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Managing Director
Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS)
Sedanstrasse 22
79098 Freiburg, Germany

Brussels, 27 June 2019

Subject: Membership of AHPGS in ENQA

Dear Mr. Reschauer,

I am writing to inform you of the decision taken by the ENQA Board on 20 June 2019 regarding the membership of AHPGS in ENQA. After a consideration of the review report and the response of the panel providing an elaboration on how it came to certain conclusions, the ENQA Board concluded that the overall level of compliance with the ESG is not sufficient to renew the AHPGS membership at this stage.

The Board found a ‘non-compliance’ on ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis. To be in line with the requirements of the ESG, the agency should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of its own external quality assurance activities.

As stated in the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews, “a case of non-compliance would normally lead to a judgement that the agency is not substantially compliant with the ESG overall.” The evidence brought forward in the review report and the additional response of the panel confirms that no work on thematic analysis has been undertaken since the previous review in 2015. In the decision letter from ENQA to AHPGS in 2016, this standard was already flagged as a concern.

The Board decided to designate AHPGS as “Member under review” for a period of two years from 20 June 2019. The Agency will need to undergo a new partial review process at the end of this period, or sooner, if it wishes. The partial review will focus in particular on ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis and the standard that was found as partially compliant in this review (ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance).

If AHPGS is dissatisfied with the decision of the ENQA Board, it may file an appeal according to the procedures outlined in article 24 of ENQA's Rules of Procedure.

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

Yours sincerely,



Caty Duykaerts
Vice-President

Annex: Areas for development

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

ESG 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

AHPGS is recommended to develop a more robust approach to strategic planning, supported by a financial plan which demonstrates sustainability, improvement and forward planning. Furthermore, AHPGS is recommended to broaden the integration of international expertise in their Governing bodies.

ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis

AHPGS is recommended to allocate financial and human resources to regularly develop thematic analysis.

ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

AHPGS is recommended a further formalisation of its internal feedback mechanism.

ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

AHPGS is recommended to develop more widely all the criteria of Part 1 in the international assessments. To demonstrate compliance with ESG Part 1, the agency should undertake a mapping exercise that clearly indicates that all standards are addressed.

ESG 2.3 Implementing processes

AHPGS is recommended to take a more active role in the follow-up of the conditioned assessments outside Germany.

ESG 2.4 Peer-review experts

AHPGS is recommended the intensification and further improvement of the training provided by the agency, for new and experienced members. Furthermore, AHPGS is recommended to expand the recruitment of experts, increasing transparency and widening accessibility.

ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals

AHPGS is recommended to establish a body to deal with complaints which is independent from both the accreditation commission and the executive board. Furthermore, AHPGS is recommended to review the complaints procedure to include common elements of a complaints procedure and use the procedure as a means of stimulating agency improvements.