

What is an agency review?

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Introduction

- Aims and Criteria
- ENQA, EQAR, ESG
- The revised ESG

Purpose and Aims of Agency Review

- To assess the agency and advise the ENQA Board upon compliance with the ENQA membership criteria
- Same report can be used for application into EQAR
- ENQA membership criteria \geq European standards and guidelines, ESG
- ENQA criterion 8 –Consistency of judgements, appeals system and contribution to ENQA aims

ESG –what are they?

- European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in EHEA
- Developed and agreed by ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESU 2003 -2005
- Signed by the Bologna-Ministers in Bergen 2005
- A prerequisite for membership in ENQA and EQAR

ESG –why are they so important?

- A common reference point for quality assurance in the EHEA
- A source of assistance and guidance to both HEIs and agencies
- Support transparency and trust
- It is all we have in QA.....

ESG – Structure

Part 1

ESG for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions.

Part 2

ESG for the external quality assurance of higher education.

Part 3

ESG for external quality assurance agencies.

Main Areas of Interest in Agency Review

Legitimacy

- 3.2 Official status
- 3.5 Mission Statement
- 3.6 Independence

Activities

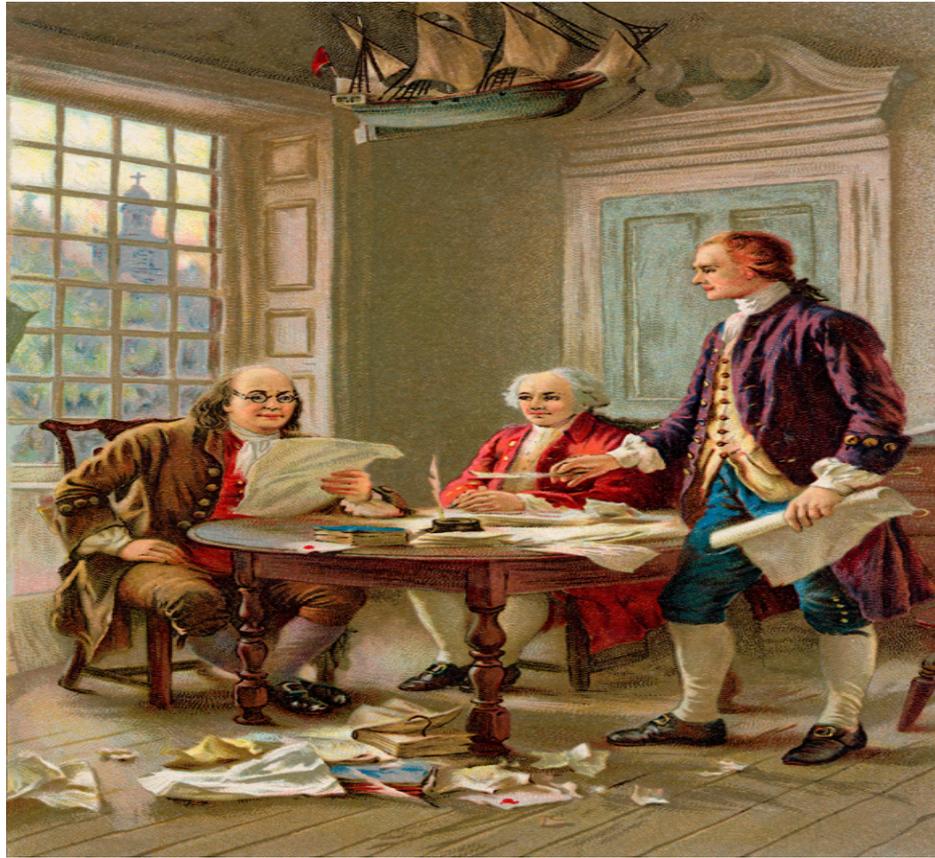
- 3.1 Use of External QA Procedures - Part II in ESG
- 3.3 Activities
- 3.7 External QA – the processes and criteria used
- Accountability procedures

Sustainability

- 3.4 Resources
- 3.8 Accountability procedures

A little bit of history...

The original
Drafting group...



Can you remember what it was like in 2003?

- George W Bush was President of USA...Christian Thune was President of ENQA
- The Bologna Process was four years old
- The E4 group didn't exist
- The EHEA was made up of 33 countries (there are now 47)
- **The very first time that anyone had tried to draft a set of principles, or standards and guidelines, that could be used for quality assurance of HE across the whole of the EHEA**

Moving to the present



The ESG over the last decade...

- Adopted by the ministers in Bergen in 2005
- The European Quality Assurance Register was born...
- ...and ENQA started to use the ESG as membership criteria. Introduction of reviews of agencies
- Two key publications from agencies' perspective:
Evaluation of the reports on agency reviews (2005-2009)
and the *MAP-ESG* project (2011)

Evaluation of the reports on agency reviews

- Key messages:
- Standards 3.2 (Official Status) and 3.3 (Activities) presented agencies with very few problems
- All the others in Part 3 were more problematic to a greater or lesser extent – but no wide-scale problems
- In Part 2, standards 2.3 (Criteria for decisions), 2.4 (Processes fit for purpose), 2.5 (Reporting) and 2.6 (Follow-up procedures) caused most problems
- Concluded that whilst suitable for some national/regional/educational contexts, the ESG are not universally easy to interpret and apply
- Concluded that the ESG are having an impact on the work of agencies

The MAP-ESG project

- Wider scope (E4 group)
- General agreement that the purpose of the ESG was clear – and that they should remain as generic principles
- Regarding scope of the ESG, only ESU wished it to be broader
- Most respondents found the ESG reasonably easy to use but felt that they could be clearer
- Evidence that the ESG have been widely implemented and have significantly impacted on QA in the EHEA

Where do we go from here? The future...



The Bucharest Communiqué 2012 says:

“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”.

- New ESG, Ministerial Meeting in Yerevan 14-15 May 2015

Revision of the ESG

- Starting point: the ESG can't solve all problems in every national context
- Keen to ensure that the ESG don't give the impression that agencies are responsible for the implementation of the Bologna Process
- Principle-based approach and three part structure have been retained
- The front end of the document is different: all introductory sections have been rewritten and a lot of the history removed
- Other Bologna tools like the QF are referred to as are tools such as ECTS
- Definitions of *quality*, *accountability*, *enhancement* and *quality culture*
- Four purposes and four principles
- An attempt at clearer language, removal of ambiguity and repetition, clearer explanation of the terms *standard* and *guideline* (also difference in language between the two)

Part one

- Programme design, approval, monitoring and review separated into two standards – the standards try to follow a ‘life-cycle’
- More student-centred
- E.g. 1.6 (Resources) recognises changes in the student population and also the need for appropriate funding as well as the deployment of resources
- Increase to 10 standards

Part two

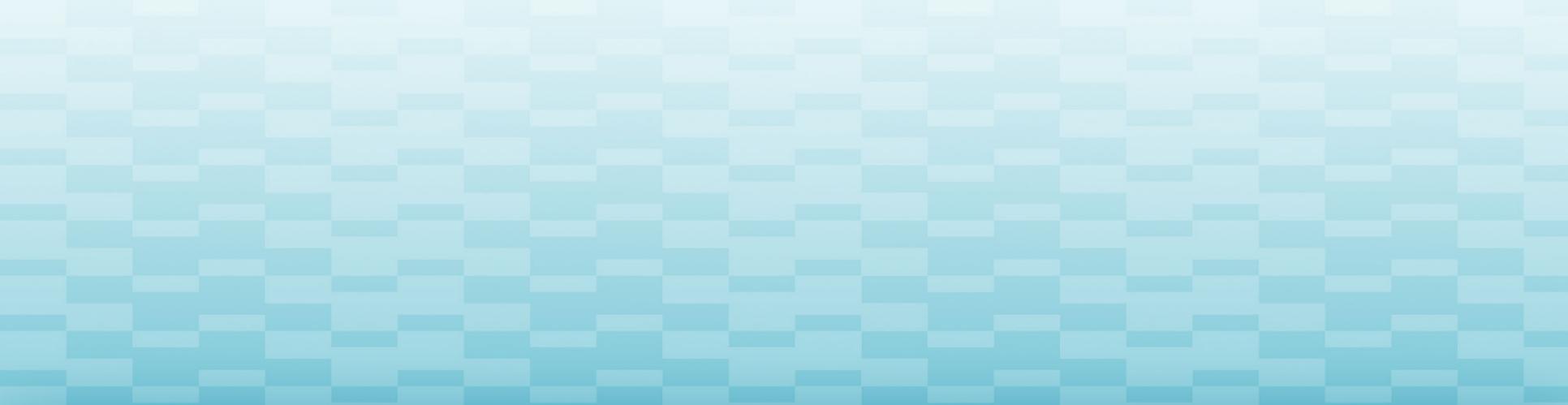
- Again, standards re-ordered and a separate standard to cover peer reviewers
- The original standards 2.2 and 2.4 have been collapsed into one standard (2.2)
- Follow-up is now a part of standard 2.3
- A standard on Complaints and Appeals has been added but system-wide analyses has been moved into Part 3

Part three

- Standard 3.1 now covers activities, policies and processes in an attempt to clarify the link between part three and part two
- Standards have been re-ordered. Independence is now 3.3 and includes in the Guidelines the idea that autonomous universities need independent agencies as a counterpart
- 3.6 Accountability replaced by ‘Internal QA and professional conduct’
- New standard 3.7 on the cyclical review of agencies

Overall...

- The document used to be a mix of explanation, possibilities, expectations for the future – now the content is context and scope – and the ESG
- Real effort to clarify, simplify, remove repetition
- The document has been modernised



Thank you!

