



Second or subsequent review
against the ESG –
value of the process for the
development of the agency
Case study: AQ Austria

ENQA seminar for recently reviewed
agencies, Porto, 1 October 2019

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AQ Austria's review – time line

Nov 2017 Request for review

Dec 2017 Start of self-evaluation

Feb 2018 SWOT

Various internal analyses/forms of stakeholder feedback

Nov 2018 Adoption of the SAR/Submission to ENQA

Feb 2019 Site-Visit

June 2018 ENQA-Board decision

Nov 2019 Board Decision on follow-up plan

AQ Austria's review - framework

2016	Evaluation of law on QA (HS-QSG)
2016	Revision of mission statement
2017/18	Revision of quality assurance processes
2017/18	Self-evaluation for ENQA review

Approach to Review

- AQ Austria, being an established and self-confident agency used the second (third) review as an opportunity for a self-critical and future-looking self-evaluation.
- The review formed the last and consolidating step of a comprehensive self-evaluation.
- AQ Austria took the tension between compliance and development easy.

A photograph of a man with a light beard and mustache, looking directly at the camera. He is touching his right hand to his cheek. The background is a plain, light grey color.

UPSHAVERS

**Review as a
welcome irritation**

ESG 2015 as trigger for development? - 1

ESG part 2

- New QA processes 2013 drafted in parallel to ESG 2015 which were taken into account, recognized in 2014 ENQA review.

ESG part 3

- No major material changes



ESG 2015 as trigger for development? - 2

ESG part 1

- Accreditation processes 2015 (criteria) with fine-tuning re student-centered learning and diverse student population
 - Audit process 2015 (standards) without adaptation
- ESG 2015 with small contribution to development



Review as trigger for development? - 1

- Self-evaluation resulted in important lessons learned and in various immediate actions at operational level
- Self-evaluation resulted in 3 future actions
- 8 *recommendations* (3 on thematic analyses) result in 7 future actions (3 on thematic analyses, 1 on internal QA, 1 re a legal change, 2 further analyses)
- Out of 5 *suggestions for further development* 1 was already implemented, 2 were being implemented, 1 didn't make sense, 1 will result in further analysis.

Review as trigger for development? - 2

The most important challenges for AQ Austria

“... a more balanced implementation of the broad remit of AQ Austria ranks high, particularly as regards consultancy and voluntary evaluations in all sectors of the Austrian higher education sector.

(...)

the strengthening of the enhancement dimension in the external quality assurance procedures in the sectors just mentioned will be challenging as well.”

Will be at the core of the follow-up.

Review as trigger for development? - 3

Yes, but:

- Out of the 11 envisaged actions only 3 are directly relevant for AQ Austria's future level of compliance
- The most relevant challenges and areas for future development as identified in the self-evaluation were hardly addressed by the panel because of loose links to ESG

Overall experience - 1

- The agency's attitude is key, particularly in 2nd or subsequent reviews!
- Self-evaluation is key!
- Limited focus of the review on ESG reduces the potential of the review.

- Focus of ESG on learning and teaching and on single QA procedures reduces the relevance of the review.

Overall experience - 2



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https://www.aq.ac.at/de/internationales/dokumente-internationales/AQ_Austria_external_review_report.pdf?m=1562336311&

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