The Role of the Panel Chair

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General

- Primus inter pares or captain of the ship with corresponding authority (he/she who must be obeyed)?

- Good working relationship and division of labour with Review Secretary (RS) is essential

After the appointment

- Read terms of reference carefully
- Liaise with ENQA headquarters and RS
- Read review reports on comparable agencies
- Check panel composition and members
- Check Self-Evaluation Report and annexed documents on the basis of first analysis of RS: Draft, if possible with RS, 'initial' or 'zero' report identifying lacunae in relation to ESG compliance
- Is there a language/translation issue?
- Ensure that ENQA training phone conference covers all the ground necessary

Before the site visit

- Check schedule and site visit programme set up by RS
- Ensure (with RS) that accommodation is adequate
- Agree with RS on relevant template for the report
- Set up division of labour among panel members according to their professional competences or other expertise

The site visit: Practical arrangements

- Sessions should not have too many participants - and no repeat performances
- Seating must ensure communication among the panel (eye contact)
- Name signs for every one instead of lengthy rounds of introductions at the beginning of sessions
- The panel must actually have time for breaks and deep breathing between sessions, but must also for stocktaking at a running basis
- Politely refuse lavish hospitality
- Laptops?
- Interpreter?

The interview sessions: Simple procedures:

- The chair is exactly that – the ‘conductor’ of the session– if necessary with a firm hand
- Put agency staff at ease – briefly explain the process and procedure
- Make sure that each panel member gets to cover their question area and that all the agreed questions are asked
- Take care that no panel member interrupts colleagues while they have the floor - unless you give a nod
- Ask agency staff (at the end) if there’s anything they’d like to add to aid the panel’s understanding
- Seek assurance from the RS that all necessary information has been obtained

Other general points on questioning

- Don’t interrogate harshly, but do secure the necessary information on which to base conclusions
- Don’t ask leading questions or questions that can be answered with yes/no (except to pin down a fact)
- One question at a time and let them answer – then follow up
- Don’t reveal your own opinions – you’re there to hear their answers, not to display your eminence or to act as a consultant
- No trick questions, you are not trying to catch them out

Final session with agency leadership

- Panel prepares for the session by going carefully through the ENQA membership criteria/ESG identifying in each case the level of compliance as documented at this stage

- At the final session be very cautious in presenting any preliminary conclusions

After the site visit: Drafting the report

- Make sure the panel's availability for post-visit email-based discussion is secured
- Support the RS in drafting the first report version
- Make the email-based discussion among panel members constructive and conclusive
- Take seriously the comments of the agency in the feedback phase
- Take responsibility for the final report
- And do provide the ENQA Board with your overall comments on the process