



The revised ESG – where do we stand?

Background and mandate

- Current ESG adopted in 2005
 - Need updating taking account of developments since
 - Need clarification
- Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué April 2012:

“We will revise the ESG to improve their clarity, applicability and usefulness, including their scope. The revision will be based upon an initial proposal to be prepared by the E4 in cooperation with Education International, BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), which will be submitted to the Bologna Follow-Up Group.”

Working structure and process

- Structure:
 - Discussion and decisions on the contents by steering group composed of representatives from ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE, EI, BUSINESSEUROPE and EQAR
 - Drafting of the document by drafting group composed of QA experts nominated by EUA, EURASHE, ESU, and ENQA
- Process:
 - 8 Nov 2013: Discussion of a draft proposal at BFUG meeting followed by feedback
 - End of Feb 2014: Proposal sent to BFUG
 - 9-10 April 2014: BFUG meeting discussed → some proposals for change received → consensus?
 - Spring 2015 Ministerial meeting adopts the revised ESG?

Guiding principles for the revision

- Keep the strengths: integrated concept and understanding of QA, broad applicability, broad ownership
- Overcome the weaknesses: vagueness, redundancies, inconsistencies
- Update: ESG as part of the 'Bologna-Infrastructure', taking into account recent developments in QA and HE
- Guarantee adaptability to future developments
- Keep a balance between changing too much and too little
- Focus on learning and teaching in higher education, including
 - Learning environment
 - Links to research and innovation

Scope and contexts

- Focus on learning and teaching in higher education, including
 - Learning environment
 - Links to research and innovation
- The ESG are applicable to all types of HEIs and programmes, irrespective of mode of provision
- Institutions and agencies
 - Can have policies and processes for other activities beyond the scope of the ESG
 - Need to take account of their respective context when deciding how to implement the ESG

Purposes of the ESG

- **They set a common framework** for quality assurance systems for learning and teaching at European, national and institutional level
- **They enable the assurance and improvement of quality** of higher education in the European higher education area
- **They support mutual trust**, thus facilitating recognition and mobility within and across national borders
- **They provide information on quality assurance** in the EHEA

Underpinning principles

- HEIs have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance
- QA responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students
- QA supports the development of a quality culture
- QA takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society

Structure

- The overall structure of the ESG with three parts remains
- *The standards* set out agreed and accepted practice for QA in HE in the EHEA and should, therefore, be taken account of and adhered to by those concerned, in all types of HE provision.
- The *guidelines* explain why the standard is important and describe how standards might be implemented. They set out good practice in the relevant area for consideration by the actors involved in quality assurance. Implementation will vary depending on different contexts.

Part 1

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

1.2 Design and approval of programmes

1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

1.5 Teaching staff

1.6 Learning resources and student support

1.7 Information management

1.8 Public information

1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

Part 2

2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

2.3 Implementing processes

2.4 Peer-review experts

2.5 Criteria for formal outcomes

2.6 Reporting

2.7 Complaints and appeals

Part 3

3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

3.2 Official status

3.3 Independence

3.4 Thematic analysis

3.5 Resources

3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies

In summary

The proposal

- presents joint views of all stakeholder organisations involved (!!)
- reflects the recent changes in the EHEA and shows a way forward (QF, student centered learning, LOs...)
- will allow to further develop QA to support quality learning and teaching (agreed = “easy”)

Main comments from the BFUG

- Most vocalised comments were positive and welcomed the new draft
 - EC highly critical about the whole process, purpose and content of the ESG
 - Some critical comments and suggestions for changes by individual countries/organisations:
 - More focus on the role of employers in the panels (into a standard?)
 - More information on employability aspects (data to be provided by HEIs to prospective students)
 - Inclusion of integrated traineeships into the QA of a programme
- Nothing major
- Working on finding out areas of consent → integrate changes

What does all of this mean for ENQA?

- New reviews will be based on new ESG → transitional arrangements
- ESG continue to be the main reference for the work of QA agencies (our common basis)
- BUT: how should they be addressed in the agency reviews for 2nd and subsequent rounds? How to support the objective of constant enhancement of agencies (that already comply)?

What does all of this mean for ENQA?

- Reviewer training to include also retraining → the new ESG and the most important changes
- Support for agencies in interpreting the new elements of the ESG through workshops on the topic → indicate the challenging areas
- Information activities to promote the new ESG and promoting their understanding at different levels (also in cooperation with the E4)

Invitation to discuss...

- How should the ESG be used in the ENQA reviews to support continuous enhancement? How to detect growth and development? (Group II – Caty Duykaerts)
- What kind of EQA reports correspond to the new ESG and the needs of the EHEA in the years to come? (Group III – Orla Lynch)