

ENQA General Complaints Policy for Third Parties

Adopted by the ENQA Board on 26 November 2014, revised 25 April 2019

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) is a membership association of quality assurance agencies based in the European Higher Education Area. In order to be accepted as Members of ENQA, the agencies need to demonstrate, through an external review by an independent panel of reviewers, that they comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The membership is given for five years at a time and requires a new review process prior to renewal. The membership in ENQA is voluntary for quality assurance agencies.

Individuals or organisations that have substantiated concerns about an ENQA Member agency's compliance with the ESG may address these to ENQA in line with this complaints policy.

Principles

A complaint will only be considered as an official complaint if it is substantiated and supported by appropriate evidence, references and examples.

ENQA will only consider complaints that are related to:

- a member agency's compliance with the ESG
- the integrity of the external review and decision making process on the basis of which the agency was admitted as a member in ENQA.

ENQA does not have a mandate to:

- review individual processes or decisions of its member agencies concerning a particular higher education institution or programme. ENQA will not make statements regarding the outcomes of such procedures, or assess any specific decision by the agency concerned.
- construe national legislation, European Union law, or any other applicable rules. Concerns as regards compliance with such rules should be addressed to the competent courts or authorities. Agency's own, or nationally available channels for appeals and complaints should be exhausted, wherever available and relevant, prior to submitting a complaint to ENQA.

Process

Complaints have to be submitted to the ENQA Secretariat in writing by email, fax, or regular mail. Any documents should be attached in plain text or pdf format. Direct mailing to individual staff members of the Secretariat or of the Board members is strongly discouraged as complaints received through these channels will not be considered as official formal complaints. ENQA will acknowledge the receipt of complaints within seven days.

The complaint will be considered by the ENQA Board. ENQA reserves the right to ignore submissions that are bogus or obviously unsubstantiated. The ENQA Board will decide if and what action to take, as appropriate and in line with the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews and ENQA Statutes.

The agency concerned will be informed and invited to make representation of its view on the complaints raised. The agency can opt to have a notary verify the fact that a complaint has in fact been made through an official channel. The ENQA Board will take into account the concerned agency's response when assessing the complaint.

At the complainant's request ENQA shall not disclose their identity to the agency concerned or to any other third party.

ENQA will inform the complainant after the complaint has been considered.

Format

Complaints have to be clearly addressed to ENQA, and follow the above-mentioned procedures for submission. Bulk messages will be ignored. The complaint should include the complainant's identity, contact information and a statement whether the complainant's identity may be disclosed to the agency concerned.

Complaints have to include at least the following:

- the name of the agency concerned
- state clearly the complainant's concerns with regard to the agency's compliance with the ESG or the integrity of the external review process. Whenever possible, complainants should refer to specific standards or guidelines of the ESG, or to specific sections of the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews.
- Evidence supporting the concerns. Evidence should be directly relevant and proportionate to the concerns raised, and should be provided in English.
- A statement whether the issue has been taken up with the agency concerned; if so with what results and if not, for what reason.
- Information on any current or past relationship of the complainant with the agency concerned.

Disclaimer and further information

This complaints policy is solely designed to provide guidelines within ENQA for purposes of reviewing complaints. It may not be relied upon in any manner by any other person or for any other purpose.

The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) may be found at:

<http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/>

ENQA Statutes can be found at:

<http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ENQA-Statutes-2015-EN.pdf>

ENQA Rules of Procedure can be found at:

<https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ENQA-Rules-of-Procedure-2018.pdf>

Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews can be found at:

<http://www.enqa.eu/indirme/papers-and-reports/occasional-papers/Guidelines%20for%20ENQA%20Agency%20Reviews.pdf>

In case of questions regarding the complaints policy, please contact the ENQA Secretariat at secretariat@enqa.eu.