Chairing an ENQA Review

ENQA Training of Agency Reviewers, Budapest May 2013
Tove Blytt Holmen, Director Quality Assurance NOKUT
NOKUT - Quality Assurance

- Assess and approve internal quality assurance systems on every institution that offers higher education in Norway every 6 years.

- Accredit new programs (licensing):
  - Bachelor (private, non-accredited institutions)
  - Master and Ph.D. (University colleges, state and private)

- Institutional accreditation

- Supervision (revision) of all higher education programmes
The Board has ultimate responsibility for its decisions. NOKUT is fully financed by the State. Budget 2012 is 12 mill Euro. NOKUT has a permanent staff of about 72 people, and each year contracts around 200-300 experts for various evaluation and accreditation processes.
Being a chair is quite different. Give this job enough time and attention. Preparation > Preparation > Preparation
General approach and setting the tone

• Flexible
  “compliance not rigid adherence”

• Considerate of context
  “taking into account the circumstances in which the Agency is required to operate”

• Supportive and developmental
  - the process should not stifle diversity and innovation
Panel Dynamics

• Chair and Secretary manage the process
• The Panel should, at an early stage, have a shared clarity on the review and expected report outcomes
• Chair: Regularly get individual views/ questions
• Chair: Stimulate to active participation of all members
• Chair: secures consensus build on evidence and informed judgment
Panel Dynamics …

• A thorough scrutiny of the selfevaluation report (SER) - all and at least the chair
• The chair has to ensure that all panel members have an active approach to their mandate
  o Agree the lines of enquiry to be pursued
  o (Perhaps) allocate approximate areas of interest depending on panel member’s expertises
• Try to ensure an equal team, no dominant individuals
• Leave baggage at home – no preconceived attitudes/values
The site visit

• The draft report is still open. However it is well developed at this stage.
• It is the panel that is leading the way, both in planning and execution of the site visit.
• You decide whom you will meet and in which order
• The panel should look for evidence and verification concerning existing activities
• Don’t get carried off. Decide upon questions before the visit (template?)
• What the panel should do, it is the chair that gives authority
End of visit - giving feedback

- Who do you want to meet at this stage?
- Keep it general
- Give encouragement
- Outline one or two key areas for action/development
- Don’t convey firm judgments
- Don’t get drawn into detail or debate
- Remind - report is only a recommendation
Interest and commitment is crucial

(Peter Findley)
• Reviewing an agency is important both for ENQA and the agency itself
• In retrospect, I will suggest that a chair has previous experience as member of a review panel
• It was an honor for me to be appointed as chair
• Being a chair was a challenging and meaningful experience that I easily can recommend to others