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Dublin, 3 March 2017

**Subject: Membership of IQAA in ENQA**

Dear Professor Kalanova,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting of 13-14 February 2017, the Board of ENQA agreed, based on the scrutiny of the final review report, that IQAA met the necessary requirements for being granted ENQA Membership for five years from that date.

Though the ENQA Board concluded that IQAA is in substantial compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Board would like to receive a follow-up report on the recommendations in the panel report (as outlined in the attached annex) within two years of its decision, i.e. by February 2019.

Specific attention should be put on ESG 3.5 Resources: the Board recommends that IQAA ensures that it has sufficient human resources and also that it strengthens its approach to thematic analysis.

In addition, the Board recommends that IQAA avails of the new ENQA procedure which is the organisation of a progress visit. The visit would take place after the submission of the follow-up report in about two years' time. The aim of the meeting is not to monitor progress concerning different standards but rather to have an enhancement-led approach and discuss the challenges and benefits of the review. The ENQA Secretariat will be in touch with IQAA in about a year's time to discuss the possible organisation of this visit.

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In the case of a first review of an agency, as in your case, it is strongly recommended that the visit is organised. The costs of this visit have already been included as part of the review fee and are non-refundable except for the travel budget of the experts.

Please accept my congratulations to IQAA for the positive review outcome and I look forward to a fruitful future cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Padraig Walsh  
President

Annex: Areas for development

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## Annex: Areas for development

IQAA is recommended to:

ESG 3.1: amend its Statutes to explicitly assign the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of its strategy to a governing body, and put in place formal mechanisms for translating its strategic objectives into its daily activities and for measuring progress towards its strategic objectives;

ESG 3.4: analyse the material available in its accreditation review reports and produce on this basis (a) thematic analysis(es) to support further development of quality assurance in higher education institutions and policy development at national level;

ESG 3.5: consider allocating some resources specifically for English language training of staff in the coming years;

ESG 3.6: put in place, as part of its internal quality assurance system, a formal mechanism for regular self-analysis and self-assessment and use of findings from the process for institutional enhancement;

ESG 2.1: (1) focus more strongly on the effectiveness of internal quality assurance in its accreditation methodology, while allowing for the varying progress made by institutions in the development of their internal quality assurance systems; (2) refine its accreditation standards concerning student-centred learning (corresponding to ESG 1.3) so that they give more consideration to how the concept is translated into pedagogical approaches and assessment practices; and (3) give more consideration to the primary responsibility of institutions for quality in its interpretation of ESG 1.9;

ESG 2.2: in order to make its external quality assurance methodology better fit for purpose, (1) phase out its preliminary review process; and (2) redesign its post-accreditation monitoring process before the second cycle of accreditation reviews, so that it focuses on follow-up on action taken by institutions in response to findings from accreditation reviews (rather than on progress they make towards meeting its accreditation standards, with a view to facilitating reaccreditation); and to balance this, (3) expand its QA capacity building activities for institutions, in particular on IQA, so that they are better prepared to undergo an accreditation review and take primary responsibility for quality and its assurance; put in place a mechanism for regular review of its methodology, including arrangements for regular collection of feedback on its fitness for purpose from its external stakeholders;

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ESG 2.3: for greater clarity, amend its regulations on programme accreditation so that they refer more explicitly to the compulsory status of post-accreditation monitoring and define more precisely its scope;

ESG 2.4: consider providing international experts with additional training and/or materials on the national higher education and quality assurance context;

ESG 2.5: (1) amend its Provision on decision-making of the IQAA Accreditation Council concerning institutional accreditation to explicitly authorise the Council to adjust algorithm-based ratings in justified cases (as is currently the case for programme accreditation); and (2) revise its guidelines for experts so that they define more precisely minimum requirements to be fulfilled or acceptable shortcomings for each of the four levels of compliance with its accreditation standards;

ESG 2.6: (1) amend its regulations so that they state explicitly that accreditation review reports are published on its website regardless of the final outcome of a review; and (2) accordingly, publish all reports and related decisions of the Accreditation Council at least on its main website. IQAA may also consider the value of publishing summaries in English of all accreditation review reports, including those leading to conditional accreditation and non-accreditation, on its English-language website.