

Director Maria Weymans
Flemish Council of Universities and University Colleges - Quality Assurance Unit
VLUHR - QAU
Ravensteingalerij 27 B3&6
1000 Brussels, Belgium

Dublin, 27 October 2014

Subject: Full membership of VLUHR-QAU in ENQA

Dear Maria,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting of 15 October 2014, the Board of ENQA agreed to reconfirm VLUHR-QAU Full membership of ENQA for five years from that date.

Though the ENQA Board concluded that VLUHR-QAU is in substantial compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines, the Board would like to receive a follow-up report on the recommendations in the panel report (as outlined in the annex attached) within two years of its decision, i.e. by October 2016.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the ENQA Secretariat.

Please accept my congratulations for the re-confirmation of Full Membership of VLUHR-QAU.

Yours sincerely,



Padraig Walsh
President of ENQA

Annex: Areas for development

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As outlined by the review panel, the agency is recommended to take appropriate action, so far as it is empowered to do so, in the following issues:

- To keep under close review with their funders the operation of the subject Panels in terms of their strength and depth and overall capacity to undertake their designated role.
- To foresee that the responsible Flemish bodies consider whether full responsibility for consideration of follow-up of reports should rest primarily with VLUHR-QAU as part of a more structured and transparent process.
- To consider how the outputs from its review activities can be further focused to support system-wide analysis and institutional quality improvement and enhancement. The constraints currently faced by the Agency through significant financial pressures and the volume of procedure-driven activity can be recognised. However, it is recommended that, to fully realise its potential, the Agency discusses with its stakeholders the options to increase its resources for this purpose. The additional resource gained could then be directed to increase the volume of system-wide analysis and quality enhancement activities.
- To consider to position itself at the centre of the debate in Flanders on future approaches to QA as the agency has much to offer the sector through its accumulated expertise, sector knowledge and accumulated institutional performance data. VLUHR-QAU operates a comprehensive and complex set of external quality assurance procedures at the programme level and a new institutional review method is being rolled out. It is open for discussion as to whether the combined weight of these procedures is really the optimum mechanism for the maintenance and enhancement of quality in Flemish HE. It is under discussion as to whether programme-level and institutional-level accreditation may in future be merged into a single process. It is recommended that VLUHR-QAU positions itself in the centre of this debate with Government and HE stakeholders; it has valuable experience and insights to offer in the debate.
- To complete the full merger of staff into the new organisation as soon as possible.
- To consider to strengthen the involvement of students and representatives of industry and professional bodies in its governance arrangements.