

Values of Quality Assurance Agencies: formulation, evaluation, compliance

Aurelija Valeikienė, SKVC (Lithuania)

Manon Wortel, NVAO (The Netherlands)

Kate Beachus, QAA (United Kingdom)

We will cover...

- **Why care at all?**
- **What is common for us?**
- **From theory to practice**

ESG 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.



Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)

Approved by the Ministerial Conference in May 2015

by
European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
European Students' Union
European University Association
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
Education International
BUSINESSEUROPE
European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

- **Goals-based** planning is probably the most common and starts with focus on the organization's mission (and vision and/or **values**), goals to work toward the mission, strategies to achieve the goals, and action planning (who will do what and by when).
- **Issues-based** strategic planning often starts by examining issues facing the organization, strategies to address those issues and action plans.
- **Organic strategic** planning might start by articulating the organization's vision and **values**, and then action plans to achieve the vision while adhering to those values. Some planners prefer a particular approach to planning, e.g., appreciative inquiry.

(Types of strategic planning according to Carter McNamara)

Among European QA agencies most frequently found values are:





Changing times, changing people – keeping the core constant

*Aurelija Valeikienė,
Deputy Director
Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC)
Lithuania*

- Started on 24 Jan 1995, mission-driven to implement external QA of higher education and to evaluate foreign qualifications
- long time functioning without a formal strategy and without values put on paper, but with a tacit code of ethics!
- strong leadership by example



- The first exercise – bottom-up
- Mental challenge of changing the structure and getting the Council as the highest strategic management body
- Now – defined by diads:
 - professionalism and quality
 - independence and impartiality
 - respect and trust
 - cooperation (both in Lithuania and abroad)

Logo – as our signature. Having fun!



3.3. Lietuvos mokslininkų mobilumo centro veikla

To discuss...

- **Which values are cherished in your agency?**
- **How they were formulated and approved (top-down, bottom-up...)?**
- **How does your agency define them?**

[Group discussion
for 20 minutes follows]

Please report back to the group 1
interesting discussion topic from your
table

[Manon to continue]

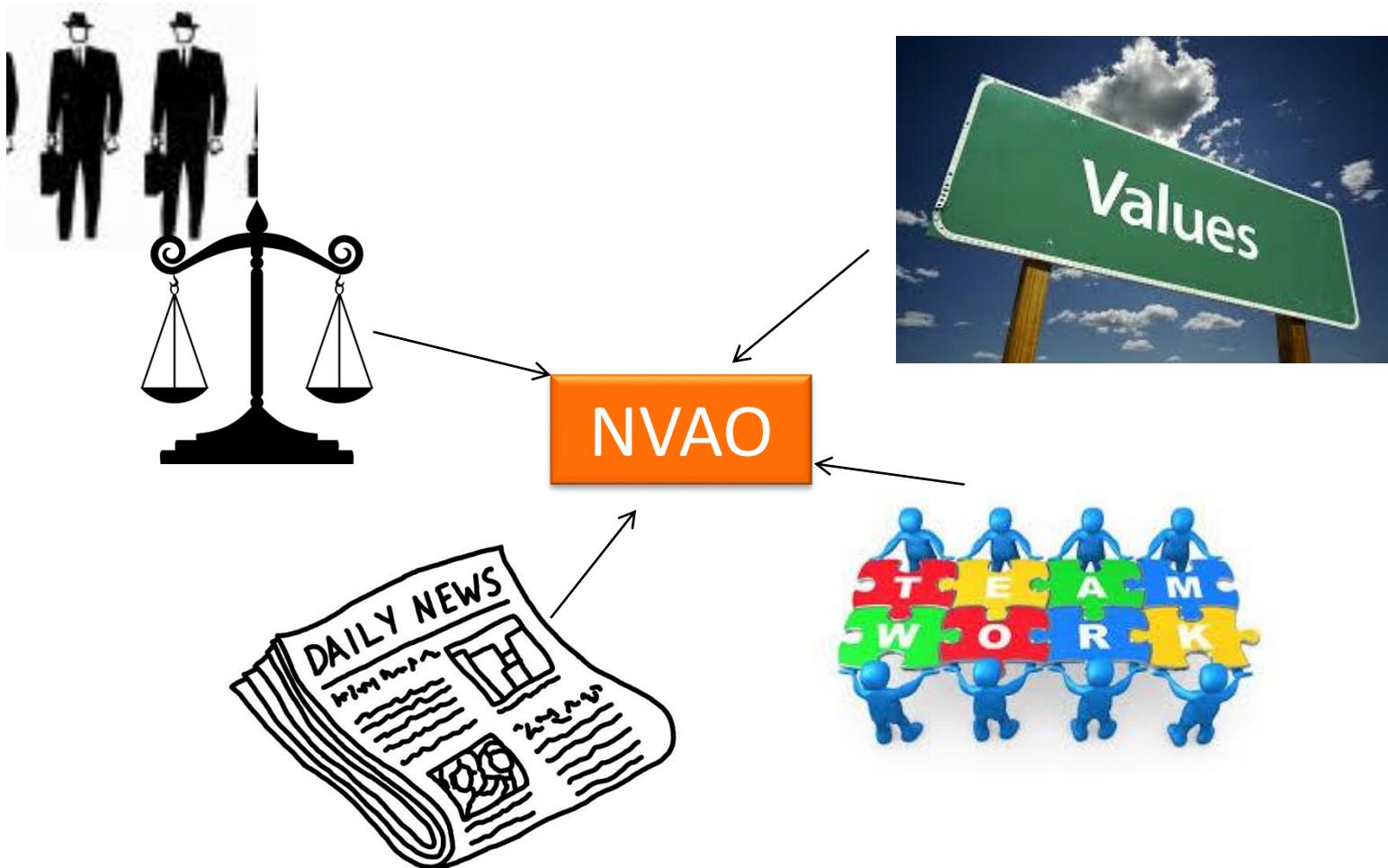
Code of conduct

Manon Wortel
Head of HR (NVAO)

ENQA Staff Development
Group Seminar
February 2016



WHY a code of conduct?



- Collective 'reflection meeting'
- Working group
- Principle based, easy to understand
- Presentation/launch – how do we face up to our own code?
- Case discussions

Successes

- More than a written code
- Values translated to ways of working
- Contents undisputed and easily recognisable

Challenges:

- Keeping focus (integrity vs work culture/employee satisfaction)
- Setting the right example at all times: openness, giving feedback
- Timing: changes within the agency had impact on people's willingness to discuss sensitive issues

- Presentation of code to new employees
- Embedding of code in job profiles, review cycle, recruitment
- Continue case discussions and make sure the code stays alive, but is not seen as something we only do 2-3 times a year



Ways of Working at QAA

Kate Beachus; Human Resources and Organisational
Development

ENQA Staff Development Group Seminar
February 2016

Then and now

Then	Now
12 Ways of Working	5 Ways of Working
Determined by the Chief Executive, Public Relations Manager and Learning and Development Manager and disseminated to staff via a laminated sheet	Determined by two focus groups of staff and the trade union, a meeting of senior managers and signed off by the Directorate – workshops to help staff interpret them
Staff required to report against every one in their annual performance review	Staff report how they have used the Ways of Working to meet their objectives where appropriate

Our Ways of Working

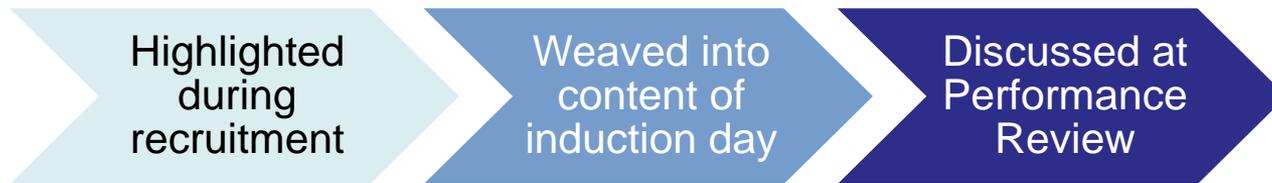


What happened next?

- The new Ways of working proved more popular with staff, line managers, Directors and the Chair of the Board than the previous 12 Ways
- Staff and managers used the Ways of working in performance reviews and in conversation to help them to raise sometimes difficult issues about behaviour or to praise behaviour

Embedding – next steps

- A slow and steady approach



- We will find other ways as QAA evolves

Lessons Learned

- Embedding Ways of Working requires **long term** commitment energy!
- Driving the change at all levels of the business gets more buy in than driving it from the top down only
- Using behaviours rather than values is more meaningful to staff

To discuss...

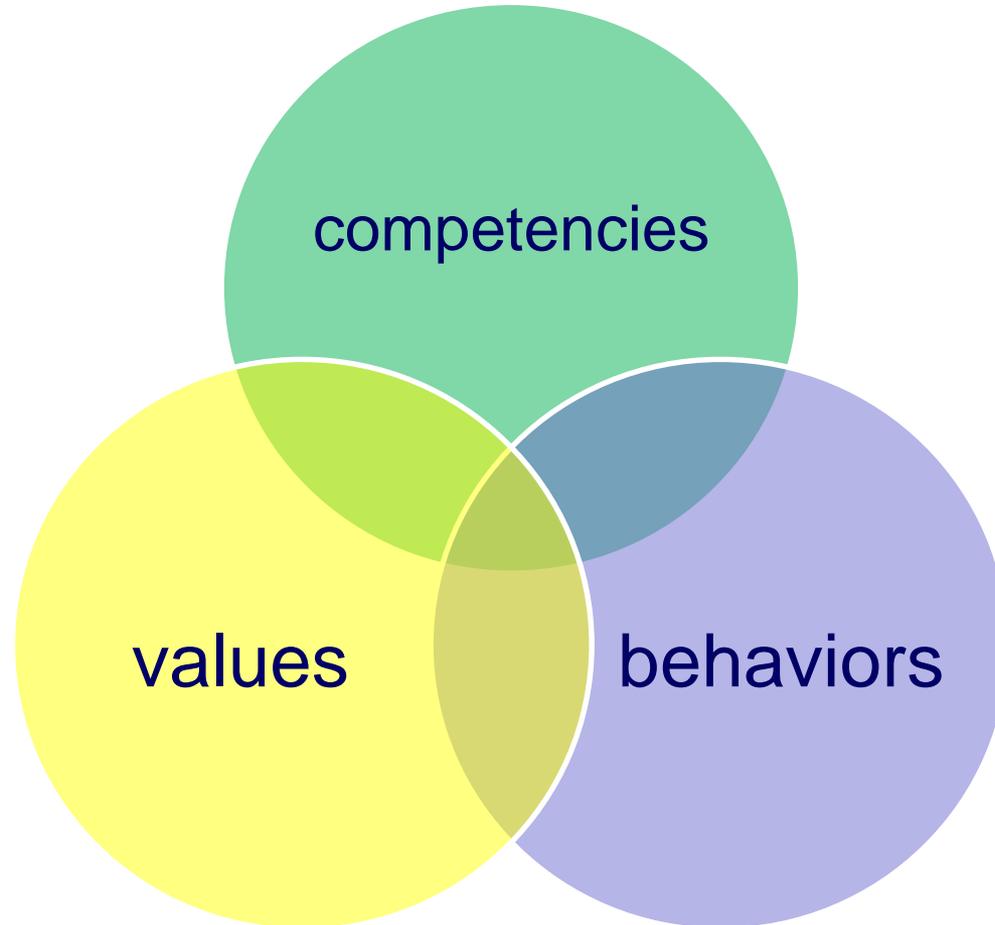
How values of your QA agency are implemented in practice:

- On the agency level?
- On individual level?

Please share 1 ‘best practice’ from your table

[Group discussion
for 20 minutes follows]

Important in job design, assessing applicants for jobs, and prioritising staff training and development



[feedback by participants;
summing up;
end of the session]