

## **ENQA training of agency reviewers**

# **Introduction to the training session**

**(with an historical  
perspective on the European dimension of QA)**

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**ENQA's regulations require all applicants for full membership to meet its membership criteria. This requirement is achieved through an independent review process approved by ENQA's Board**

**The regulations also require agencies that were full members when the Association was formed in 2004 to have been reviewed, to the satisfaction of the Board, by 19 September 2010**

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**In practice, ENQA is leading the European processes for the review of agencies for the purposes of**

- ENQA membership
  - national reviews
  - applications to EQAR
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## The agency reviewer training programme

- is based on the belief that external review of agencies is crucial
- aims to build on your experience, to share your experience and views
- is aimed at a mixed audience (reviewers, future reviewers, ENQA Board members and staff).
- The programme should allow all participants to
  - ▶ understand and prepare for the review process
  - ▶ understand what is expected of review reports
  - ▶ understand how review reports are used
  - ▶ ensure consistency of processes and reports among review panels
  - ▶ gain confidence as reviewers.

## **ENQA – a membership organisation**

- network founded in 2000; association in 2004
  - umbrella NGO for European QA agencies
  - strict membership criteria
  - 45 Full members, 3 Candidate members
  - associates and affiliates since 2006: 27+3
  - structure: Board, General Assembly, Secretariat
  - co-operation within E4 (EUA, ESU, EURASHE)
  - consultative member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group
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## ENQA's early years

### **Dissemination activities**

Dissemination of general information, experiences, good practice and new developments in QA through its website, newsletter, publications, seminars and workshops

### **Training and advisory support**

Training for staff members of QA agencies with special emphasis on new developments in Europe in the field of quality assessment.

Training seminars for staff members of recently started quality assessment agencies and for new staff of the existing agencies for introduction of the general principles and rules of quality assessment and quality assurance.

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## **ENQA workshop February 2003, Sitges, Spain**

- 'Taking our own medicine - how to evaluate quality assurance agencies in order to create trust in their work and thereby in higher education'

...the start of something big

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## The Sitges Recommendations:

- Ensure transparency in goals, clearly defined processes, and clarity of outcomes of agency activities
  - Agencies' internal quality assurance should include relevant stakeholders such as the evaluated institutions, the students – also future students, and the external experts
  - **External quality assurance agencies should themselves undergo an independent, external evaluation at, for instance, five-year intervals**
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## From the Berlin communiqué (September 2003)

- `At the European level Ministers call upon ENQA, through its members, in co-operation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, **to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies**, and to report back through the Follow-Up Group to Ministers in 2005. Due account will be taken of the expertise of other quality assurance associations and networks`.

## **In 2004, ENQA became an association...**

...and introduced stricter membership requirements:

'Before being accepted as a Full Member, an applicant agency must satisfy the Board that it meets the eight criteria, listed below. The applicant agency will thereby also meet the European 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. The Board may modify the details of the procedures at its discretion.'

*(from the current ENQA regulations)*

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## ENQA's report to the Bergen ministerial meeting

- drafted by ENQA in consultation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB
- approved by the Bologna ministerial conference in Bergen in 2005
- consisted of
  - ▶ ESG for internal QA within HEIs (Part 1)
  - ▶ ESG for the external QA of higher education (Part 2)
  - ▶ **ESG for external QA agencies (Part 3)**
- **...and proposals for both a cyclical review of agencies (with a model peer review process) and a register of quality assurance agencies**

## **ESG Part 3: external quality assurance agencies**

- 3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education**
  - 3.2 Official status**
  - 3.3 Activities**
  - 3.4 Resources**
  - 3.5 Mission statement**
  - 3.6 Independence**
  - 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies**
  - 3.8 Accountability procedures**
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## From the Bergen communiqué (May 2005)

**'We commit ourselves to introducing the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies** on a national basis, while respecting the commonly accepted guidelines and criteria. **We welcome the principle of a European register of quality assurance agencies** based on national review. We ask that the practicalities of implementation be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB with a report back to us through the Follow-up Group.'

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**Between 2005 and 2007 E4 developed a scheme for a register of agencies based on compliance with the ESG...**

...and ENQA refined its membership requirements, also based on compliance with the ESG....

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## From the London communiqué (May 2007):

We thank the E4 Group for responding to our request to further develop the practicalities of **setting up a Register of European Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies**. The purpose [...] is [...] **open access to objective information about trustworthy QA agencies** that are working in line with the ESG. It will therefore **enhance confidence** in higher education [...] and **facilitate the mutual recognition** of QA and accreditation decisions. We welcome the establishment of a register by the E4 group [...] The register will be **voluntary, self-financing, independent and transparent. Applications for inclusion on the register should be evaluated on the basis of substantial compliance with the ESG, evidenced through an independent review process** endorsed by national authorities.

## The Register was set up in March 2008

- The Register is a list on the internet, restricted to voluntary applicant agencies that the Register Committee approves as having met its criteria
- It is run by a separate and independent organisation (EQAR) from ENQA
- It uses the same review reports as ENQA as evidence of compliance with its inclusion criteria
- There is general agreement that there should be only one review process for both purposes (no wasteful duplication), so membership of ENQA is *prima facie* evidence for inclusion in the Register
- Nevertheless, the Register Committee may come to different conclusions from ENQA, based on its own analysis of the same information and evidence
- ENQA is not responsible for, or to, the Register (and *vice versa*)