The Role of the Panel Chair

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• 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