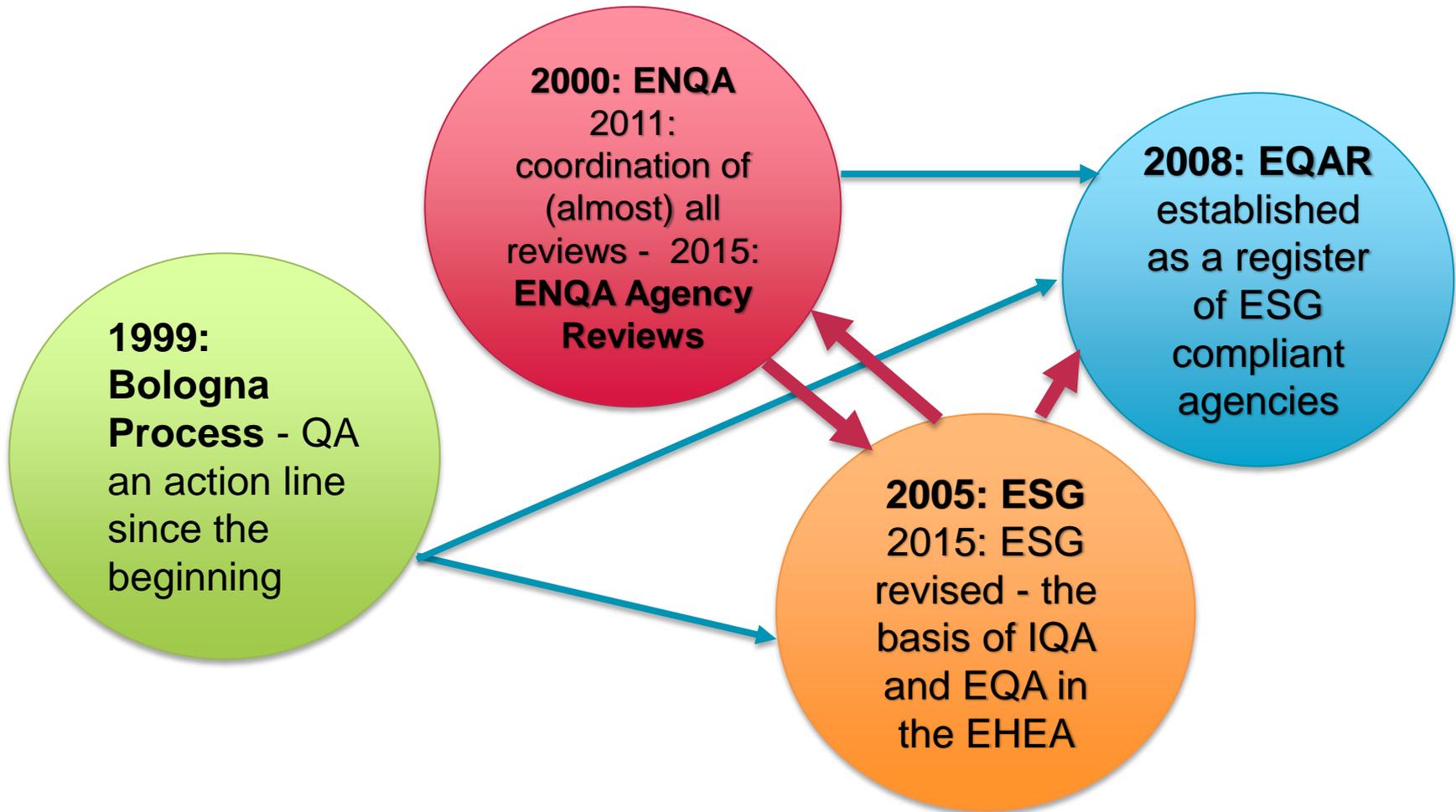


Use of the ESG for the external review of agencies

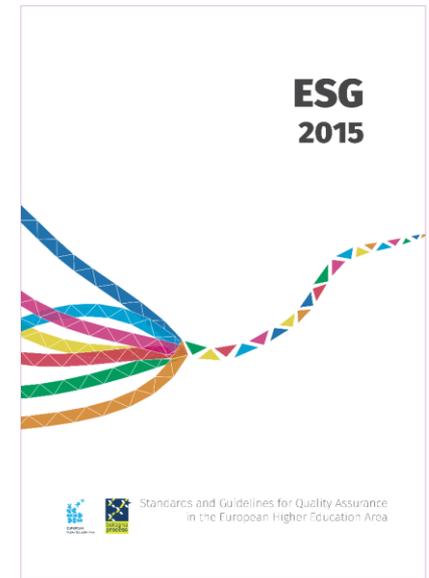
Maria Kelo
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Madrid, 31 May 2018

European Quality Assurance Framework



The ESG

- Written by the **stakeholders**, adopted by the **ministers** (2015)
- Composed of three parts:
 - Part 1 - Internal QA within HEIs
 - **Part 2 - External QA by QAAs**
 - **Part 3 - Internal QA and operation of QAAs**
- ESG are a document that needs to be read as a whole:
 - **introductory part is of central importance!**
 - parts 1, 2 and 3 build on each other
- **Four main purposes:**
 - Set a common framework for QA in Europe
 - Enable assurance and improvement of quality
 - Support mutual trust
 - Provide info on QA



How to use the standards and guidelines?

- **Generic principles** → allow for diversity of implementation; need to be “translated” into different context without losing their meaning
 - **Standards** “set out agreed and accepted practice... and **should** be taken account of and **adhered to** by those concerned”
 - **Guidelines**
 - “explain **why the standard is important**”
 - “describe how standards **might be implemented**”.
 - “set out **good practice** ... (but).. Implementation *will* vary depending on different contexts”
 - If do things in another (good) way, OK → explain “why?”
- The big challenge of the ESG and for the reviewers: **not a checklist!**
- **Interpretation** by programmes, HEIs, agencies, ENQA, EQAR... (leave your package home)

What is particularly important in...

...ESG 2.3 – implementing processes

...ESG 2.4 – peer review experts

...ESG 2.6 – reporting



ESG 2.3 Implementing processes

To consider:

If some procedures deviate from the usual model there has to be **explanation and justification provided** (e.g. if the site visits is not a part of the process).

There could be various approaches to follow-up, agency decides in light of its mission and as appropriate in its context. BUT the **next review should not be interpreted as follow-up!**

Processes should be useful (identification of main stakeholders and their views on the usefulness)

Good practice: recommendations, methodologies for HEIs provided by the agency to support follow-up; special events.

ESG 2.4 Peer-review experts

To consider:

At least one student member in the panel.

Role of students. How does an agency demonstrate that students are equal members of the panel? Do they participate in decision making?

How wide is the **range of experts**? Who are/should be in panels depending on the nature of the process? **What about international experts?** (guideline – but a “strong” one)

Is it clear, what the expert **selection criteria are** for each QA activity?

How is **no conflict of interest** guaranteed?

ESG 2.6 Reporting

To consider:

Summary reports not enough – need to publish **full (expert) reports**.

Full reports published also for **cross-border QA** activities if within the scope of the ESG.

What **measures/internal procedures** has the agency in place to **ensure the reports are clear** (“reader friendly”) and **accessible**?

How is the **quality and consistency** of the content ensured (e.g. by training, guidance, report templates)?

Good practice: summary reports (to better serve the needs of different target groups) and opportunity to HEIs to point out the errors of fact in the reports.

What is particularly important in...

...ESG 3.4 – thematic analysis

...ESG 3.5 – resources

...ESG 3.6 – IQA and professional conduct



ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis

To consider:

Thematic reports should present the **general findings of EQA activities** and not any other kind of information about the agency or its performance

→ factual and descriptive **annual reports do not qualify** as thematic reports! The

The **regularity** of the reports can depend on the scope of the agency's activities, but the agency should have a **clear plan for when and how to carry out these analyses**, e.g. at the end of each review cycle; after each cluster of evaluations; selecting thematic topics (how?) every 3-4-5 years, etc. → ideally not only ad hoc projects!

ESG 3.5 Resources

To consider:

Agencies should demonstrate a good **balance** between their financial **and** human resources and the volume **and type** of their activity.

Agencies should have adequate and **appropriate** resources to carry out all activities connected to their mission including:

- **to improve continuously** (e.g. investment in staff development)
- to carry out **information activities**
- to carry out **thematic analysis**

→ “do not have time”, or “do not have the right people” are not good excuses for not doing thematic analysis, info activities, follow-up, training of experts, etc.

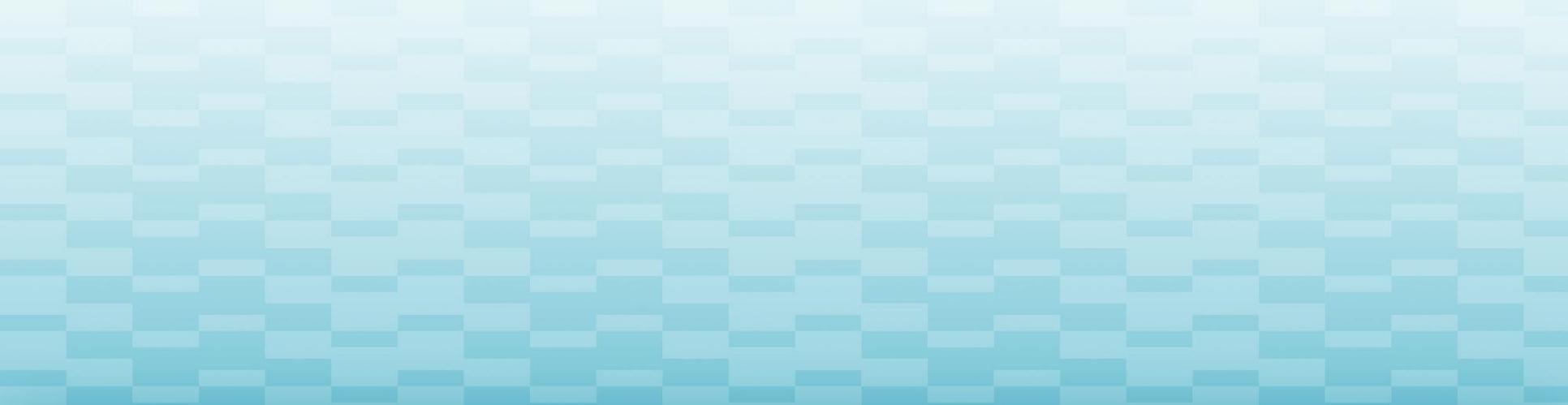
ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

To consider:

Internal quality processes and organisational culture, in particular **integrity** of their activities, are paramount to the Agencies who evaluate quality of others.

The processes for internal quality assurance need to be **formal and regular**, and not just informal.

IQA policy



Thank you!

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