANDARD:

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

GUIDELINES:

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency.

The quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include:

- development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;
- careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content;
- specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional);
- availability of appropriate learning resources;
- formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme;
- monitoring of the progress and achievements of students;
- regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members);
- regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations;
- participation of students in quality assurance activities.

1.3 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

STANDARD:

Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

GUIDELINES:

The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education.

The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and that it takes into account the extensive knowledge which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support.

Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
- be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative;
- have clear and published criteria for marking;
- be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification;
- where possible, not rely on the judgements of single examiners;
- take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;
- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures.

In addition, students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

1.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING STAFF

STANDARD:

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

GUIDELINES:

Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students.

It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

1.5 LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

STANDARD:

Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

GUIDELINES:

In addition to their teachers, students rely on a range of resources to assist their learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries or computing facilities to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors, and other advisers. Learning resources and other support mechanisms should be readily accessible to students, designed with their needs in mind and responsive to feedback from those who use the services provided. Institutions should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.

1.6 INFORMATION SYSTEMS

STANDARD:

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

GUIDELINES:

Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance. It is important that institutions have the means of collecting and analysing information about

their own activities. Without this they will not know what is working well and what needs attention, or the results of innovatory practices.

The quality-related information systems required by individual institutions will depend to some extent on local circumstances, but it is at least expected to cover:

- student progression and success rates;
- employability of graduates;
- students' satisfaction with their programmes;
- effectiveness of teachers;
- profile of the student population;
- learning resources available and their costs;
- the institution's own key performance indicators.

There is also value in institutions comparing themselves with other similar organisations within the EHEA and beyond. This allows them to extend the range of their self-knowledge and to access possible ways of improving their own performance.

1.7 PUBLIC INFORMATION

STANDARD:

Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

GUIDELINES:

In fulfilment of their public role, higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Published information might also include the views and employment destinations of past students and the profile of the current student population. This information should be accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity. The institution should verify that it meets its own expectations in respect of impartiality and objectivity.

PART 2: EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1 USE OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

STANDARD:

External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES:

The standards for internal quality assurance contained in Part 1 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. It is important that the institutions' own internal policies and procedures are carefully evaluated in the course of external procedures, to determine the extent to which the standards are being met.

If higher education institutions are to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance processes, and if those processes properly assure quality and standards, then external processes might be less intensive than otherwise.

2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

STANDARD:

The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

GUIDELINES:

In order to ensure clarity of purpose and transparency of procedures, external quality assurance methods should be designed and developed through a process involving key stakeholders, including higher education institutions. The procedures that are finally agreed should be published and should contain explicit statements of the aims and objectives of the processes as well as a description of the procedures to be used.

As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of higher education institutions.

2.3 CRITERIA FOR DECISIONS

STANDARD:

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

GUIDELINES:

Formal decisions made by quality assurance agencies have a significant impact on the institutions and programmes that are judged. In the interests of equity and reliability, decisions should be based on published criteria and interpreted in a consistent manner. Conclusions should be based on recorded evidence and agencies should have in place ways of moderating conclusions, if necessary.

2.4 PROCESSES FIT FOR PURPOSE

STANDARD:

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

GUIDELINES:

Quality assurance agencies within the EHEA undertake different external processes for different purposes and in different ways. It is of the first importance that agencies should operate procedures which are fit for their own defined and published purposes.

Experience has shown, however, that there are some widely-used elements of external review processes which not only help to ensure their validity, reliability and usefulness, but also provide a basis for the European dimension to quality assurance.

Amongst these elements the following are particularly noteworthy:

- insistence that the experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity
- have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task;
- the exercise of care in the selection of experts;
- the provision of appropriate briefing or training for experts;
- the use of international experts;
- participation of students;
- ensuring that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached;
- the use of the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/follow-up model of review;
- recognition of the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement
- policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

2.5 REPORTING

STANDARD:

Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

GUIDELINES:

In order to ensure maximum benefit from external quality assurance processes, it is important that reports should meet the identified needs of the intended readership.

Reports are sometimes intended for different readership groups and this will require careful attention to structure, content, style and tone.

In general, reports should be structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations, and recommendations. There should be sufficient preliminary explanation to enable a lay reader to understand the purposes of the review, its form, and the criteria used in making decisions. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by readers.

Reports should be published in a readily accessible form and there should be opportunities for readers and users of the reports (both within the relevant institution and outside it) to comment on their usefulness.

2.6 FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

STANDARD:

Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

GUIDELINES:

Quality assurance is not principally about individual external scrutiny events: It should be about continuously trying to do a better job. External quality assurance does not end with the publication of the report and should include a structured follow-up procedure to ensure that recommendations are dealt with appropriately and any required action plans drawn up and implemented. This may involve further meetings with institutional or programme representatives. The objective is to ensure that areas identified for improvement are dealt with speedily and that further enhancement is encouraged.

2.7 PERIODIC REVIEWS

STANDARD:

External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

GUIDELINES:

Quality assurance is not a static but a dynamic process. It should be continuous and not “once in a lifetime”. It does not end with the first review or with the completion of the formal follow-up procedure. It has to be periodically renewed. Subsequent external reviews should take into account progress that has been made since the previous event. The process to be used in all external reviews should be clearly defined by the external quality assurance agency and its demands on institutions should not be greater than are necessary for the achievement of its objectives.

2.8 SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSES

STANDARD:

Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc.

GUIDELINES:

All external quality assurance agencies collect a wealth of information about individual programmes and/or institutions and this provides material for structured analyses across whole higher education systems. Such analyses can provide very useful information about developments, trends, emerging good practice and areas of persistent difficulty or weakness and can become useful tools for policy development and quality enhancement. Agencies should consider including a research and development function within their activities, to help them extract maximum benefit from their work.

INTRODUCTION TO PART 3: EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

The growth of European external quality assurance agencies has been expansive since the early 1990s. At the same time cooperation and sharing of best practices among agencies have been an integrated element in this development. Already in 1994/95 the so-called European Pilot Projects initiated by the European Commission resulted in the mutual recognition by agencies of the basic methodology of quality assurance: independent agencies, self-evaluations, external site visits and public reporting, laid down in the 1998 EU Council Recommendation on quality assurance in higher education. The creation of ENQA in 2000 was therefore a natural formalisation of this development in cooperation, and ENQA has been able to build on the state-of-the-art consensus arrived at during the 1990s.

The European standards for external quality assurance agencies, which follow, have been developed on the premises of this development in the young history of European external quality assurance. Moreover it is the conscious ambition that the standards should be neither too detailed nor too prescriptive. They must not reduce the freedom of European quality assurance agencies to reflect in their organisations and processes

the experiences and expectations of their nation or region. The standards must, though, ensure that the professionalism, credibility and integrity of the agencies are visible and transparent to their stakeholders and must permit comparability to be observable among the agencies and allow the necessary European dimension.

It should be added that in this way the standards do also contribute naturally to the work being done towards mutual recognition of agencies and the results of agency evaluations or accreditations. This work has been explored in the Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (NOQA) and is part of the 'Code of Good Practice' by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

Several 'guidelines' have been added to provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the standards. Although the guidelines are not part of the standards themselves, the standards should be considered in conjunction with them.

PART 3: EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

3.1 USE OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

STANDARD:

The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES:

The standards for external quality assurance contained in Part 2 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experiences gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education institutions.

The standards for external quality assurance should together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies constitute the basis for professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS

STANDARD:

Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

3.3 ACTIVITIES

STANDARD:

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

GUIDELINES:

These may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the agency.

3.4 RESOURCES**STANDARD:**

Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.

3.5 MISSION STATEMENT**STANDARD:**

Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

GUIDELINES:

These statements should describe the goals and objectives of agencies' quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of their work. The statements should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the agency and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statements are translated into a clear policy and management plan.

3.6 INDEPENDENCE**STANDARD:**

Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

GUIDELINES:

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments
- is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts);
- the definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence;
- while relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

3.7 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA AND PROCESSES USED BY THE AGENCIES

STANDARD:

The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

GUIDELINES:

Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes.

Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people.

Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions or conclusions which have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

3.8 ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES

STANDARD:

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

GUIDELINES:

These procedures are expected to include the following:

1. A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;
2. Documentation which demonstrates that:
 - the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts;
 - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;
 - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
3. A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years.

ANNEX V – SCRUTINY FOR RECONFIRMATION OF OR APPLICATION FOR FULL/ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

SCRUTINY FOR RECONFIRMATION OF OR APPLICATION FOR FULL/ ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The membership provisions of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) require all member agencies to undergo an external review at least once every five years. In most cases the reviews are likely to be coordinated by ENQA but on occasion a member review may be co-ordinated by national authorities. Guidelines for the conduct of both nationally and ENQA co-ordinated reviews are available from the Secretariat, as well as on the ENQA website.

New membership applications accompanied by an external review report are also examined under this policy.

This policy, and the procedure that it outlines, applies irrespective of whether the review was co-ordinated by ENQA or another body.

PRINCIPLES

In its scrutiny of member/applicant reviews, the Board seeks to answer two fundamental questions:

- *Does the information provided in the final report of the agency's review satisfy the Board that the review was conducted to the required level of independence, integrity and robustness?*
- *Does the final report of the agency's review provide sufficient, verified evidence that the agency meets the ENQA membership criteria and thereby the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG)?*

In its analysis, the Board reflects the understanding that compliance with the ENQA membership criteria (and so the ESG) can be adequately judged on substantial, but not necessarily exhaustive, evidence.

THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The initial scrutiny of agency reviews has been delegated by the Board to its Review Committee (hereafter referred as to "the Committee").

The Committee's responsibility is to conduct the initial scrutiny of the final report of an agency review, and make a recommendation to the Board based on its findings.

PROCEDURE

STAGE 1: RECEIPT OF REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT

The final report of the review is submitted to the ENQA Secretariat, who distributes it to the members of the Committee.

If the report has been produced through a nationally co-ordinated review the Secretariat should be kept up to date on the review timetable and terms of reference as well as on the date of submission of the final report. This will help to ensure that the work

of the Committee and of the Board can be managed efficiently, and that the report can be examined as soon as possible. For more information, please contact the Secretariat.

STAGE 2: ANALYSIS BY THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

On receipt of the final report each member of the Committee completes Template B. The template has been designed to prompt the Committee to address each ENQA membership criterion individually and also to gather their thoughts on the independence, integrity and robustness of the review process in a systematic and consistent manner.

The Committee members then combine their analyses to form a conclusion and so to decide what recommendation to make to the Board. This conclusion and recommendation are presented in the form of Template A, and fall in to one of five categories:

1. The Committee finds that the agency review was conducted to the required level of independence, integrity and robustness, and the final report provides sufficient, verified evidence that the agency meets the ENQA membership criteria and thereby the ESG.

In this case the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board grants/(re)-confirms the agency's Full/Associate Membership of ENQA.

2. The Committee finds that the agency review was conducted to the required level of independence, integrity and robustness but that the final report did not provide sufficient, verified evidence in specific areas to be able to conclude that the agency meets the ENQA membership criteria and thereby the ESG.

In this case the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board would request further information and/or documentation from the agency to address the specific areas raised by the Committee.

3. The Committee finds that the final report does not provide sufficient evidence that the review was conducted to the required level of independence, integrity and robustness, and so does not feel able to draw a conclusion as to the agency's compliance with ENQA membership criteria.

If the review has followed the relevant Guidelines, it is highly unlikely that the Committee would draw this conclusion. If, however, this is the case, then the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board request further information and/or documentation from the agency to address the concerns raised by the Committee.

4. The Committee finds that the final report provides sufficient evidence to conclude that the agency does not adequately comply with ENQA membership criteria.

In this case the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board does not grant/(re)-confirm the agency's Full/Associate Membership and encourages it to apply for Affiliate status directly.

5. The Committee finds that the final report and/or the review itself does not provide enough evidence to draw conclusions on the agency's compliance with the majority of ENQA membership criteria.

In this case the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board does not grant/ (re)-confirm the agency's Full/Associate membership and that the review is declared unacceptable.

STAGE 3A: REVIEW AND DECISION BY THE BOARD

The Board members receive copies of:

- the final report of the agency's review
- the findings and recommendation of the Committee
- each of the three Committee members' analyses

If the Committee has made a recommendation of type 1, and the Board agrees with the findings, the scrutiny will proceed to stage 4.

If the Committee has made a recommendation of type 2 or 3, and the Board agrees with the findings, the scrutiny will proceed to stage 3b.

If the Committee has made a recommendation of type 4, and the Board agrees with the findings the scrutiny process will proceed no further. The agency is invited to apply for Affiliate status directly.

The agency is notified in writing of the reasons for the Board's decision, and subsequently has one month from the receipt of the letter from the President to submit an appeal to the Appeals and Complaints Committee through the Secretariat. If no appeal is received within the time limit, the agency's membership will be terminated, subject to a confirmation of the General Assembly.

If the Committee has made a recommendation of type 5 and the Board agrees with the findings, the scrutiny process will proceed no further. The agency has the opportunity to undergo a second external review, within its original five-year timeframe, and submit to the Board, without prejudice, a more detailed review report addressing thoroughly the weak points.

The Board is free to disagree with the recommendation of the Committee, and so draw a conclusion of a different type. The consequences of the type of conclusion are still, however, as described above.

STAGE 3B: REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION BY THE BOARD (IF REQUIRED)

A Committee recommendation of type 2 or 3 indicates that there was not sufficient evidence provided in the final review report on which a full conclusion could be drawn. In this case the Board reserves the right to request further information (documentary or oral) about the review itself and the agency under review. This may take a number of forms, including, but not limited to:

- Any extant documentation to which the review makes reference, including the self-evaluation document, earlier reviews, published and internal agency documentation, etc.
- Communication with the review panel to seek further information or clarification

On receipt of this additional information, the Board reaches a conclusion as to whether the concerns and queries raised by the Committee have been adequately answered. If this is the case, the scrutiny then proceeds to stage 4.

If the Board is not satisfied from the evidence provided that the review was conducted to the required level of independence, integrity and robustness, the following course

of action is offered. The agency is given the opportunity to withdraw the review from scrutiny. The agency then has the opportunity to undergo another review, which must be completed within the original five-year timeframe. The agency conserves its Full/Associate Membership until the second review (within the original five-year period).

STAGE 4: GRANTING/(RE)-CONFIRMATION OF FULL/ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

After the final decision of the Board the Secretariat notifies the agency formally, by letter, of the granting/(re)confirmation of its Full/Associate Membership of ENQA. The letter includes a notification (e.g. as an annex) on the compliance of the criteria.

ANNEX VI – MAPPING GRID FOR PANEL MEMBERS

PANEL SITE VISIT TO [Agency X]
[Date]

MAPPING GRID FOR PANEL MEMBERS

Part 1: The European Standards and Guidelines

Part 2: Other aspects of [Agency X]’s work for consideration

Part 3: Planning Schedule for meetings

**PART 1:
THE EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES**

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA				ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION	FOR SESSION NUMBER
Part 2: European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education	2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.3 Criteria for decisions	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.4 Processes fit for purpose	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.5 Reporting	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.6 Follow up-procedures	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.7 Periodic reviews	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.8 System-wide analysis	Standard:	Guidelines:		
Part 3: European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies	3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.2 Official status	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.3 Activities	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.4 Resources	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.5 Mission statement	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.6 Independence	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.8 Accountability procedures	Standard:	Guidelines:		

**PART 2:
OTHER ASPECTS OF [AGENCY X]'S WORK FOR CONSIDERATION AS
PART OF THIS REVIEW, OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE STANDARDS AND
GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER
EDUCATION AREA.**

ACTIVITY	SUB-ACTIVITY	ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION	FOR SESSION NUMBER

**PART 3:
PLANNING SCHEDULE FOR MEETINGS**

DAY 1
[DATE]

TIME	EVENT	PERSON FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION	LEAD PANEL MEMBER

