



ENQA Staff Development Group – report of outcomes

April 2014

Summary

This paper represents a report on the work of the Staff Development Group (SDG).

An initial report was forwarded to the ENQA Board in January 2013 and a presentation given on the work of the SDG to the ENQA Members Forum in April 2013. The final report was approved of by the ENQA board in September 2013 with warm thanks for the work of the group.

This report offers ideas for ENQA to take forward in relation to the personal and professional development of staff engaged in the quality assurance and enhancement activities of quality assurance agencies. It proposes that staff development activity should be progressed in the context of the expected competencies, values and behaviours of agency staff, that is, development should be focussed on activities which help agencies deliver their mission and strategy. It also outlines a framework in which to consider staff development in a proactive way to ensure that staff are effective in as short a time as possible after appointment, and remain effective, through continuous development, during their employment.

Participating agencies were surveyed on areas the SDG saw as key to staff development. The analysis of the surveys has been used to identify what agencies see as important in relation to professional staff competencies, values and behaviours. The SDG concluded that these features are important in job design, assessing applicants for jobs, and prioritising staff training and development. With this in mind the SDG has used the information gathered to highlight what agencies see as effective practice in relation to staff recruitment, new employee induction and in using performance review processes to develop staff.

The findings of the SDG are presented in a series of short papers, designed to aid agencies of all sizes as they think about their activities and plan work in this area. The SDG has identified a number of activities which ENQA could take forward in its future work plans.

This report marks the end of the first phase of the SDG. In terms of future stages of work the SDG will be guided in terms of priority and resourcing by the ENQA Board.

Douglas Blackstock

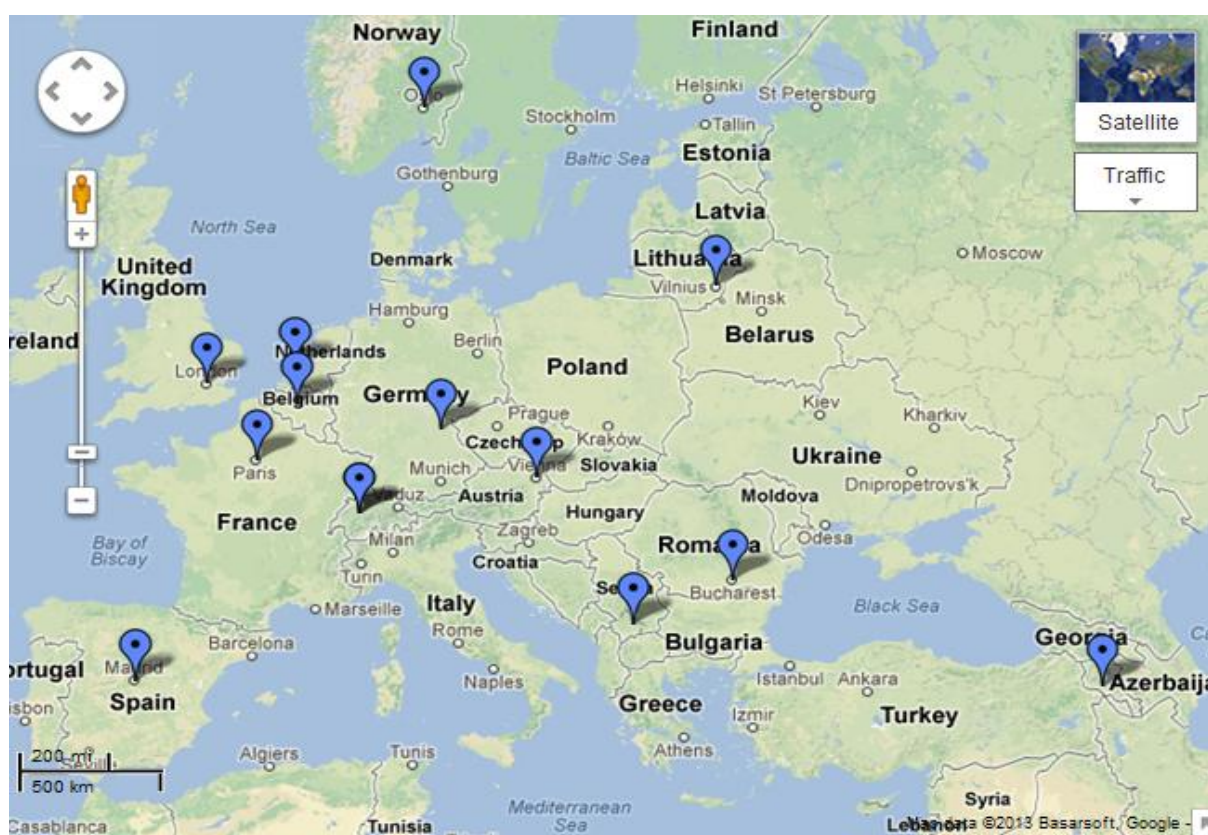
Chair of the working group, 15 May 2014

ENQA Working Group III - Staff Development

The origins of the Staff Development Group (SDG) are in the ENQA work plan for 2011-12, where the tasks of group were identified:

- The main focus of the working group in 2012 was to start elaborating a staff development scheme and/or staff development tools that could be used by ENQA member agencies for training and development of *their own staff*
- In addition, the group would consider if and what kind of training materials would be useful for the agencies, and eventually start developing such materials

The SDG was established in June 2012 under the chairmanship of Douglas Blackstock, Director of Resources at the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), UK. Originally 16 colleagues expressed willingness to be involved. The size of agencies ranged from 3 staff to 170 staff so there was a broad range of input and experience.



Locations of SDG participants

There was some drop off of members, which impacted progress on some aspects of the group's work. However twelve colleagues remained active and contributed through research and writing of discussion papers. Most of the members are colleagues whose roles are in the field of quality assurance and enhancement, not staff development, making this activity itself a stretching staff development opportunity.

Six meetings of the SDG were held in London (June 2012), Brussels (November 2012), London (March 2013), Vienna (July 2013) London (November 2013) and Paris (April 2014).

The work of the SDG

The SDG were fortunate enough to be able to draw upon the work of the ENQA IQA group and particularly the work on benchmarking staff development presented to the IQA Helsinki seminar in 2011, available on the ENQA website.

Early on the SDG recognised that the remit from ENQA was ambitious. The group had no resources allocated and would be limited in its ability to deliver ‘products’ in the form of training activities and materials. In this context the SDG deliberated the following questions: we are asked to consider developing materials which can support training, but training for whom and in what?

These simple questions guided much of the work of the SDG. The first decision in answering this was for the SDG to limit itself to looking at *those staff in agencies who work on quality assurance and enhancement activities (professional QA staff)*. Other staff agencies may employ, such as qualified accountants or IT workers, have well established continuous professional development opportunities available to them. What the SDG focussed on was the extent to which agencies defined the requirements of professional QA staff and what organised structured activities were in place to support them becoming effective in their roles.

At the inaugural meeting the SDG explored the areas of staff development that members thought may be of interest to their own and other agencies.

Areas identified for possible exploration were:

- Sharing good practice in relation to staff development
- Competencies for professional/technical QA staff
- How to facilitate staff exchanges
- Tools to help agencies
- Recruitment, selection and induction for new staff
- Motivation and development of staff in austere times

The work of the SDG can be broadly described in four stages. The stages do not all have clear beginnings and ends, i.e. they overlap, but the group decided it can live with this ‘agile’ approach.

Phase 1:
Initial exploration,
information-sharing

All participating agencies completed questionnaires. SDG members conducted detailed analysis of each area, drawing out commonalities and effective practice.

Phase 2:
Identifying a framework
for staff development

Using the survey findings to develop a framework to put our work into context – this has gone through several iterations and needs to evolve to consider issues of motivation.

Phase 3:
Identifying effective
practices for agencies

Using the framework structure as a way to articulate broad effective practice which agencies could adopt, regardless of size

Phase 4:
Experience sharing
amongst agencies

Although not yet started, the SDG is working on plans for how we might share experience amongst agencies

Information sharing and analysis

Over the course of our work, **participating agencies** completed questionnaires about the systems they have within their organisation, to support:

- Mission and values of agencies
- Competency profiles
- Recruitment and selection of new staff
- Induction of new staff
- Performance review

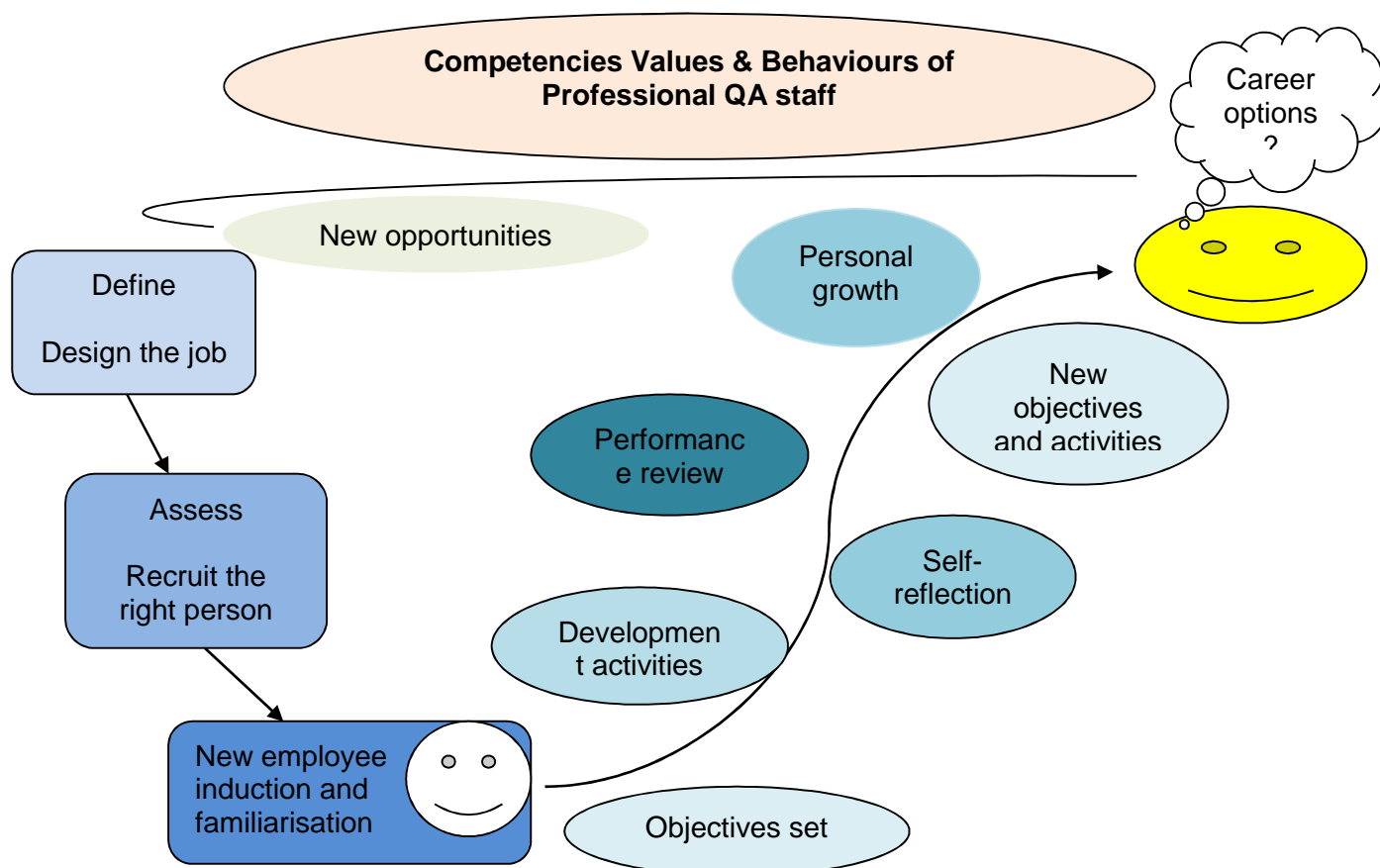
Members of the SDG have acted in pairs to analyse and provide commentary on the returned questionnaires and to undertake further work. From this analysis a number of themes were highlighted and presented to the ENQA Members Forum in Prague in April 2013 as interim findings.

- Values are common across agencies, suggesting opportunities for staff mobility (not withstanding language and other barriers). Aligning new employees with the values of the agency starts way before the person joins. It starts when they read the advertisement or even before in some circumstances e.g. when they have experienced a review themselves.
- There is commonality in generic competencies for professional QA staff. Generic categories of competencies have been grouped in line with the EQF-LLL. The importance of independence, autonomy and self-reliance of staff came out strongly.
- The importance of induction to agencies was underlined. This process of welcoming new staff and familiarisation with his/her role is the basis of good work, and consequently of the higher education sector's confidence in the agency. If a staff member is ill-informed, the agency's reputation can be damaged, no matter how committed the staff member is. Induction is not to be confused with a trial or probationary period.
- It takes at least one year (or one full cycle) to become fully effective in a professional QA job. It is not easy (or possible?) to short-cut this learning process. This is a challenge for many agencies with financial uncertainty requiring agencies to consider taking staff on short-term contracts.
- Written documents or handbooks outlining procedures are important in ensuring consistency, and must thoroughly explain how things are done if they are to be effective. However, it is clear that a 'human' element is essential to the induction. Face-to-face interaction is hugely valuable in understanding the context of procedures and culture, as this cannot be obtained simply through reading.
- Mentor feedback can be extremely helpful in developing staff who are new to the agency or who are on a development 'journey'.
- There seems to be little or no evidence of any formal training for QA professionals in quality assurance and enhancement, or on the European dimension of QA. That does not mean there is no staff development activity, rather the SDG found that in the participating agencies there is no evidence of structured development in quality assurance, domestic or European.

A 'framework' for staff development (of professional QA staff) in agencies

In taking forward its work, the SDG has tried to view staff development through a framework. This is described and represented in diagrammatic form below. The SDG has tried to articulate its work in this way to answer the earlier questions: staff development for whom and for what purpose?

- Key to the model is the view that overarching development of QA professionals is the identification of agency **values**, desired **competencies** and expected professional **behaviours** these are essential in driving appropriate staff development activity.
- Staff development starts with being clear in defining these essentials through **job design** (job descriptions, person specifications), using them to **assess suitability** in recruitment processes and in **preparing new staff** for their role through inductions. Perfect candidates are seldom found and at each stage of these early processes development needs/activities can be identified. This applies equally to staff who are promoted to higher level roles from within the agency.
- Good staff development is underpinned in the long-term by effective **performance management**. Performance review should identify not only work objectives but allow staff to **self-reflect**; facilitate the identification of **developmental needs** and setting of **work objectives**; and activities **targeted at personal improvement**.
- Staff development activities facilitate the development of **expertise** through: **confidence** in role, **alignment** with agency values, **achievement** of objectives, **acquisition of skills and knowledge**, development of **networks** and the generation of **new knowledge**.

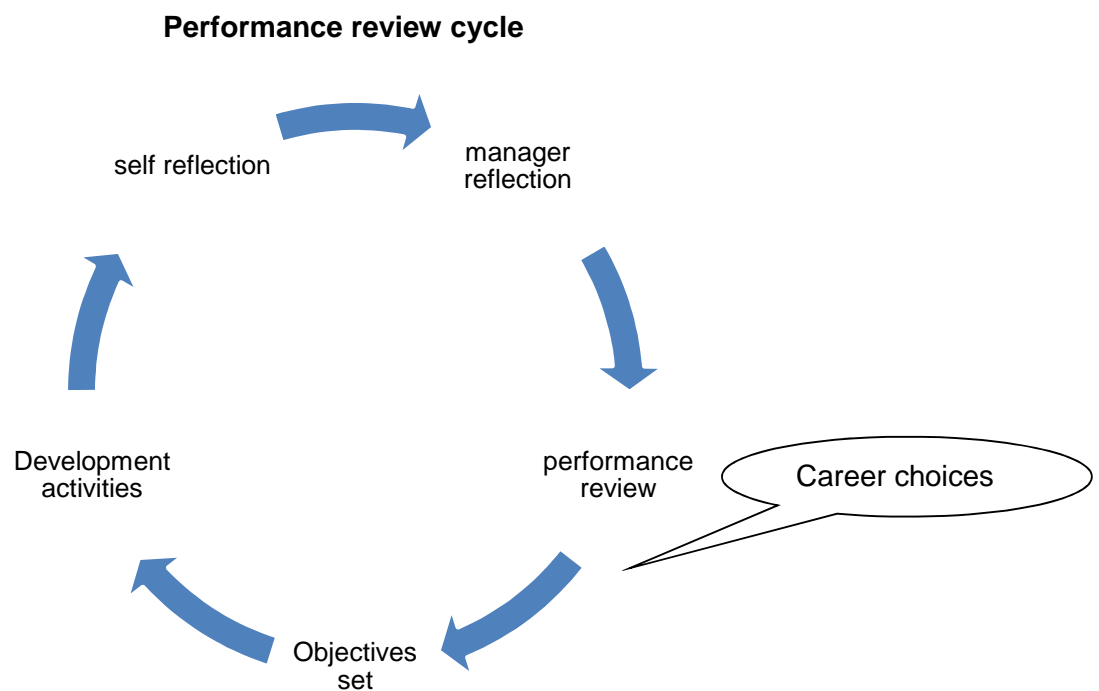


This has not been an abstract exercise. It has established purpose and set the context for SDG (now and in the future stages of work) in identifying the areas which all agencies could benefit from sharing of good practice, i.e. the ways in which agencies can promote learning from each other. In identifying such staff development activities across agencies (e.g. secondment of staff, exchange visits) the SDG recognises that ENQA and agencies will need to overcome barriers of language.

This framework has had several iterations and still requires further evolution to reflect the spiralling, increasing nature of personal development, the role of performance management, and **staff motivation**.

Staff development and **motivation is a challenge for many agencies** due to their size and stages of organisational development. There are limited promotion opportunities within most agencies which could mean that it can be difficult for staff to envisage a career path in quality assurance and their best career opportunities may be outside the agency. Agencies need to consider motivation in the development of job roles. Performance review meetings seem to be the best forum in which to conduct discussions about motivating factors such as stretching targets, career opportunities, and personal growth,

Performance review and management is essential in this framework and the diagram below sets out key elements of an effective performance review cycle.



Identifying and sharing effective practice

The findings of this work and the feedback from a breakout discussion at the Members Forum 2013 suggested to the SDG that it should work on **areas for sharing with agencies**:

- a) Common competencies and values for professional QA staff
- b) Guidance on recruitment, induction and performance review
- c) Ideas on staff development and exchange
- d) Developing means for sharing experiences

The SDG was also asked to develop ideas for ENQA to consider:

- a) Facilitating a mentor scheme for new executive level directors
- b) Offering training materials or programmes on the skills of managing reviews
- c) Coordinating a scheme for staff exchanges

The outputs of the Staff Development Group

Part A – identifying competencies and values key to quality assurance professionals

1. The essential competencies for QA professionals

The SDG has considered competences as ‘a combination of attributes with respects to knowledge and its application, attitudes, skills and responsibilities, that describe the level or degree a person is capable of performing’.

The SDG saw the identification of the core competencies common to all agencies as critical in developing staff development activities that could be run or coordinated by ENQA or through collaboration between agencies. Where individual agencies identified specific expected skills, unique to their own circumstances in their responses, they were not all included in the list of core competencies

Annex A.1 summarises which core competencies are common to all agencies and highlights the regularity in which they were cited in the survey. With reference to the EQF–LLL these have been grouped in term of knowledge, social abilities and systemic skills

2. The values of quality assurance agencies (and for professional QA staff?)

From an analysis of publicly available documents such as agency strategic plans, codes of ethics, and websites, it can be seen that in broad terms there is an overlap between the values cherished by quality agencies, though some variety exists as well. Although no exact correlation with ESG is found, many of the values are still in line with spirit of ESG in general. Two kinds of values were identified: *institutional level values* and *personal level values*.

This work identifies in Annex A.2 the four most frequently found values to be **independence, receptiveness to the needs of stakeholders and cooperation, transparency, and professionalism and competency** and advises to further concentrate SDG work not on finding exact definitions of broadly shared values, but rather to discuss their practical implications for agency work in the area of staff development.

Part B – Effective practice papers, for wider dissemination amongst agencies

1. Job Design and Recruitment

The first effective practice paper in Annex B.1 draws on the feedback from agencies and sets out the key questions to be addressed by agencies as they enter the recruitment process.

Designed to be used as a prompt for agencies regardless of size, it identifies phases in job design: definition of the needs of the role, describing the job, and the definition of the profile of the person sought.

Considerations in the production and placement of job advertisements, establishing a recruitment panel, processes for short listing, interviewing candidates and other assessment tools are outlined. The need for clarity on establishing processes for decision making, feedback to candidates, how complaints are handled, and follow up activity are also set out.

2. Induction

This second paper (Annex B.2) highlights that due to their responsibility for quality assurance in higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies have to fulfil certain standards concerning their internal procedures. Working in a quality assurance organisation includes a broad range of tasks which requires manifold competencies of the employees as identified earlier.

For new employees a good induction process to the work of the agency is therefore necessary: ill-informed and not well qualified agency members can cause damage to the reputation of the agency and can also lead to a loss of trust in quality assurance processes in higher education institutions. The group has identified staff induction approaches which quality assurance agencies can utilise to maximise effective integration of new staff into its daily activities and minimise the risks of disrupting the smooth flow of its daily activities because of hiring new and inexperienced staff.

3. Performance review

The final effective practice paper, Annex B.3, sets out how performance review discussions can be used to identify personal development targets and activities for staff members. Rooted in the categories of competencies identified in paper A.1 (knowledge, systemic skills and social abilities) and agency values, the paper identifies the need for a range of learning options to be available for staff.

A wide range of examples of how individual staff members can develop personally, through a blend of learning approaches, is suggested including: data acquisition; coaching; new tasks; networking; and formal training. Each activity is related to the generic competencies. The benefits of the activity for individual staff, the line manager and the agency are identified

Part C – Activities for ENQA to consider:

1. Facilitating a mentor scheme for new executive level directors

Being the leader of an organisation is challenging and can be a lonely role. It is proposed in Annex C.1 that ENQA put in place a programme of support for new executive directors of agencies through the provision of a pool of experienced mentors. The benefit is to provide peer support, and at the same time support the integration of the new executive into ENQA.

SDG considered that the ENQA Secretariat could manage this scheme and “recruit” ENQA Board members, members of the SDG and other interested ENQA member agencies’ CEOs as mentors. It was also thought that it would be possible to adapt and implement ‘mentoring contracts’ from other schemes.

More detailed guidelines for the mentoring scheme will be developed by the SDG in the course of 2014, together with two pilot mentoring exercises.

2. Pilot training session: skills in managing reviews

The proposition in Annex C.2 was developed at the request of agencies attending the ENQA Members Forum in April 2013. The proposition is for a pilot two day training programme covering what have been identified as key competencies for staff managing quality assurance reviews: understanding quality assurance in a European context; developing personal resilience; managing reviews as projects; working with teams and essential communication skills.

ENQA will apply for external funding for the development and running of the training in the course of 2014, and should this be successful, the first training could take place in the course of 2015.

3. Coordinating study visits

SDG were not wholeheartedly convinced of the merits of a coordinated study visit or exchange programme as set out in Annex C.3. To work, it would need to be valuable for both participating agencies and clearly-defined anticipated outcomes identified. SDG questioned whether an exchange programme could bring any more benefit to an agency than the process of preparation for external review.

Levels of resource would need to be allocated to such a project, and potential barriers, such as the working language, would need to be considered and overcome, which could escalate costs. It was considered difficult to assess whether an exchange programme could add value unless ENQA had access to profiles of agencies which included their strengths and challenges.

In summary, SDG were not convinced that ENQA could add value to a study visit or exchange programme until they were in a position to make links between the work of the KP3 group and study visits. It is suggested that ENQA/KP3 could be asked to develop a tool for agencies to more easily search recommended good practice in ENQA review reports, whilst in the meantime, agencies would do this for themselves. It was suggested that the report template may need to be improved for this purpose.

Nonetheless, an outline of a programme based on the work of APQN is suggested in the annex as a possible way forward.

Annex A.1

The essential competencies for QA professionals

The SDG has focussed its work on agency staff that support quality assurance and quality improvement activities. In identifying essential competencies at the heart of our business for quality assurance agencies, this analysis has to be considered by individual agencies in the context of understanding the differences and needs of our various systems of quality assurance and enhancement.

The work undertaken by SDG highlights the 'core competences common to all agencies' identified by the questionnaire survey led by the SDG within the 11 participating agencies. It is therefore not an exhaustive reflection of the set of all competences expected by all the agencies in the EHEA. In designing jobs, agencies should identify the competencies relevant to their circumstances.

Definition of Competences

The SDG has considered competences as 'a combination of attributes with respects to knowledge and its application, attitudes, skills and responsibilities, that describe the level or degree a person is capable of performing'. In this context, the SDG has taken into account the EQF-LLL in identifying appropriate grouping of relevant staff competencies:

- Knowledge - 'the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study'. Knowledge relates to theoretical and/or factual data;
- Social abilities - a part of personal abilities and attitudes or interpersonal skills. In terms of EQF determined as "competences".
- Systemic skills - abilities and skills concerning whole systems (combination of understanding, sensibility and knowledge; prior acquisition of instrumental and interpersonal competences required. Related to EQF "skills" are cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

In its work, the SDG identified two sub-categories of systemic skills related to the staff that support quality assurance and quality improvement activities:

- Management skills,
- Analytical skills.

Social abilities

The Social abilities and behaviours most expected of the staff that support quality assurance and quality improvement activities relate to **communication skills**. Each agency which answered the survey identified that communication or oral skills (that could be also described as diplomatic skills) and writing skills are the most important skills to do this job well. This quality is inextricably linked to the ability to work in a team, and the ability to be flexible. Our analysis highlighted some important attitudes expected, such as the ability to resist stress and pressure, and autonomy and pro-active behaviours.

Other qualities such as leadership, ethics, self-confidence, integrity, independence, tact, empathy, and self-initiative were cited among the expected competences.

Systemic skills

The investigations of the SDG highlighted two major kinds of systemic skills. To support quality assurance activities, staff have to demonstrate **project management skills**, including the ability to organise, plan and to monitor evaluations. With the same level of importance, it appears essential to demonstrate **analytical skills** to visualise, articulate and solve complex problems and concepts, and to make decisions that are based on verified and understood information. Such skills include demonstration of the ability to apply logical thinking to gathering and analysing information, and designing and testing solutions to problems.

Knowledge

Both the specificity of quality assurance activities and of the higher education area lead agencies to seek staff with, or an ability to develop, a high level of knowledge of these two domains of expertise.

Core competencies

The SDG saw the identification of the core competencies common to all agencies as critical in developing staff development activities that could be run or coordinated by ENQA or through collaboration between agencies. Where individual agencies identified specific expected skills, unique to their own circumstances, they were not all included in the list of core competencies.

The following table summarises which core competencies are common to all agencies and highlights the regularity in which they were cited in the survey. In taking forward staff development activity it is suggested this could be done so according to the typology proposed by the SDG:

Type	Expected staff competencies	Importance for agencies
Social	Communication (oral and writing) skills	++++
Social	Team work (flexibility, diplomacy)	+++
Social	Stress/Pressure resistance	++
Social	Autonomy, pro activity	++
Systemic Skills	Project management skills / organisational and planning skills	+++
Systemic Skills	Analytical skills, continuous learning skills	+++
Knowledge	Knowledge of higher education (domestic and international)	+++
Knowledge	Knowledge of QA activities	++
Knowledge	Knowledge of the legal framework	++
Knowledge	Principles and procedure of agency	+

In the survey, agencies did not distinguish specifically which level of competence is expected from new employees and from personnel with experience. Nevertheless, there seem to be key areas such as project management skills, communication skills, and knowledge of procedures and QA principles which have to be tested and strengthened during recruitment and induction.

Further work

The ENQA Members Forum 2013 identified understanding 'entry level' and 'experienced level' competencies as important for targeting staff development activities. Using the classifications

which were used in the analysis of the questionnaire (traits, acquired...), this could be a starting point for our discussions in developing this further.

Julien Lecoq (AERES) and Notburga Damm (AQ), August 2013

Sources:

- THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING (EQF-LLL) - EUROPEAN COMMISSION Education and Culture Lifelong Learning (April 2008)
- Universities' contribution to the Bologna Process, An introduction – Julia González & Robert Wagenaar – Tuning Project (February 2008)
- ENQA Staff development working group survey (September 2012)

Annex A.2

The values of quality assurance agencies (and professional QA staff)

Agency values, aligned to their mission statements, constitute a cornerstone for expectations in staff recruitment processes and subsequent performance on the job. Of vital importance are three kinds of questions:

- do persons fit the job description, are they already **able to do** what is expected, in other words, do they have **relevant competences** (specific competences, and above all generic ones – of being able to learn quickly and with sufficient independence);
- do persons possess appropriate **attitudes**; does past performance provide grounds for reasonable confidence of them demonstrating the same desired behaviours; are they **willing to do the job**;
- will the candidates **fit the organization**; will newcomers find a “common language” and be able to effectively work together with longer serving staff (not necessarily being alike in personal traits, but rather fitting to the present variety by their competences, **sharing the same values**).

To understand the definition of values in agencies, an analysis of publicly available documents, such as agency strategic plans, codes of ethics, and internet pages, was carried out. Although from descriptions available one can see that in broad terms there is an overlap between the values cherished by quality agencies, there is some variety as well. Although no exact correlation with ESG was found, many of the values are still in line with spirit of ESG in general.

Two kinds of values were identified: present **at institutional level** and **at personal level**. These groups of values are not independent, but mutually influencing each-other. Among quality assurance agencies, **most frequently found values** were these:

- a. **independence,**
- b. **receptiveness to the needs of stakeholders and cooperation,**
- c. **transparency,**
- d. **professionalism and competency.**

Quite often mentioned values were also overall compliance to the ESG and other international standards, accountability, accent being put on responsibility of HEIs for quality and respecting autonomy, academic freedom, impartiality and objectivity, quality, comprehensiveness and integrity.

One finding of the group discussion is that, although it might not be very distinctly reflected in formal writing, it was felt that there was a certain **hierarchy of values**. In some cases, the **attitudes of staff being more important than presence of certain competencies**, such as knowledge of quality assurance matters.

It is advised to further concentrate SDG work not on finding exact definitions of broadly shared values, but rather discuss practical implications for agency work.

Further questions raised:

1. How agencies **formulate and approve values** (top-down, bottom-up)?

2. **How to evaluate values**, especially in the recruitment process? How to improve the recruitment process in order to be more focused on professional values, not only on professional competencies?
3. How to organise the trial period to get to know enough someone, to discover and improve professional attitudes?
4. How to **balance** the indicators in the periodical evaluation process of staff between **professional competencies and professional values**? How much room for tensions between the two there could be?
5. What “**staff training**” means **for values**? How values of organisations and persons are aligned and promoted (formal and informal activities)?

Aurelija Valeikien (SKVC), Gryt Ruzg (SKVC), Oana Sarbu (ARACIS), August, 2013

Annex B.1

Effective practice paper – job design and recruitment process

This paper, based on the answers from 12 agencies to the staff development questionnaire suggests essentials of the processes of job design and raises some of the key questions to be addressed by an agency when entering the recruitment process. It is intended as a helpful list for ENQA agencies when considering filling new roles or replacing staff that have left.

Job design

The job design process may present the following phases:

- **Definition of the needs:** what position needs to be filled?
 - At what level are the needs defined? Who is involved in the discussion?
 - What instruments are available to identify those needs?
 - Who is in charge of the recruitment procedure?
 - What are the necessary resources for the procedure?
 - What is the time frame?
 - What are the various steps of the procedure, what are the results expected for each one and who is involved?

- **Definition of the job description:** what are the tasks involved in the position?
 - What instruments are available to identify those tasks?
 - What is the level of the job?
 - What is the salary for the job?
 - Where does the job fit in the organisation chart?
 - Who does the role have close working relationships with?

- **Definition of the profile:** what competencies are needed for the tasks?
 - What are the core competencies?
 - What are the specific competencies?
 - Which competencies have priority?
 - Which attitude competencies, values are expected?
 - What is the experience required?
 - What level is required for the competencies?

Recruitment

Recruitment processes may be managed within the agency, or by the ministry or the body the agency is attached to. In general, the process should be based on an *ad hoc* policy, be transparent, well described (in schematic and/or written form), and its principles known to all.

The recruitment process may present the following phases:

- **Production of the job announcement:** what composes the announcement?
 - job description, competency profile, specific requirements (degree, experience, age, etc.), contract type, requirement of annexes (diplomas, motivation letter, references, etc.), deadline, etc.?
 - Who is the contact person for the candidates?

- **Publication of the job announcement:** where is it published?
 - Internally, externally, specialised publication, general newspapers, online, nationally/internationally, etc.?

- **Setting up of an appointment panel:** who will review the applications and select the candidates?

- How many people, with what profile?
- Internal or external committee or a mix of both?
- Same committee for applications review and selection of candidates?
- Organisation of work of the panel
- What competencies have to be assessed when and how?
- Privacy issues

- **Review of the applications:** what is the review process?

- What composes the application package (see what is asked in the announcement)?
- How are the applications treated upon arrival? Acknowledgement of receipt by the administrative staff?
- Who does the review?
- Against which criteria are the applications reviewed?
- Who defines the criteria?
- How many candidates should be selected for the interviews?

- **Interviews of the selected candidates:** what is the selection process?

- How many interviews? One, two, more?
- Who interviews, what is the setting? Director/general manager, human resources director, job manager, representative of the employees, future colleague, Board member, external expert, etc.?
- What is the content, how are the required competencies assessed? What is being asked, when, how, what is formalised/improvised, etc.?
- What is the interview method?
- How is the candidate's motivation assessed?
- Will the candidate embrace the agency's values, fit in the team? How is this assessed?
- When are the salary and practical issues (work time, holidays, etc.) discussed?

- **Additional assessments:** what other tests, assignments, assessments are necessary?

- Technical test: language, legal framework, etc.
- Assignments: simulation tasks, written assignments, test on published bibliography, etc.
- References from previous employers
- Personality testing
- Occupational testing

- **Decision:** who confirms the preferred candidate?

- Who chooses the final candidate? Director/general manager, Board, team, HR department, job manager?
- Who confirms the chosen candidate? Director/general manager, Board?
- Is there a substitute list?
- How is the decision communicated internally and externally?

- **Feedback to candidates:** how does the communication with the applicants run?

- How, by whom and when is the confirmed candidate informed?
- How, by whom and when are the rejected candidates informed?

- **Complaints:** how are they treated?

- What complaints are being considered? By whom?
- Who deals with the complaints?
- Is there an appeal commission?

- **Follow up:** what has been the impact of the recruitment process?

- What are the indicators to measure the impact of the process?
- Is the approach successful?
- What are the challenges?
- Which competencies will need to be developed during the trial and induction periods, and beyond (and how to assess them)?

Geneviève Le Fort (OAQ) and Liz Clegg (QAA), August 2013

Annex B.2

Staff induction

Due to their responsibility for quality assurance in higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies have to fulfil certain standards concerning their internal procedures. Working in a quality assurance organisation includes a broad range of tasks which requires manifold competencies of the employees as identified earlier.

For new employees a good induction process to the work of the agency is therefore necessary: ill-informed and not well qualified agency members can cause damage not only to the reputation of an agency - this can also lead to a loss of trust in quality assurance processes in higher education institutions. This paper identifies staff induction approaches which higher education quality assurance agencies can utilise to maximise effective integration of new staff into its daily activities and minimise the risks of disrupting the smooth flow of its daily activities because of hiring new and inexperienced staff.

The SDG proposition is that the induction process for new staff begins during the recruitment and selection phases, if not before. Therefore, an important element for the success of the new staff employment is that the things the QA agency does or says before the first day in a job are also well thought through and prepared, as those after the candidate takes up the post.

Further, it is important that the induction process not only familiarises new employees with their new tasks, but also with their role and the values of the organisation. They should have the impression that they belong to the organisation (be part of the “family”) and should identify with the organisational values. An early introduction to the mission and goals of the agency is useful in guiding new staff.

Additionally, it might be helpful to show possible career paths within the agency to a new employee. In this regard the personal development and motivation of the new member of the agency can be closely connected with the strategic planning of the entire agency.

Consequently, the current guidelines will evolve around such major phases of an induction procedure as: (1) pre-induction phase; (2) induction period; (3) post- induction evaluation. We have also included a note on the ‘trial or ‘probation’ period, which we see as different form induction.

Pre-induction phase

There are at least two aspects of this phase:

- Recruitment and selection process
- Pre-employment

Recruitment and selection process

Other papers cover aspects of job design and recruitment processes. How the agency projects itself in this phase matters in aligning staff to the agency’s mission and values. Whether through advertisement, job descriptions, publicised terms and conditions and other materials introduced during this phase, potential new employees form a picture of the agency and how they might be expected to work.

Pre-employment

The agencies would benefit from having a consistent approach to welcoming new staff members. This could include sending an official invitation package to the new employee with an employment contract, the necessary information for the new employee, and such forms as bank details to be completed and filed to the HR manager. Also, this package may include necessary information for the first day of work and information on the induction period. A first visit to the office in the pre-employment phase could be helpful for the new employee as well as for the existing staff to get to know each other. This helps also existing staff to prepare to welcome the new colleague.

Induction period

Feedback from the surveys and discussions considered by the SDG suggest that, due to the cycle of quality assurance reviews, the induction period often lasts relatively long. This poses challenges for agencies who for financial or other reasons are offering short-term employment contracts. The duration of the induction period should be adapted to the background/experience and individual demands of the new employee.

Induction can be organised more formally or informally. Experienced colleagues are, however, involved in most cases. The human element is crucial: face-to-face interaction is needed for the understanding of the context of the quality assurance procedures, internal routines and the culture of the organisation. A welcome gift or welcome activities could help the new staff member to become acquainted with the organisation and its values.

When starting in an agency the focus of daily work is mainly within the national context. Survey results suggested that familiarisation with European aspects of QA is often unstructured and where it happens, it is often self-initiated by new staff members and through the attendance or the contribution in workshops and conferences. "Back to office" reports seem to be a valuable tool to share the international experience with colleagues. The question is whether familiarisation with the European context should be a fixed component during the induction process. Could this be done through an introduction workshop for all agencies at the European level?

Initial Induction programme

Agencies reported that induction period usually lasts two to three months and it could include such major steps as

- The first day
 - Meeting the new employee and introducing to the team of colleagues
 - Organising a tour of the premises and workplace
 - Introduction to the induction package and timetable
 - Managing all necessary paperwork regarding employment.
 - Instructions on the use of the computer, telephone, and photocopier
- The first week
 - Introduction to the induction programme and assessment of the understanding of the information provided
 - Introduction into the key aspects of the job, the goals and objectives of the immediate team of colleagues;
 - Introduction to the work plan and explanation of what is expected
 - Introduction to the work ethics of the agency
 - Making sure the new employees have the necessary support they need.
- The first month
 - By the end of the first month a general picture of the competencies and the areas of development are already clear and a personal development plan

- should be developed by the line manager to guide the new employee in his/her personal development. This should be aligned to work targets.
- Also, it is necessary to have feedback of the team of colleagues that have been working with the new employee during the induction process to assess the employee's progress and accomplishments.

Induction: Preparing for managing review procedures

The SDG discussions and the outcomes of the survey suggest that many agencies do not have systematic staff development for staff managing review procedures. Whilst a formal training programme would be ideal, SDG recognises that it is not reality in many agencies. In the absence of such a programme, the agency should make sure that the new employee has opportunities to develop and is equipped for this role during the induction period.

Agencies reported that usually the training is done parallel to the daily work (on the job training). From the earlier papers we can see that agencies have identified a need for their staff to be able to work independently and with certain autonomy, and the importance of promoting the employee's soft skills, e.g. communication skills, self-reliance and the ability to work in a team. This has to go hand in hand with the acquisition of practical knowledge, such as knowledge about quality assurance processes, higher education institutions and legal rules as well as techniques for editing reports.

In the absence of a formal development programme (many agencies may never be able to provide such a programme), the SDG suggests it would be advantageous both for the managers and the employees to structure the development aspects of induction activities around the competencies structure suggested earlier: social, systemic skills, and knowledge. This would be effective either related to the individual demands of the new employee, or to specific requirements of the agency and its routines.

Another method for gaining practical knowledge and skills used by many agencies is the involvement of new employees in the external review procedures as an observer to make sure there is first-hand exposure to the practice.

Mentoring

A first analysis of the different induction procedures of the contributing agencies shows that the designation of a mentor for new employees, who introduces new colleagues into the organisation with its values and practical routines, is one of the most prominent aspects. The new agency member can also participate in on-site-visits of the mentor and vice versa. The continuous communication between the new employee and his/her mentor (and also other colleagues) facilitates the start into the new work environment and helps to enhance the process of becoming a part of the "family". Therefore the selection of mentors is an aspect which should be carefully discussed within the agencies: the qualification of a person to fulfil the tasks of a mentor, and of course also the capacity in regard to the overall workload have to be taken into consideration.

Induction package

Apart from having a mentor, it seems to be very helpful to provide a compilation of relevant literature, e.g. internal guidelines, quality management handbooks, and relevant legal rules to the new staff member. The use of the intranet for providing documents and relevant literature and video casts could be also a possibility to provide relevant information.

Post-induction evaluation

To make sure the induction procedure is effective both for the new employees and the organisation it is important evaluate the process regularly. The agency needs to assess to what extent the induction programme met the set objectives and whether adjustments and improvements are needed. Feedback from the new employees on improvements will be useful for this purpose.

Note: Probation or trial periods

The SDG suggest that agencies need to differentiate between what is induction (familiarisation with agency and job role) and a probation period (ascertaining whether the person can or has the potential to do the job and fits in the agency). The duration of any probation or trial period and an induction period need not be the same. Due to the variety of different tasks and the necessary time to get into them, a short probation period of e.g. one month is insufficient to check whether a new agency staff member fits to the job tasks. At the same time, too long a probation period creates uncertainty, and may not be legally possible in some contexts.

The probation period offers the opportunity also for the new employee to decide whether the position is suited to him/her. If the new staff member decides to leave, the agency should ask for a feedback why the new employee decided to leave.

Summary

The main aspects for the induction process at a glance:

- A formalised induction procedure seems to be advantageous.
- Nominating a mentor helps new employees in finding their role in the agency. Face-to-face interaction is needed for the understanding of the context of quality assurance procedures, internal routines, and the culture of the organisation.
- Providing a starting package with relevant information helps new staff members getting acquainted with the organisation, its culture and values, and the duties and the context.
- Competencies which have to be fostered (with prioritisation if necessary) should be identified.
- The duration of the induction procedure should consider the background/experience of the new employee
- Beside the national context also the European context should be considered (through workshops?).
- Short term contracts are challenges to agencies in ensuring staff understand the implications of a full review cycle.

Marion Moser (ACQUIN) and Susanna Karakhanyan (ANQA), August 2013

Annex B.3

Sharing Effective practice: staff development through performance review

The setting and reviewing of work and development objectives is an important part of any performance review process and objectives should be agreed for every member of staff. This paper addresses the importance of the developmental aspects of a performance review. It is intended as a good practice note for ENQA agencies and is suitable for use in agencies of all sizes.

Development objectives aim to increase personal competence in terms of knowledge, skills, personal attributes, and the experience the individual staff member has to draw on, with a view to increasing their effectiveness in carrying out work responsibilities and their career development. There should also be a discussion on the extent to which the staff member demonstrates the agency's values, and development objectives agreed where behaviours need to be changed.

In order to be successful both parties have to be open, constructive, and respectful of each other's views. Confidentiality must also be respected. Sufficient time should be set aside so that a full discussion can take place and a private room should be booked. Agencies should provide training to both parties on how get the best out of development discussions.

1. How can learning needs identified at performance review be actioned?

It is recognised that individuals have different learning styles and there are many workplace activities that, when used in combination, can make up a highly efficient and effective development programme. The term 'blended learning' is used to describe this style of learning, where a blend of different structured activities carried out over time create a stimulating and very effective learning programme. The list below includes a number of activities that can be blended together.

Learning on the job in this manner requires a degree of self-awareness about the type of activity best suited to the individual's own style. Many of the options listed below will be particularly beneficial for the smaller agencies. We have also identified activities most relevant to the staff competences: systemic skills, social skills, and knowledge.

Examples of activities which, when blended together, enhance development	Relevance to competences
Data acquisition	Knowledge (K); systemic skills (SK); social (So)
Reading (books, journals, reports, newspapers)	K
Watching training/educational videos	SK
Watching relevant documentaries/news items on the television or listening to selected radio programmes	K
E-learning – a large selection of computer-based courses is now. E-learning tends to be interactive, carefully designed (to meet the diverse	K, SK, So

needs of as many people as possible) and may include video, sound, pictures, as well as text and check tests to measure understanding	
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Coaching	
Coaching	So, SK
Mentoring	SK, K
Instruction - being shown how to do something and subsequently putting this into practice	SK
Work shadowing	K
New tasks etc.	
Taking on new tasks or additional responsibilities to develop particular skills	SK
Moving into a new or different work role	K, SK
Secondments - for a given period of time, the individual works in another work area, department or even organisation to experience new tasks. Secondments can be both internal or external.	K, SK
Networking etc.	
Networking (both internally and externally)	K, So
Attending conferences/seminars/development forums	K, So
Being a member of committees or working groups	K, So
Participating in group discussions	K, So
Belonging to an action learning group (meeting with peers to discuss work related issues with the aim of finding solutions to problems)	K, So
Involvement in activities related to a professional body or employer's association (e.g., attending branch meetings, giving a presentation to fellow members)	K, So
Formal training	
Attending a formal training event (both internal and external)	K, SK, So
Being involved in role plays or simulations	SK, So
Using case studies to develop knowledge	K
Keeping a personal development journal (reflection on experience)	SK, So
Working towards a qualification (academic, professional, or vocational qualifications)	K, SK
Benchmarking – using a similar agency to compare work processes with a view to learning, developing and possibly improving the performance of own organisation. A true benchmarking exercise will be reciprocal.	K, So

2. What are the benefits to the job holder?

The benefits are maximised where the individual recognises his/her own responsibility for development, and is proactive in seeking to make improvements in his/her work and personal competences. Benefits include the opportunity to:

- take stock and review past performance, and own skills, knowledge and behaviours

- highlight and build upon personal strengths and achievements; this activity is in itself motivational
- discuss with the individual's line manager any problems encountered at work, drawing out their own strengths and weaknesses with a view to finding solutions
- improve the individual's understanding of their personal contribution to the agency's goals
- agree individual personal development objectives and put together an action plan for how these will be met
- It is good practice to include discussions on career aspirations, both inside and outside the agency particularly where there are limited career development opportunities available.

3. What are the benefits to the line manager?

The developmental aspects of the performance review process offer the line manager an opportunity to maximise the potential of their staff. Doing this requires a concern for the needs of both the individual and the agency, and a supportive, encouraging approach to the management of staff. The benefits include:

- dedicated time to focus on the personal development of each member of staff
- a chance to learn more about the strengths the job holder brings to their job, and to utilise these to the best effect
- an opportunity to bring any problems encountered by the job holder and by the manager to the attention of each other and to agree solutions to these.

4. What staff development can potentially bring to agencies

- increased value of contribution (quantity or quality)
- increased mastery of tasks (in terms of improved consistency of good results) will be measurable
- increased empowerment (in terms of initiative, decision-making, etc.)
- enlarged perspectives will be evident in what is said and done – thinking beyond previous boundaries, making sense of ambiguous situations which previously would have caused confusion, thinking in both the long and short term.
- more creativity than previously in response to problems and new situations
- a sense of personal growth; it will be possible to cite examples of what is being achieved now that would have been beyond the individual's ability before the development activity
- a member of staff may be given, or considered for, tasks which before the development activity would have been beyond his or her ability
- it will be possible to successfully take on higher-profile, riskier, or more important tasks
- it will be possible to cite examples of what has been learned, how it has been utilised, and the results that have been achieved
- the individual will increasingly be sought by others for help, advice, and guidance
- all members of staff are better able to contribute to the agency's objectives,
- the performance review process helps with the identification and development of talent.

5. Next steps

The working group intends to build on this paper by developing examples of development activities.

Liz Clegg (QAA) and Geneviève Le Fort (OAQ) August 2013

Annex C.1

An ENQA mentoring scheme for new executive level directors

1. Being the leader of an organisation that has national and regional significance for a higher education system is a demanding job. Leaders of agencies are often in the public spotlight, are expected to be experts in their business and face internal and external demands on their time, commitment and energies. An agency's work is subject to public scrutiny, has to balance the needs of varying stakeholders whilst at all times ensuring clear independence of judgement.
2. The purpose of the scheme is to assist newly appointed leaders at Chief Executive and Director/Head of unit level in ENQA member agencies adjust to their role. It is offered as a benefit to ENQA member agencies and is facilitated by the ENQA Secretariat.

Format

3. ENQA will invite experienced colleagues from agencies (*mentors need not necessarily be at CEO-level*) to volunteer to be mentors. It is expected a pool of 4- 6 colleagues from the ENQA Board and/or a variety of agencies: large and small; programme accreditation or institutional audit based; etc. This pool will be kept under review and 'refreshed' every 2 to 3 years.
4. Mentors will be briefed by the ENQA secretariat on their role. This could be in the form of one-to-one meetings or discussions or through a group session, possibly added on the agenda of an existing ENQA forum or assembly.
5. When a new leader is appointed to an agency, ENQA will write to them offering the support of a mentor and suggesting one or two possible names. The 'mentee' will confirm whether they wish to be involved or not. The time commitment of either person will be mutually agreed, but it is proposed that ENQA adapt and implement 'mentoring contracts' from other schemes.
6. Mentors will offer one-to-one support to newly appointed colleagues. They will give a personal view based on their experience rather than an ENQA formulated answer to problems and issues. The type of issues which could be covered include: working with a Board; working with the government and the media; managing a senior team; the challenges of leadership; the European dimension of QA, including the ESG; the work of ENQA and managing in a national and international context.
7. The form of interaction will be entirely up to the individuals and their agencies as ENQA is unable to fund any travel or other costs. Interactions could be a visit to each agency, by telephone, video or web conferencing, email and instant messaging. Face-to-face meetings could happen in the margins of existing ENQA or other fora.
8. The ENQA secretariat will review the effectiveness of the scheme each year, by inviting feedback from participants and summarising in a report to the Board.

Next steps

The SDG and ENQA Secretariat will develop detailed guidelines.

Douglas Blackstock, QAA, August 2013

Annex C.2

Pilot training session proposal: Skills in managing reviews

1. The Members forum suggested that the SDG should propose some training for staff working on quality assurance reviews and procedures and this paper sets out a workable, but potentially expensive proposition developed by the SDG chair. This is separate from any further work on sharing experiences the SDG organises.
2. SDG has received an outline proposal but is not resourced to undertake the detailed work on course content. This could be contracted out by ENQA to one of the larger agencies with a staff development function or ENQA could seek proposals from commercial suppliers. There is some financial risk to ENQA as an initial outlay would be needed.
3. Further development would be needed by ENQA with consideration also given to commercial offers already available from some agencies, work being undertaken by ECA and training run by the informal 'audit group'.
4. The outline programme suggests five sessions over a full two day period. Delegates should arrive the evening before to ensure they are ready for the start. Participants would be asked to do some preparatory work about themselves and their agencies.
5. The initial proposal is that these should be offered at a basic rather than an advanced level, involving experienced colleagues in delivery. The suggested programme is:

Session 1 – The basics of quality assurance in a European context

The ESG, what they mean and how to apply them in your own agency context. Acquiring technical knowledge, understanding your methods and putting them into practice.

Session 2 - Developing personal resilience

Working independently, guiding your own work, what to do when your decisions are challenged, complaints are made or appeals are submitted.

Session 3 – Managing reviews as projects

Applying project management techniques, organisation of review activities, scheduling, work allocation and organisation tools.

Session 4 - A team work approach to quality assurance

Creating a team ethos with a review panel, the challenge of managing expert peer reviewers.

Session 5 – Mind your language

Communicating technical findings and judgements in a clear manner, verbal and non-verbal communication, and language barriers.

The programme above could be a significant first step in addressing the identified gap for training of professional QA staff. The programme development and delivery will require external funding, which ENQA will apply for in the course of 2014.

Douglas Blackstock, QAA, August 2013

Annex C. 3

ENQA coordination of agency staff study visits

1. This paper explores issues on how an 'exchange scheme' or 'study visit' programme coordinated by ENQA may work. Later on in the paper there is a suggested adaptation of the APQN exchange programme, but this proposal was not fully endorsed by SDG.
2. Members of SDG were not fully persuaded that there was a demand for this type of programme as agencies arrange such visits for themselves anyway. The alternative view is that a structured approach could a) reduce the investment of staff time for agencies that receive lots of visitors and b) based on ENQA's knowledge could be targeted at agencies in need of greater development and who are less 'networked'.
3. In considering how a such a scheme may work, the SDG felt that there is a need to make any potential exchange programme valuable for both visiting and host agencies, and it was queried whether time would really be invested in such a programme if there were not clearly-defined anticipated outcomes. The SDG also discussed whether an exchange programme could bring any more benefit to an agency than the process of preparation for external review.
4. It was agreed that the right levels of resource would need to be allocated to such a project, and that potential barriers, such as working language, would need to be considered and overcome, which could escalate costs. The benefits, both for the agency and in terms of individual staff development, would need to be clearly outlined, as would the desired outcomes.
5. It was considered difficult to assess whether an exchange programme could add value unless ENQA had access to profiles of agencies which included their strengths and challenges. ENQA could possible use the external agency review reports to collate these profiles.
6. In summary, SDG were not convinced that, without further research by ENQA, that value could be added by a coordinated study visit or an exchange programme. If ENQA were in a position to make links between the work of the KP3 group and study visits this view may change. It was suggested that ENQA/KP3 could develop a tool for ENQA to search recommended good practice, whilst in the meantime, agencies would do this for themselves. This may not be possible without changes to the ENQA review report template.
7. Any ENQA run programme would need to be designed to help staff employed in member agencies develop and deepen their expertise and understanding of the practice of quality assurance and enhancement outside of their own country, in building professional networks and developing capacity. How a programme might work is described below.

The nature of a programme

8. The nature of any visit will vary according to circumstance but it is anticipated that between 6 and 8 staff (from different agencies) could visit an agency for a defined period. In signing up to the programme those colleagues will confirm that they are visiting on the agreed days.

9. The content of the programme may vary each time depending on the focus agreed between the participants, ENQA and the host agency. It is expected that the visit would include some or all of the following: detailed briefing on the work of the host agency; briefing on the appropriate HE sector and possibly visit some institutions; work with staff of the host agency to review some problems and issues that could help that agency improve; look at some areas of good practice within the host agency; undertake some staff training. The participants will be expected to produce a report of what they learned on their visit for their own and the host agency. *This would not be a rerun of an ENQA review.*

Organisation of the programme

10. ENQA would co-ordinate between the host agency and the visiting delegates. ENQA would continually explore possibilities of securing some funds from international bodies to support the exchange programme, but this is not guaranteed.
11. ENQA would put out a call for applications to be the host agency. The Board would determine the most suitable proposals from among the applications and agree the expected outcomes with the host agency. The host agency would need to appoint a programme coordinator to manage the visit.
12. Once the host agency is confirmed, ENQA would put out a call for participants and the criteria for consideration as a suitable person for selection.

Financing the programme

13. The activity would need to be a self-financing although it is facilitated by the ENQA secretariat. The programme would need to operate on a reciprocal basis, in which both financial and in-kind contribution is expected from the participants and the host agency. Alternatively, if host agencies are not able to subsidise this, they could charge a fee.
14. Visiting agency staff will have their travel and accommodation costs funded by their employing agency. The host agency would need to cover the costs of meeting rooms, refreshments and food for visiting colleagues. ENQA could consider charging a small fee for administration costs.

Douglas Blackstock, QAA, August 2013