
ENQA AGENCY REVIEW: FONDACIÓN PARA EL CONOCIMIENTO MADRIMASD (madri+d)

NORMA RYAN, NIEVES PASCUAL, ALMANTAS SERPATAUSKAS, ALEKSANDAR SUSNAR
20 FEBRUARY 2020

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	4
BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW AND OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW PROCESS.....	4
BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW	4
MAIN FINDINGS OF THE 2015 REVIEW	4
REVIEW PROCESS	6
HIGHER EDUCATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF THE AGENCY	8
HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM	8
QUALITY ASSURANCE	10
THE FOUNDATION.....	11
THE FOUNDATION'S ORGANISATION/STRUCTURE	11
THE FOUNDATION'S FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES, PROCEDURES	13
THE FOUNDATION'S FUNDING	17
FINDINGS: COMPLIANCE OF MADRI+D WITH THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (ESG).....	18
ESG PART 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES.....	18
ESG 3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY, AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE	18
ESG 3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS	19
ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE	20
ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS	22
ESG 3.5 RESOURCES	23
ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT	25
ESG 3.7 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES.....	27
ESG PART 2: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE	27
ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	27
ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE	29
ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES.....	30
ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS	33
ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES	35
ESG 2.6 REPORTING	36
ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS.....	38
SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS.....	40
OVERVIEW OF JUDGEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	40

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT	41
ANNEXES	43
ANNEX 1: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT.....	43
ANNEX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW	51
ANNEX 3: GLOSSARY.....	57
ANNEX 4. DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE REVIEW	58
DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY THE FOUNDATION	58
DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY THE FOUNDATION UPON THE REQUEST OF THE PANEL.....	58
OTHER SOURCES USED BY THE REVIEW PANEL	58

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report results from an external review assessing the compliance of the Fundación para el Conocimiento madri+d (the Foundation), with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) parts 2 and 3. It is the agency's second review coordinated by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and its first under the updated ESG from 2015. The Foundation has been a member of ENQA since March 2015 and has been listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) since June 2015. The Foundation is applying for renewal of its membership in ENQA and for renewal of registration in EQAR. This external review report is based on a review process that uses the Foundation's self-assessment report, the information published on the Foundation's website and the information gathered during the site visit by the ENQA-appointed review panel on September 24 to 26, 2019.

Decree 63/2014, of 29 May designates the Foundation as the official assessment body for the Madrid Higher Education System. The Foundation's objective is to contribute to the improvement of higher education by means of evaluation activities leading to accreditation and quality certification in the university environment of Madrid. The agency performs a broad range of quality assurance activities, of which the following are addressed in this external review:

- Ex-Ante Accreditation: Verification and Modification of Official Programmes
- Ex-ante evaluation of master programmes in the arts
- Monitoring
- Accreditation Renewal of official programmes
- DOCENTIA, assessment and certification of internal evaluation of teaching systems
- SISCAL madri+d, Internal Quality Assurance Systems of University Centres certification
- Institutional accreditation
- Assessment of the programmes' development plan, related to the creation, admission, authorisation and accreditation of universities and centres, as foreseen in the RD 420/2015
- Faculty assessment

The documentation reviewed and the interviews conducted during the site visit show that the Foundation is a well-established and respected agency in the university system of Madrid. The professionalism of the Foundation's staff was highly appreciated by all stakeholders, as well as the agency's openness to improvement, its great capacity for feedback, and its consistency in follow-up actions. The review panel found ample evidence of the strong influence of the Foundation across the university education system of Madrid in ensuring the quality in higher education institutions. Its role as an instrument for enhancing quality in the university sector was highlighted by most stakeholders.

The panel finds some areas for improvement and recommends the agency strengthens its independence and expertise by including foreign evaluators in their assessment panels, committees and governing bodies. Additionally, the panel recommends the agency uses the general findings of its external quality assurance processes more as a basis for system-wide analyses on the higher education system in the Region of Madrid. Finally, the panel recommends the agency establishes and publishes a protocol for complaints that is different from appeals with clear instructions for the users.

The summary of the compliance assessment by the panel is as follows:

- Fully compliant for the following ESGs: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6.
- Substantially compliant in ESG 2.7.
- Partially compliant in ESG 3.4.

INTRODUCTION

This report analyses the compliance of the Fundación para el Conocimiento madri+d (the Foundation) with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). It is based on an external review conducted between April 2019 and February 2020.

BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW AND OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

ENQA's regulations require all member agencies to undergo an external cyclical review, at least once every five years, in order to verify that they act in substantial compliance with the ESG as adopted at the Yerevan ministerial conference of the Bologna Process in 2015.

As this is the Foundation's second review, the panel is expected to provide clear evidence of results in all areas and to acknowledge progress from the previous review. The panel has adopted a developmental approach, as the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* aim at constant enhancement of the agencies.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE 2015 REVIEW

The 2015 review panel paid particular attention to the policies, procedures, and criteria in place, in accordance with the Statutes of ENQA and in line with the process described in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG), as adopted at the Bergen ministerial meeting of the Bologna process in 2005.

In the light of the documentary and oral evidence supplied by the Foundation, the review panel judged that the Foundation was in substantial compliance with the ENQA Membership Provisions. The panel noted that the agency fully complied with the ENQA Membership criteria 2, 4 and 7; and substantially complied with criteria 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8. On the basis of its findings, the panel recommended to the Board that the Foundation be admitted to membership of ENQA. Recommendations were as follows:

- ESG 2.1 'Use of internal quality assurance procedures': full compliance (now ESG 2015 Standard 2.1 'Consideration of internal quality assurance').
- ESG 2.2 'Development of external quality assurance processes': full compliance (now partly ESG 2015 Standard 2.2 'Designing methodologies fit for purpose').
- ESG 2.3 'Criteria for decisions': full compliance (now ESG 2015 Standard 2.5 'Criteria for outcomes').
- ESG 2.4 'Processes fit for purpose': substantial compliance (now partly ESG 2015 Standard 2.2 'Designing methodologies fit for purpose').
 - The Foundation should further invest in finding more students who would be willing to engage in external quality assurance processes.

- The Foundation should develop procedures which encourage the participation of international experts in reviews.
- ESG 2.5 'Reporting': substantial compliance (now ESG 2015 Standard 2.6 'Reporting').
 - The Foundation should relate key findings to conclusions more explicitly in its reports, making the deliberation by the panel visible.
 - The Foundation should consider the style of reports, to make them useful to a wider readership.
- ESG 2.6 'Follow-up Procedures': partial compliance (now partly ESG 2015 Standard 2.3 'Implementing processes').
 - The Foundation should consider to focus more on quality within the monitoring process, rather than on mere implementation.
 - The Foundation should implement a follow-up procedure within one year at most following accreditation renewal.
- ESG 2.7 'Periodic reviews': full compliance (now ESG 2015 Standard 1.10, 'Cyclical External quality assurance').
- ESG 2.8 'System-wide analysis': partial compliance (now ESG 2015 Standard 3.4 'Thematic analysis').
 - The Foundation should use the general findings of its external quality assurance processes more as a basis for system-wide analyses on the higher education system in the Region of Madrid.
- ESG 3.1 'Use of External Quality Assurance in higher education': substantial compliance (now partly ESG 2015 Standard 3.1 'Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance').
- ESG 3.2 'Official status': full compliance (now ESG 2015 Standard 3.2, 'Official status').
- ESG 3.3 'Activities': full compliance (now partly ESG 2015 Standard 3.1 'Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance').
- ESG 3.4 'Resources': substantial compliance (now ESG 2015 Standard 3.5 'Resources').
 - The Foundation should consider its internal communications strategy, to ensure the active involvement of all staff within the organization.
- ESG 3.5 'Mission statement': full compliance (now partly ESG 2015 Standard 3.1 'Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance').
- ESG 3.6 'Independence': substantial compliance (now ESG 2015 Standard 3.3 'Independence').
 - The Foundation might reconsider the appointment procedure of the Board of Trustees in order to achieve greater formal independence from the Regional Government.
- 3.7 'External quality assurance criteria and processes used by members': substantial compliance (now partly ESG 2015 Standard 2.3 'Implementing processes', Standard 2.4 'Peer-review experts', and Standard 2.7 'Complaints and appeals').

- The Foundation should clearly communicate the appeal procedures.
 - The Foundation should implement a follow-up procedure after a positive accreditation renewal decision.
- 3.8 ‘Accountability procedures’: full compliance (now partly ESG 2015 Standard 3.6 ‘Internal quality assurance and professional conduct’, and Standard 3.7 ‘Cyclical external review of agencies’).
 - ENQA Criterion 8 ‘Consistency of judgements, appeals system and contribution to ENQA aims: substantial compliance (now partly ESG 2015 Standard 2.7 ‘Complaints and appeals’).
 - The Foundation should clearly communicate the appeal procedures.

Following the panel’s recommendations, the Board of ENQA granted the Foundation full membership in March 2015 for a period of five years. Within two years of this decision, in March 2017, the Foundation submitted a follow-up report on the improvements made based on the recommendations of the panel. The ENQA Board considered the follow-up report in its meeting of May 2017. In a letter dated June 7, 2017 to the Foundation, the Board of ENQA acknowledged the progress made and expressed its satisfaction with the improvements achieved.

REVIEW PROCESS

The 2019 external review of the Foundation was conducted in line with the process described in the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and in accordance with the timeline set out in the *Terms of Reference*. The panel for the external review of the Foundation was appointed by ENQA and composed of the following members:

- Norma Ryan (Chair), Independent QA consultant, Ireland (EUA nominated);
- Nieves Pascual (Secretary), Professor, Valencian International University, Spain;
- Almantas Šerpatauskas’, Acting director, Center for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), Lithuania;
- Aleksandar Šušnjar, PhD student in Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Rijeka, Croatia (ESU nominated, “Member of the European Students’ Union Quality Assurance Student Experts Pool”).

Anaïs Gourdin, ENQA’s Project Manager, acted as process coordinator for the review. She monitored the integrity of the process and ensured that ENQA expectations were met.

The panel received the agency’s self-assessment report in June 2019 and had a video conference on July 15 to discuss practical details of the review and its preparation. In the period running up to the visit in September 2019, the panel exchanged e-mail correspondence on the proposed time schedule for the site visit and the contents of the mapping grid. During this time the panel secretary had regular contact with the Foundation’s review coordinator and ENQA process coordinator.

The main aim of the site visit was to fully validate the information contained in the self-assessment report and clarify any points at issue. The panel confirms that the interviews conducted during the site visit were highly informative. The panel was given access to all the documents it needed to review. Even though not all documentation was available in English, panel members with knowledge of Spanish analysed the documents in Spanish and shared their findings with the other members. This

allowed the whole panel to consult all the necessary information. The final report was produced based on the self-assessment report of the agency, the site visit, and its findings.

Self-assessment report

At the end of 2017, the Foundation started work on its SAR. At the same time, the agency initiated drafting its next multiannual strategic plan. Both processes complemented each other. “In February 2018, an expert consultant in organisation analysis and strategic plan definition was hired” (SAR 8). In July 2018, a team was formed to elaborate the report. The team counted with the participation of the QA Manager, the Director and the General Coordinator of the agency. In January 2019, an external expert from the University system joined the team part-time.

The team collected documents, checked reviews, surveys and metaevaluations by stakeholders, consulted other agencies’ SARs and held internal meetings with the agency's personnel. Interviews were conducted “with the director of quality assurance agencies, Rectors of the public and private universities of Madrid, vicerrectors in charge of quality matters, representatives of the Regional Ministry of Education and Research of the region of Madrid.” In this regard, “A specific survey was sent to the directors of all the Spanish quality assurance agencies” (SAR 8). In April the draft was sent to the universities and the Board of Trustees. The Delegate Commission of the Board of Trustees approved the SAR in its meeting of April 23, 2019.

The final SAR is a 93-page document that follows the guidelines provided by ENQA. It gives detailed information on the Spanish higher education context, the history of the agency, its activities and its internal quality system. It provides useful links to processes, reports published, guides, protocols and pools of evaluators. The tables contained in it have proved to be extremely helpful. The SWOT is honest and open in the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The report is well-written, clear, easy to read and carefully formatted. The documentation the panel received from the agency was excellent.

Site visit

The site visit took place from 24-26 September (Annex 1). The programme included interviews with the Director; the SAR team; Heads of Communication and Internal Quality; members of the Secretariat; Heads and members of Evaluation, Certification and Institutional Evaluacion Commissions; President and Vice-President of the Board of Trustees; Members of the Advisory Committee and the Advisory Council; Board of Appeals; Manager of the Accounting Department; external experts involved in programme and institutional accreditation; Rectors of private and public universities; students involved in recent accreditation procedures; QA officers of HEIs; stakeholders from Trade Unions, Social Councils, Research Centres and Madrid Institute for Advanced Studies, as well as representatives of the Council of Universities and the National Ministry of Education.

The visit was well planned and organised. The staff of the agency demonstrated high professionalism during the entire review process and provided excellent assistance to the panel in all matters.

To prepare for the first day the panel had a meeting on September 23. The panel went over the mapping grid and organised questions for sessions according to groups to be interviewed. It was followed by an interview with the Director of the Foundation to clarify elements related to the overall education system in Spain and the context of the agency. During the site visit members of the panel had internal meetings at the beginning of the day, after each interview session, and at the end of the day. On the final day the panel held a meeting to reach preliminary conclusions on the agency's compliance with each of the standards in parts 2 and 3 of the ESG. After the site visit, panel members

sent their notes to the secretary who drafted a first version of the review report. After the draft was circulated and reviewed by all panel members, it was sent to the ENQA process coordinator at the beginning of November. On November 27th, it was sent to the Foundation for factual verifications, in accordance with the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews. The final external report was presented to the ENQA Board in February 2020.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF THE AGENCY

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The legal framework that regulates Spanish policy in matters of education has its basis in the Spanish Constitution of 1978. Article 27 recognises the autonomy of universities and ensures that the decisions of academic nature of public and private universities are taken by bodies in which the teaching and research staff have a majority representation. Article 149 gives the State exclusive competence over the promotion and general coordination of scientific and technical research. It also sets the responsibility of the State to regulate the conditions for issuing academic and professional qualifications. Organic Law 6/2001 of December 21, amended by Organic Law 4/2007 of April 12, enhances the autonomy of the universities while increasing the demand for accountability on the performance of their duties. It also enhances the role and the responsibility of all stakeholders within the university system by better articulating the relationship between them: While the State establishes the basic rules for the development of the autonomy of universities, the autonomous communities are responsible for university policy as laid down in the statutes of autonomy.

The Spanish State has 17 Autonomous Communities and 84 universities, of which 82 are active, spread on 235 campuses (on-site universities) and 113 sites (online universities). Of those that are active, 50 are public and 32 are private. According to the *Statistics Report on the Spanish University System* published in 2019 by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, during the academic year 2017-2018, there were 1,047 colleges, 532 research institutes, 49 doctoral schools and 75 foundations in Spain.

University education in Spain is divided into five academic fields: Arts and Humanities, Science, Health Sciences, Social and Legal Sciences, and Engineering and Architecture. Degrees have a three-cycle structure. Bachelor degrees, usually composed of 240 ECTS, provide students with a general education in one or several disciplines and prepare them for professional activities. Master degrees, usually composed of 60 to 120 ECTS, allow students to acquire an advanced, specialised or multi-disciplinary learning in a professional or academic specialization. Doctorate degrees train students in advanced research techniques and require a doctoral thesis consisting of an original work of research.

As to the university programmes available in 2017-2018, a total of 2,864 bachelor degrees were offered (1,007 in Social and Legal Sciences), of which 2,130 were taught in public universities. The number of master degrees earned in Spain that year was 3,567, of which 2,789 were awarded in public universities. The number of doctorate degrees offered was 1,120, of which 90 were taught at private universities with 5% of students.

Concerning number of students, a total of 1,575,579 enrolled in Spanish Universities during 2017-2018. Compared to the previous year, an increase of 1,1 % was recorded in the University Enrollment Rate (percentage of population between the ages of 18 and 24 registered in bachelor and master degrees).

Regarding teaching and research staff, the number in 2017-2018 was of 120,383, with an increase of 1,9% over the previous year. Of that total, 102,297 worked at public universities and 18,086 at private universities. The number of full-time positions amounted to 82,469, an increase of 0,8% from the previous year. The number of tenured professors was 43,318. Women made up 35,7 %.

Higher Education System in Madrid

The legal framework for the Higher Education System in Madrid was established in article 29 of the Statute of Autonomy of February 25, 1983. The article legislated that it corresponded to the Regional Government of Madrid “the competence for the legislative development and execution of educational matters, at all levels and in all degrees, modalities and specialties, in line with article 27 of the Spanish Constitution,” without encroaching upon the prerogatives of the State, as laid down in article 149 of the Constitution. Article 29 also ruled that the Regional Government of Madrid was to collaborate with the State in the evaluation of the national system of education.

Currently, the community of Madrid holds 15 universities in its territory, i.e. 18% of the country’s universities. Its higher education system is the biggest in Spain in terms of number of universities, students and faculty members. Of these 15 universities, 7 are public (Universidad de Alcalá, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, UNED). The rest (8 universities) are private (Universidad Alfonso X El Sabio, Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, Universidad Camilo José Cela, Universidad a Distancia de Madrid -UDIMA, Universidad Europea de Madrid, Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Universidad San Pablo CEU, Universidad Pontificia Comillas de Madrid). Recently three institutions: Colegio Universitario de Estudios Financieros (CUNEF), Escuela de Negocios y Centro Universitario (ESIC) and Universidad Internacional Villanueva, previously affiliated to other universities, have received approval to become private universities and will start operating as such in the coming years.

Other universities, in Spain (Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca) and outside Spain (Saint Louis University, Suffolk University, Schiller International University, Asociación ESCP Europe España, and Universidad Francisco Marroquín) have locations in Madrid. So do the following centres affiliated to universities: Centro de Estudios Superiores Instituto de Empresa (IE Universidad), Centro ESADE (Universidad Ramón Llull de Barcelona), and Centro de Educación Superior NEXT (Universidad de Lleida). As the SAR specifies (p. 11): “In Spain, universities operate through own centres and affiliated centres, which are public or private institutions that establish a cooperation agreement with a university that allows them to provide official degrees. Currently, the number of own centres in Madrid is 277 and the number of affiliated centres is 31.”

The number of official programmes offered by the different universities of Madrid during the academic year 2017-2018, including bachelor and master degrees, was 1,077. Among these, 470 were bachelor degrees and 607 were master degrees. At the doctoral level, Madrid has approved 318 programmes out of the 1,650 approved in Spain.

In the year 2017-2018, a total of 298,065 university students were concentrated in the community of Madrid (17% of all students enrolled in all universities in Spain). The distribution of students in Madrid was as follows (The SAR shows tables of number of students enrolled by universities, pp. 12 & 13):

- 206,104 in public universities (192,104 in public universities and 13,840 in centres affiliated to public universities)
- 33,873 in affiliated centres of Madrid and Madrid-Sur (UNED)

- 58,148 in private universities and those of the Catholic Church

Of these students, 29% came from outside Madrid. The percentage of international students (especially Latin Americans and Europeans) was 9,78%. As of 2019, the number of students at HEIs in Madrid has reached 317,577.

Regarding teaching and research staff in the region of Madrid, the current number amounts to 24,242, of which 69.78% are employed by public universities (56.6% are tenured while 43.4 % are lecturers under different categories). The percentage of PhD holders among all of them is 68.3%.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

In line with the division of competences ruled by Spanish law in matters of higher education between the State and the autonomous communities, external quality assurance in higher education is provided by regional agencies. Currently there are 10 regional agencies in the country (in Andalusia, Aragon, Canary Islands, Castile and Leon, Catalonia, Madrid, Valencia, Galicia, Balearic Islands and Vasque Country). Besides them, there is a national agency (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación, ANECA), in charge of evaluating official programmes and institutions in those regions where there is no regional agency.

In October 2006, all the Spanish quality assurance agencies set up a network called Red Española de Agencias de Calidad Universitaria (REACU) to promote collaboration, exchange good practices, develop quality assurance standards, and support the implementation of accreditation systems. Agencies have a friendly connection. They share experts and cooperate in projects. REACU fulfills the important role of harmonizing criteria and formulating common guidelines. Proof of this collaboration is DOCENTIA (2007), a voluntary evaluation scheme jointly designed to support universities in the design of their own procedures for the evaluation of the quality of teaching. REACU holds periodic meetings of directors and technical staff and has an open dialogue with the Ministry and the universities.

The review procedures conducted by quality agencies in Spain are regulated by the following legislation:

- Royal Decree 1393/2007 which establishes the organisation and planning of official university education.
- Royal Decree 1614/2009 which establishes the organisation and planning of higher education in the Arts (music and dance, performance, preservation and restoration of cultural heritage, design and visual arts).
- Royal Decree 99/2011 which regulates official doctoral studies.
- Royal Decree 420/2015 for the foundation, recognition, authorisation and accreditation of universities and university centres.
- Resolution of 7 March of 2018 which develops the procedure to be applied by the agencies to proceed to the Institutional Accreditation of university centres.

Concerning programme review, the Spanish Government lays down that degrees and higher education qualifications must follow a system of ex-ante accreditation (verification and modification) monitoring and ex-post accreditation (accreditation renewal). The Foundation has conducted the evaluation of degrees since 2013.

Since 2015 university centres (faculties or schools) can obtain institutional accreditation based on the ex-post accreditation of at least half of their official bachelor and master programmes in combination with the certification of their internal quality assurance system. In 2018 the Foundation started implementing the certification of quality assurance systems of university centres. In 2019 the agency started implementing institutional accreditation.

THE FOUNDATION

The Fundación para el Conocimiento madri+d (the Foundation) was established in Government Decree 63/2002 of the Regional Government of Madrid by which it was created. Its purpose is to contribute to the social improvement of science and technology; support the development and management of technological scientific knowledge and promote the society of knowledge. Its objectives are strengthening and coordinating the Madrid R&D and Innovation Regional System through joint projects and actions, supporting technology transfer and commercialization activities, developing a framework to encourage start-ups from R&D and Innovation projects, fostering the participation in European R&D and Innovation programmes, and improving the quality of the Higher Education system in the Region of Madrid.

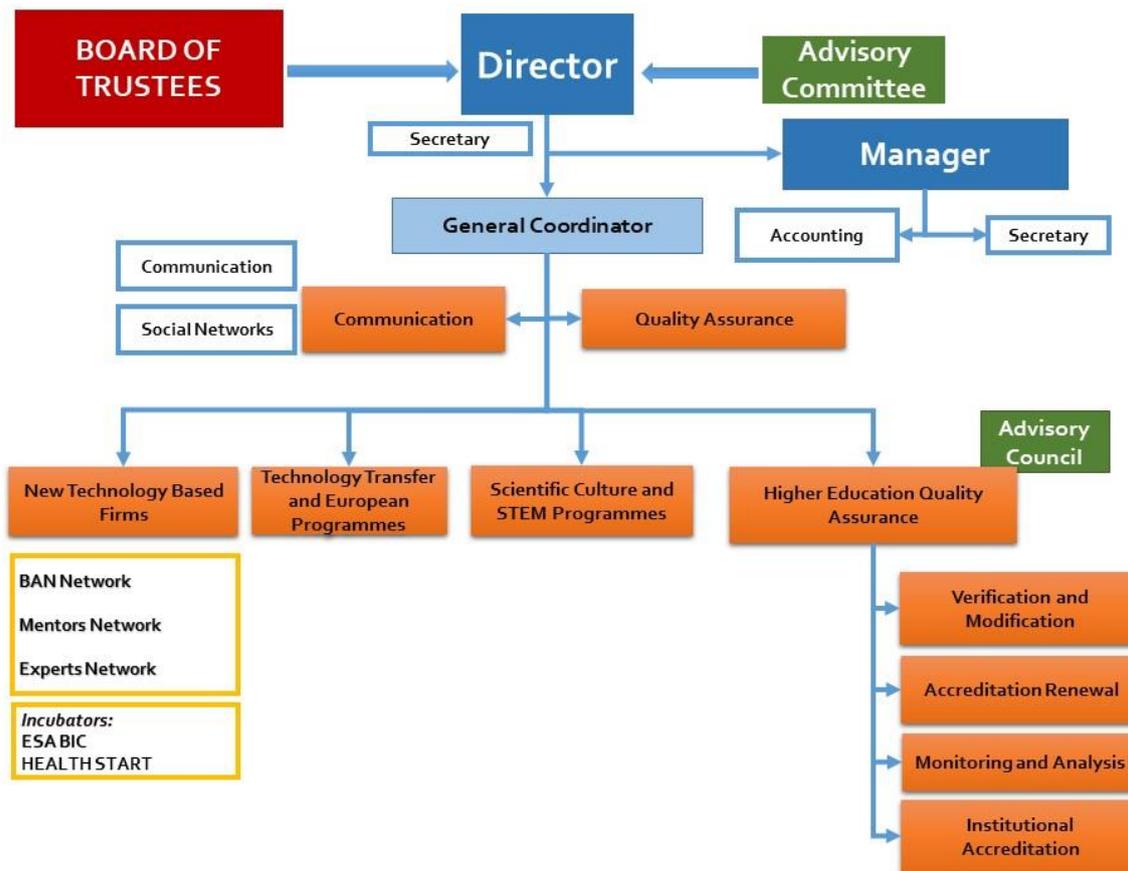
In 2013, the former Agency for Quality, Accreditation and Prospective of the Madrid Universities, ACAP (created by law 15/2002 of December 27), was absorbed into the Foundation. As a result, the activities related to evaluation, accreditation and certification of the quality of the higher education system in Madrid according to the principles of EHEA were taken over by the Foundation. Decree 63/2014, of 29 May, designates the Foundation the official assessment body for the Madrid Higher Education System.

The Foundation is a non-profit organization with its own legal personality that acts independently of its members to fulfill its objectives. It is governed by its own Statutes. In relation to the objectives pertaining to the evaluation of quality in higher education, as set out in Article 5.3 of the Statutes of the Foundation, the Foundation is designed to:

- a) Promote transparency, cooperation and competence among universities.
- b) Foster improvement of teaching and research activities.
- c) Make available the information necessary for society to promote efficient decision-making, excellence and mobility of students and faculty.
- d) Have in place an internal quality assurance system, publicly available, that includes mechanisms to gather internal and external information about the activities it develops, procedures of evaluation and continuous improvement.
- e) Undergo an external cyclic review, at least every five years, by a team of international experts.

THE FOUNDATION'S ORGANISATION/STRUCTURE

The Foundation's organisational structure is defined in Chapter IV of the Statutes and can be found below as withdrawn from the agency's website.



The **Board of Trustees** is the highest governing representative and administrative body of the Foundation. It meets twice a year. Its main function is to ensure that the objectives of the Foundation are fulfilled. This involves the approval of the annual programme of activities, strategic plans, annual preliminary budgets and quality policy as well as the adoption of appropriate measures for the best organisation and functioning of the Foundation.

It is composed of the president (head of the competent office of the Regional Government with responsibility for universities in the region of Madrid), the vice-president (head of the competent Directorate General with responsibility for universities in Madrid), and 13 members. Members include representatives from the the following bodies in the region of Madrid: Directorate General for Research, Subdirectorate General for Universities, Subdirectorate General for Research, Regional Council for Employment, Regional Council for Research, private universities, CEOE Business Confederation (CEIM), IMDEA Foundations, Council of Students, Social Councils, Trade Unions, and Superior Scientific Research Council (CSIC). In addition, the Board of Trustees may appoint up to a maximum of three trustees, all experts of renowned prestige in university matters, from outside Madrid.

The **Director** is appointed by the Board of Trustees following an open call selection process conducted by an external and independent committee. “The Director must demonstrate specific abilities and skills in the area of university evaluation and accreditation, as well as in the promotion, management and evaluation of research, and must be a person of renowned prestige in these areas of knowledge” (SAR, p. 18). The mandate lasts four years. The functions of the Director are: Drawing up the annual action plan, preparing budgets and annual accounts as well as directing, organizing, managing and monitoring the activities of the Foundation in accordance with the guidelines of the Board of Trustees.

The **Advisory Committee** is an advisory body that consists of national and international experts of renowned prestige and professional competence in the areas of the Foundation. Among its functions are: Suggesting ways to innovate procedures and improve the prestige of the agency, providing orientation in the development of university quality policy and giving advice on key aspects in the organisation of national and international events. With the new Director this Committee is being reorganised into subcommittees to increase efficiency. According to the SAR, “in addition to the advisory activity, these groups will also work as ‘think tanks’ on strategic issues related with higher education and the future of the labor market” (p. 20), offering analysis and opinion about quality policy and plans.

The **Manager** is selected for his/her specific qualifications to hold the position and is appointed by the Executive Commission of the Board of Trustees. The manager is not a trustee. The functions of the Manager, under the supervision of the Director, are: To manage administrative, financial, contractual and personnel aspects of the agency.

The **General Coordinator** coordinates the work (along with the Director and the Manager) of the four areas of the Foundation, which are:

- a) Scientific Culture and STEM Area. It coordinates the European Researchers Night; the Science, Technology and Innovation Week, and the Science and Innovation Fair. It publishes a free, daily science and technology newsletter called *Notiweb*.
- b) The Technology Transfer and European Projects Area. It encourages the participation of Madrid entrepreneurs and researchers in European research and innovation networks and programmes. It also promotes commercialization of research results.
- c) The Technology Based Entrepreneurship Area. It promotes entrepreneurial culture and helps consolidate new science-technology-based companies.
- d) The Quality Assurance in Higher Education Area. It is divided in four subareas, Verification and Modification, Accreditation Renewal, Monitoring and Analysis, and Institutional Accreditation.

Evaluation commissions. They are organised in the fields of Engineering and Architecture, Science, Health Sciences, Arts and Humanities and Social/Legal Sciences. Their composition is regulated by the Board of Trustees in accordance to the criteria of independence and competence, following international standards. They are specific for each evaluation procedure and are responsible for insuing the final evaluation report. Evaluation commissions are renewed every four years.

The **Advisory Council** is an advisory body that consists of representatives of the Regional Government, Vicerectorates of Quality and the Social Council of Madrid Universities. It meets at least twice a year. Its functions are to give advice on the evaluation and accreditation methodologies used, improvements to apply and internal procedures developed to assure quality. In addition, the Council helps as means to exchange information related to quality assurance among the institutions involved in external quality procedures.

THE FOUNDATION’S FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES, PROCEDURES

The agency performs a broad range of quality assurance activities, varying from the the evaluation of study programmes through the evaluation of university centres in Madrid to faculty assessment.

- **Evaluation of bachelor degrees, master degrees and doctoral studies:**

All degrees must undergo ex-ante accreditation, monitoring and accreditation renewal.

Ex-ante accreditation: verification and modification

Before universities may implement a new degree programme, it needs to be verified. In this procedure the university sends an application to the National Council of Universities who requests from the Foundation a report on the degree. The Evaluation and Certification Commission of the agency evaluates the proposal. This is a desk-based exercise that assesses whether the degree complies with the legal requirements in place. It reviews governance, teaching and learning activities, academic and administrative staff, internal QA system, and facilities of the institution. The report is then sent to the university and the National Council of Universities who decides on the verification. After verification, the Regional Government authorizes the implementation of the degree which is entered in the Register of Universities, Centres and Titles (RUCT) of the Ministry of Education. The Foundation started the verification of programmes in 2016. In the last three years (2016-2018), 344 programmes have been verified.

Once a programme has been implemented for at least a year, universities may request substantial modifications to the verified degree. In these cases, the Committee evaluates the overall coherence of the degree and issues a report indicating whether these modifications are valid under current legal rules. In the last three years, the Foundation evaluated 596 requests.

Ex-ante evaluation of master programmes in the arts

This evaluation is regulated by Royal Decree 1614/2009. Master programmes in the arts cover studies in music and dance, performing arts, preservation and restoration of cultural heritage, design and visual arts. These are delivered by Arts Schools. Although Arts Schools are not universities, the degrees awarded are university-level qualifications, according to the Spanish Qualifications Framework. The procedure is conducted by the Foundation following the same steps as in the previous model but the organ that issues the decision is the National Higher Council of Artistic Education.

Monitoring

Quality Assurance agencies are required by law to monitor the compliance of verified programmes with the initial projects. The monitoring process, which covers the period from the implementation of the degree until post-accreditation, can be of two kinds: ordinary (for those programmes whose review report did not include significant recommendations for improvement) and special (when recommendations were many and critical).

This is essentially a desk-based exercise whereby the Monitoring Evaluation Committee evaluates the SAR submitted by the university, paying attention to study plans, resources, outcomes and improvements. A provisional report is then sent to the university. As the SAR informs: "Universities can appeal the Provisional Report and provide more supporting evidences that are studied by the Plenary of the Monitoring Evaluation Committee." "After analysing the appeals the Plenary of the Monitoring Evaluation Committee issues a final monitoring report" (SAR, p. 27).

The Foundation started monitoring programmes in 2012. During 2016 and 2017 the monitoring process was suspended in the agency due to the high number of programmes under review for Accreditation Renewal. In 2018, 63 programmes were monitored by the agency. In 2019, 140 programmes were monitored. It is within the plans of the agency to redesign the monitoring process to improve efficiency.

Accreditation renewal

It takes place every 4 years (for master degrees) and every 6 years (for bachelor degrees and doctorate studies) after verification. Unlike verification and monitoring, this procedure includes a site visit. After the visit, the panel appointed by the Evaluation and Accreditation Committee drafts a report focusing on three primary areas of evaluation: Management of the programme, resources and outcomes. Once the report is analysed by the Committee, it is sent to the university, who may appeal or suggest improvement plans to address the weaknesses identified therein. As in ex-ante accreditation, the National Council of Universities issues the final decision. If positive, the programme continues its implementation as official programme. If negative, it is eliminated from the RUCT. In the last three years, the number of accreditation renewals for verified degrees has been 768.

- **Evaluation of institutions:**

DOCENTIA

The DOCENTIA programme was created in 2007 by the national quality assurance agency in coordination with regional agencies in order to help universities draw internal procedures for assessing and improving the quality of their teaching. It consists of five steps, from the design of a system for teaching planning, development and improvement, over implementation, evaluation and monitoring, until final certification. Only in the certification phase does a visit take place. Although this scheme of evaluation is not mandatory, up to date 80% of Spanish universities have participated in it (SAR, p. 33). As of 2019 five universities in Madrid have been certified and five other universities are involved in the process. Certification is renewed every five years.

SISCAL Madri+d

This model of certification was designed by the Foundation with the purpose of aiding university centres (faculties and schools) of Madrid in implementing and maintaining an internal quality assurance system to improve their programmes. It is based on the common certification protocol established in 2017 by the General Conference of University Policy. The procedure involves a site visit, after which a report is produced providing information about management of implemented programmes and continuous improvement, academic staff, learning resources, transparency and accountability. In case of compliance with the requirements, the Certification Commission of the Foundation issues the Certificate of the Implementation of the IQAS (Internal Quality Assurance System of University Centres). The model was approved by the agency in 2018 and even though it is voluntary it can lead to accreditation renewal and institutional accreditation. In 2018 one university center in Madrid was reviewed. Another is currently under certification.

Institutional accreditation

Royal Decree 420/2015, of 29 May 2015, introduces the institutional accreditation of public and private university centres (faculties or schools, not whole universities) as an alternative to the current model of ex-post accreditation. The institutional accreditation aims to simplify the process of renewing the ex-post accreditation of official degrees by recognizing the capacity of centres to guarantee the quality of their own programmes and allowing them to accredit their own degrees. The requirements to apply for institutional accreditation are specified in Resolution of March 7, 2018, of the General Secretariat of Universities. The first is for centres that have obtained renewed ex-post accreditation for at least half of the bachelor and master degrees that are taught. The second is for the centre to have the above-mentioned certification of implementation of its IQAS.

The Evaluation Commission for Institutional Accreditation that carries out this process in the Foundation consists of the Director of the agency, the person in charge of IQAS certification and the

head of Accreditation Renewal. The agency implemented this procedure in March 2019. In July 2019 it delivered the accreditation to two centres of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (Escuela Técnica Superior de Edificación and Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingenieros Industriales). The methodology for renewing institutional accreditation is still under construction but will include a site visit.

Assessment of Programmes Development Plan

As stated above, RD 420/2015 regulates the requirements for the creation, recognition, authorisation and accreditation of universities and university centres. Among these requirements is the presentation on the part of the institution of a development plan to be assessed by the Foundation. In this case, the agency's Commission of Authorisation of New Universities issues a report that is sent to the Directorate of Universities in Madrid, who ultimately decides on accreditation.

- **Faculty assessment:**

The Foundation has competences on the evaluation of academic staff on their teaching and research for contractual lecturer positions in the region of Madrid. Notwithstanding, the Regional Government of Madrid has not requested these evaluations since 2012.

The Foundation, in some cases, upon request from some universities and within the framework of their own internal processes, has evaluated the research activity of certain faculty members. These evaluations are performed according to the specific criteria established by each university. The university and the Foundation sign a specific contract for that purpose, for which the Foundation charges the university the costs of the evaluations.

- **International activities:**

The Foundation does not conduct international accreditations but **cooperates with international agencies** that perform evaluation activities in Madrid, such as ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology), MusiQuE (independent evaluation body in Europe which has the aim to assist higher music education institutions in their own enhancement of quality) and ANECA. In the first case, the Foundation participates as an observer in the accreditation of engineering programmes directed by ABET. In the second case, the Foundation assisted as secretariat to the review panel in 2018. Being ANECA authorised (by ENAEE and EQANIE) to award EUR-ACE, Euro-Inf and chemistry quality labels to engineering, informatics and chemistry programmes respectively, the Foundation collaborates through the evaluation of two label criteria.

The Foundation has participated in the forums and assemblies organised by **ENQA**, has collaborated in its working groups (on Quality Assurance and e-learning, set up in 2016) and has hosted events (12th ENQA training of agency reviewers in 2018). The agency is also participating in the DEQAR project (Database of External Quality Assurance Results). Organised by **EQAR**, the project aims to develop a large database that facilitates the access to the reports of various university evaluation processes carried out by quality assurance agencies that are registered with EQAR. Likewise, the agency has been active in disseminating quality culture through courses at universities (2017) and presentations at international forums (2018). The Foundation acknowledges in its SAR "that there is still room for growing" at the international level (p. 42) and is currently opening new avenues for cooperation in quality assurance with Latin America and Morocco.

THE FOUNDATION'S FUNDING

The Foundation is funded with public resources. It has an annual assignment for its evaluation activities that is included in the general budget of the Regional Government of Madrid. In the last five years it has increased steadily from 2,789,664€ in 2015 to 3,238,178€ in 2019. The table below, extracted from the SAR (p. 51) shows budget numbers. For regulations legislating public expenditure and resources of the Foundation, see ESG 3.5 below.

YEAR	TOTAL BUDGET	HEQA Activities	HEQA Personnel
2015	2,789,664 €	890,000 €	230,788 €
2016	2,799,664 €	1,063,090 €	240,250 €
2017	2,789,664 €	1,763,560 €	318,545 €
2018	3,013,178 €	1,369,360 €	315,086 €
2019	3,238,178 €	1,046,911 €	341,154 €

FINDINGS: COMPLIANCE OF MADRI+D WITH THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (ESG)

ESG PART 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

ESG 3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY, AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

Evidence

The Foundation has clear and explicit goals. Its mission, purposes and goals are available on its website, in English and Spanish. They are reflected on the *Articles of Association*. Article 5 reads: “The purpose of the Foundation is to contribute to making the quality of higher education, science, technology and innovation a key element for competitiveness and well-being of citizens.” Values are clearly identified in its *Quality Policy* (2017) as follows: Commitment to public service, guidance to the university community and society, independence, objectivity, impartiality, transparency, cooperation with stakeholders, responsibility and continuous improvement. Likewise, the vision of the agency is distinctly expressed in the *Strategic Plan 2019-2022* where five lines of action are proposed. Among these are the improvement of universities, degrees and faculty in the region of Madrid along with the provision of better guidance on higher education so that citizens can make informed decisions.

As seen above, the Foundation conducts ex-ante accreditation, monitoring, and accreditation renewal as well as evaluations of internal QA systems, institutional evaluation, DOCENTIA for assessing quality in teaching and learning, and assessment of Programmes Development Plan. During the interviews the panel confirmed that all the stakeholders were acquainted with the agency’s activities and were involved in the processes. Rectors also informed of the involvement of universities in the agency through their vice-rectors of quality who are in permanent contact with the agency. For their part, students informed that they participated in the agency in the same way and at the same rate as other stakeholders, at all stages and in all procedures, and that their voices were listened to. The consensus among stakeholders was that their suggestions for improvement were always heard by the agency and modifications were made on that account. Even when this was not the case, the reasons for this were properly explained and feedback was given.

The panel also found that stakeholders were satisfied with the work of the agency in the development of quality assurance in higher education institutions and credited the Foundation for its contribution to quality culture. Heads and members of the evaluation and certification commissions corroborated that programmes improve after being evaluated. Members of the Advisory Committee and the Advisory Council affirmed that the evaluation processes of the agency have not only made the educational system of Madrid accountable to society but have increased the freedom of universities

in the offering of degrees and spurred them to reflect on quality approaches. Many interviewees acknowledged that some evaluation processes are still strict and time consuming due to legal requirements but agreed that institutional evaluation will speed-up processes and enhance efficiency.

As already observed, stakeholders are included in the operations of the agency by representation in governing bodies, committees and panels. Notably, experts come from Madrid and other autonomous regions. International experts are scarce, though. Students, on the other hand, participate in all evaluation (visit panels, branch and plenary committees and commissions of each process), advisory and governing bodies, except for the Advisory Council and the Claims Committee. Students and external stakeholders were not involved in the process of creating the Strategic plan, nor in the process of developing the SWOT analysis, and were only consulted on the draft of the Strategic plan through the representatives in the Board of Trustees.

Analysis

Given the evidence from the SAR and the interviews conducted, is clear that the external quality assurance activities of the Foundation are taking place on a regular basis and that its mission is reflected in the agency's daily work. Representatives of universities and relevant stakeholders in the University System of Madrid showed high awareness and appreciation of the scope and quality of the agency's work.

Except for the Advisory Committee, permanent bodies in the Foundation do not include people from outside Spain. Panels and committees are mostly made up of national experts. The agency is aware that "participation of international experts is an area that needs further development" (SAR, p. 66). The panel believes that international experts will bring exposure to different systems and will be useful to showcase Spanish higher education. The panel could not identify any clear reason not to include more international specialists in different bodies of the agency when meetings and training courses can be held via teleconference. Nor could this panel identify any reason why students are not involved in all its governing bodies.

Panel commendations

- The panel commends the strong influence of the Foundation across the university education system of Madrid to ensure the quality in higher education institutions.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

- The panel suggests including more international experts as members of panels, committees and governing bodies of the agency. They will bring valuable experience and knowledge to quality assurance in Madrid and will help the plans of the agency for internationalisation.
- The panel suggests including students in all its governing bodies and engaging new students through the Council of Students and Student Unions. Students should also be more thoroughly included in developing the content of the long-term strategic documents.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS

Standard:

Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.

Evidence

The Foundation is a non-profit organization established on 25 April 2002, by Decree 63/2002, under the initiative of the Regional Government of Madrid. As explained above, in 2013 the agency merged with the previous evaluation body, ACAP. On May 29, 2014, the Regional Government published Decree 63/2014, which designates the Foundation as the evaluation body of Higher Education in the region of Madrid. Therein the agency is recognised formally by the Government of Madrid as a public entity endowed with its own legal personality, and with full capacity and independence for the purpose of fulfilling its objectives. The *Articles of Association* of the Foundation declare that its basic objective is the promotion and assurance of quality in the university system of Madrid.

Spanish regulations require that quality agencies undergo a periodical external review process and be registered in EQAR. The Foundation underwent an external evaluation, coordinated by ENQA, in 2015, and received a positive evaluation by EQAR. On 8 June 2015, its inclusion in EQAR was approved. Representatives of the Ministry of Education are highly aware of the importance of this. During the interview they confirmed that belonging to ENQA and EQAR is necessary for the agency to be trusted by the public. It was also observed during the meeting that while the Ministry establishes the legal requirements for accreditation, the agencies are in complete charge of quality assurance.

Analysis

Based on the evidence above, it is obvious that the Foundation has a clear legal basis and is clearly recognised by the relevant public authorities. Its processes and outcomes are accepted within the higher education system by the state, the stakeholders and the public.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE

Standard:

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

2015 review recommendation

(ENQA membership criterion 5 / 2005 ESG 3.6):

- The Foundation might reconsider the appointment procedure of the Board of Trustees in order to achieve greater formal independence from the Regional Government.

Evidence

The *Articles of Association* show that the Foundation is an autonomous organism with judicial personality and full legal capacity to act on its own behalf (Art. 4) with the mission of promoting quality in higher education (Art. 5). Article 6 evidences its independence: "Having regard for the circumstances attendant on each case, the Foundation shall act freely in order to focus its actions on

any of the goals [...], in accordance with the specific aims that, at the discretion of its Board of Trustees, may take priority at that moment.”

As of November 2015, the *Articles of Association* were updated, and the appointment procedures of the Board of Trustees were revised with a view toward independence from the regional government. Under the Foundation’s current Articles, the four representatives of public universities are no longer appointed by the Minister of Education but by the Head of the Council of Education and Research at the proposal of CRUMA (Conference of Rectors of Public Universities in Madrid). Also, the appointment procedure for the Director has been modified. If previously designated by the Board, now the Director is selected out of merit by an external and independent committee for a period of four years, subject to renewal.

In relation to operational independence, the Director is endowed with powers to act with full independence from the Board of Trustees (Art. 22 of Association). The Director confirmed that this is respected in practice. He stated that he was satisfied with the level of independence and that attempts of interference in the agency’s operations never happen. Concerning the composition of the panels and committees (Art. 24), the Foundation has a profile database that allows for a selection of independent experts. While at the time of the previous review, it was a selection criterion that 50% of reviewers needed to come from outside the University System of Madrid, now the percentage has risen to 55. In order to consolidate transparency of the process, the composition of panels and committees is published on the agency’s website. This allows stakeholders to identify who is involved in the evaluation and prevent any conflict of interest. As it is, stakeholders may object to the participation of those whom they deem likely to have vested interests. When these objections are properly motivated, the Foundation replaces the expert. When experts are appointed, they must state their commitment to the Foundation’s *Code of Ethics* and the principles of professional conduct, neutrality and independence.

The Foundation implements its procedures and methods according to the legal requirements. The guides and protocols for the different evaluation processes are published and available on the agency’s site. Formal and informal feedback is collected after every procedure from the agents involved to ensure improvement and growth.

As established in Article 24.3 of Association: “The results of the evaluations carried out by the evaluation committees may not be modified by any other body of the Foundation”. While legally it is the Council of Universities that makes the final decision on evaluation processes, it generally accepts the technical reports of the agency and endorses the decision of the Foundation. Although the Council may change a report from positive to negative (a negative report can never be turned into positive), these cases are extremely rare. All stakeholders interviewed (representatives of universities, Government and experts) agreed that the existing procedure guarantees fair, professional and independent evaluations.

Analysis

According to national regulations, the majority of members of publicly funded institutions must be appointed by the public administration/government. Although the Minister chairs the Board of Trustees and the Board has one new representative from Government, there is no sign that the Ministry intervenes in the agency’s assessment judgments or in any way compromises the operational independence of the agency. As described in the evidence section, following up on the recommendation of the previous review panel, the appointment procedure of the Board of Trustees was amended in November 2015. The panel is convinced that the Board has a balanced composition with representation of Government, higher education and society.

During the site visit the panel confirmed that experts from relevant stakeholder backgrounds take part in quality assurance processes but the final outcomes remain the full responsibility of the agency. The panel also corroborated that all appointed members in the agency are aware that they are participating in their own individual capacity. Upon the analysis of the documentation and the information gained from the different groups of interviewees, the panel concludes that the Foundation acts autonomously and is independent in undertaking its work.

Panel commendations

- The panel commends the improvement of the procedure of appointment of the Board of Trustees and the implementation of the recommendation of the 2015 review panel.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Standard:

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

2015 review recommendation

(2005 ESG 2.8):

- The Foundation should use the general findings of its external quality assurance processes more as a basis for system-wide analyses on the higher education system in the Region of Madrid.

Evidence

In 2016 the Foundation hired INAECU (Institute for Higher Education and Science) to conduct the study VALPRATUM, based on the results of the first three years of accreditation renewals. Up to 560 reports were investigated. VALPATRUM examined the evaluation outcomes of bachelor and master degrees, compared best programmes, identified best practices, analysed recommendations and offered suggestions for improvement. During the site visit the panel learned that the analysis had not been as useful as it was hoped because the focus on quality was insufficient.

In the framework of cooperation with REACU, since 2017 the Foundation is collaborating with a working group doing thematic analysis. The Foundation also collaborates with the higher education quality assurance agencies in drafting annual reports on higher education in Spain (ICU reports). These reports feature the main outcomes of the activities of agencies and offer critical reflection on quality improvement opportunities.

The Foundation publishes annual activity reports which include a list of all activities carried out in relation to evaluation processes and statistical data on evaluations. In the interest of carrying out analytical studies and provide useful information, the Foundation has funded a project to analyse the employability of university students in Madrid and has commanded a report on the scientific activity of the public university system of Madrid compared to the rest of the country. That notwithstanding,

on page 50 of the SAR, the agency acknowledges the need to conduct more thematic analysis. The Strategic Plan of the Foundation also admits of “the need to provide more and better information to the society, and also to the Higher Education main stakeholders.”

Analysis

The ESG 2015 indicate in the guidelines of standard 3.4 that agencies should conduct thematic analyses across the higher education system that “show developments, trends and areas of good practice,” in order to “contribute to the reflection on and the improvement of quality assurance policies and processes in institutional, national and international contexts.”

In view of this, and although the panel values the quality and range of the reports issued by the agency, it does not consider employability studies, reports on the scientific activity of the public university system of Madrid, annual activity reports and ICU reports as reports of thematic analysis. These reports inform on statistics about graduate employment and metrics, research and development, evaluation activities, results of evaluation, certification and accreditation processes as well as results of satisfaction questionnaires regarding assessment processes. However, they contain no analysis of research data nor the themes derived from these data. Nor do they contain conclusions that create knowledge of good practices. The panel, therefore, does not consider that these reports answer the demand for thematic analysis as defined in the ESG.

As seen above, the Foundation acknowledges this weakness in its SAR. Certainly, analyses should respond to the needs of stakeholders and have a clear aim. This panel insists on the recommendation made by the previous panel and further recommends that the agency publishes reports of thematic analysis every year. Benefit being, in addition to publication of the analysis itself, to highlight the work of the agency to the key stakeholders and public at large and to ensure a wide and prompt dissemination of the data and analysis.

Panel recommendations

- The panel recommends that the agency focuses on smaller areas instead of big ones so that it can conduct more useful and frequent thematic analyses.
- The panel recommends that the agency publishes reports of thematic analysis every year.

Panel conclusion: partially compliant

ESG 3.5 RESOURCES

Standard:

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

2015 review recommendation

(ENQA membership criterion 3 / 2005 ESG 3.4):

- The Foundation should consider its internal communications strategy, to ensure the active involvement of all staff within the organization.

Evidence

The Foundation receives funding from participating in European R&D programmes (mainly from the European Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development), training and sponsorship activities, and the assessment of university faculty. Yet, its external quality assurance activities are mainly funded with public resources. The Foundation has a yearly assignment that is included in the general budget of the Regional Government. This assignment for the Higher Education Quality Assurance Area is based on the Annual Action Plan of the Foundation and has been adjusted to each year workload, from 890,000€ in 2015, to 1,046,911€ in 2019, with a peak of 1,763,560€ in 2017. Most of the budget is spent on accreditation renewal, ex-ante accreditation, institutional evaluation and monitoring processes. The budget allotted to personnel costs has also increased from 2015, with 230,788€ to 341,154€ in 2019, in accordance with the increase of evaluations (due to the natural cycle of the accreditation procedure) and the introduction of institutional evaluation. According to the SAR, the Government “provides enough funding to guarantee the payment of all the expenses related to the evaluation activity, and is adjusted every year to the expected workload. In case of unexpected expenses, the Foundation has flexibility to reassign funds, in order to guarantee that all the evaluation processes are operated appropriately” (p. 50).

The Foundation has full legal capacity to define the profiles required for the positions to be filled and can establish selection processes for the provision of vacancies. Since 2014, one technical and three administrative staff have been hired and a new permanent position of head of unit “with responsibilities on reports and analysis” (SAR, p. 92) has been created. In addition to the Director, the Manager and the General Coordinator, the staff of the Foundation consist of 25 highly qualified professionals with experience in quality and university education. The staff serving at the Assessment and Accreditation Area (7 persons) hold higher education degrees and have broad experience in the field of university management.

The staff is coordinated by a higher education quality assurance officer, and is organized in three units, according to the programmes of evaluation they administer. Besides, the staff manages and updates the database of experts, handles payment of evaluators and invoices, and organises training sessions. Members of the staff may also act as secretaries to review panels and commissions. As support for staff and committees, some expertise is hired out. Notably, staff are trained on a regular basis and is offered continuous opportunities for professional development in all quality areas, languages and soft skills. The panel noticed during the meeting with the staff that there is a fluid communication with the management of the agency who meets regularly with heads of areas. All in all, the staff feel listened to and highly engaged in the evaluation process.

The agency’s new premises, at Calle del Maestro Ángel Llorca 6, are appropriate to the needs of the Foundation and provide a comfortable and ample environment for the staff. Material resources are adequate for the correct performance of tasks. The agency “has its own servers for intranet, cloud services and web services and has subscribed to an IT maintenance service contract with a specialised company for PCs, laptops, servers and communication systems, and another contract with a company specialized in webpages design and maintenance” (SAR, p. 52). The Higher Education Quality Assurance Area uses different applications for managing document registry (ABSIS), verification and modification processes (VERIFICA), accreditation renewal, monitoring and SISCAL Madri+d (SICAM). The agency owns the website www.madrimasd.org, “a webpage that has historically been an internationally known spot for information regarding Science, Technology, Innovation and Scientific culture in Spanish, and now also regarding the Quality Assurance in the Region of Madrid” (SAR, p. 52). The agency informs the public of its activities through this website. Of interest is the “section named *Notiweb*, www.madrimasd.org/notiweb, which publishes ten articles related to Science,

Technology and Education on a daily basis and has over 64,000 subscribers.” A daily newsletter is sent daily to all subscribers. This newsletter is used by the Quality Assurance Area, along with “social media and other tools coordinated by the Communication Area to disseminate the events, results and news to this wide audience” (SAR, p. 52).

Analysis

The panel is convinced that the agency is adequately and appropriately funded. Its financial arrangements ensure the sustainability of its evaluation activities within the scope and in line with the ESG. Even if there is a downturn in the economic situation of Spain (as in the time of the previous review), the Assessment and Accreditation Area of the Foundation can rely on internal funds and the relocation of budget assigned to other areas.

Based on the interviews, the panel is convinced that the resources of the agency allow for improvement of quality and for adaptive responses to critical situations. During the site visit the panel corroborated there is enough staff to conduct evaluation activities. It also confirmed the high competence of the staff and their deep knowledge of the University System of Madrid. The panel believes that the large gap in knowledge between the coordinating staff and the technical staff noted by the 2015 review panel has been corrected by formal and informal frequent meetings and the inclusion of the staff in these meetings.

Panel commendations

- The panel commends the Foundation for its efforts in informing the public of its activities and the broad reach of the agency’s online platform (newsletter, social media).

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Standard:

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

Evidence

The Foundation has established an ISO 9001 certified internal quality assurance system (IQAS) that is renewed every year. While originally applied to evaluation activities, in 2017 it started to be also used to manage training activities for external users. Within this framework, and in agreement with the ESG, the Foundation has set up a *Quality Policy* that informs of its mission, vision, values and commitment to society and stakeholders. This quality assurance policy is available on the Foundation’s website.¹

The IQAS of the Foundation is structured in four blocks that correspond to: a) strategic goals, laid out in the agency’s annual plan for action; b) operative processes that specify criteria for evaluation; c)

¹ It can be retrieved from: < <http://www.madrimasd.org/fundacion/quienes-somos/calidad-interna>>

support processes to manage resources and activities, and d) monitoring for continuous improvement.

After workshops and training activities, satisfaction surveys are conducted for participants. When a cycle of procedures is concluded, the stakeholders involved are surveyed and a metaevaluation is performed to identify areas that need betterment. After accreditation renewal, secretaries of panels meet to assess the process and suggest ways to ameliorate it. Usually every year, reviewers are also asked to rate the performance of other members in their panels according to compliance with deadlines, application of criteria and attitudinal components. When ratings do not meet required levels, the Foundation does away with their services.

A key element of IQAS is the *Code of Ethics* to which staff and reviewers must adhere to. It outlines the agency's core values, the ethical principles they are based on and the standards to which stakeholders, staff and management are held. An explicit policy against intolerance, discrimination and bullying is also currently in place. For the most part, the *Code of Ethics* represents an external commitment by the Foundation to the institutions it accredits and establishes the forms of appropriate communication with stakeholders and relevant authorities. In order to guarantee the impartiality and objectivity of accreditation and certification activities, reviewers must communicate any possible conflict of interest in advance. As seen above, the Foundation makes public its review panels, and universities may recuse members if a conflict of interest arises.

Interviewed stakeholders were positive about the quality and amount of the surveys they receive. The panel confirmed that feedback is an integral component of reviews and that internal feedback is received during meetings. The Foundation schedules regular meetings of the director, manager and general coordinator with the heads of the different areas to check the results of activities and plan the work ahead (SAR, p. 76). Meetings are also held three or four times a year to review the system. Notably, given the nature of the Advisory Council's activities, feedback from this body is especially detailed. As stated above, the Advisory Committee is in process of restructuring for purposes of efficiency. As also seen above, internal communication between staff and management is fluid and proactive. The Foundation encourages employees to come up with suggestions for improvement that may be translated into action. During the site visit, the panel was given evidence of feedback resulting in improvements to procedures (like the introduction of practical cases and good practices in training sessions, standardisation of criteria and evidences in reports, and matching of evidences with criteria on SICAM). Reviewers are informed of changes to improve processes and procedures during meetings, training sessions and informal communications.

Analysis

The agency has a well-developed internal quality system. It is by using it, through frequent reviews of performance and both formal and informal meetings, that the agency becomes accountable to its stakeholders. The agency ensures that high professional standards are held by reviewers through training sessions and adherence to the *Code of Ethics*. This code also ensures the professional conduct of the staff. During the site visit the panel confirmed that all the staff feel a responsibility to contribute to the goals of the agency and frequently undertake activities leading to continuous professional development.

Processes and procedures for all its activities are clearly defined and are reviewed regularly through surveys to all stakeholders. Procedures are discussed and analysed internally, and processes are modified to improve the evaluation system. The panel commends the agency for its ability to take on

suggestions and amend methodologies. However, the panel finds that feedback, despite being regular, is not formally systematized or routinized, and so knowledge may be lost. The panel suggests that the agency systematizes its feedback through the same application used to implement accreditation renewal, SISCAL and Monitoring (SICAM). Also, the panel encourages the agency to finish restructuring the Advisory Committee on higher education quality and use it actively.

Panel commendations

- The panel commends the agency for the ability to take on suggestions to amend methodologies and procedures and for the amount of feedback given and received by the Assessment and Accreditation Area.

Panel suggestions

- The panel suggests that the agency systematizes feedback through its evaluation application so that it becomes routinized.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 3.7 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES

Standard:

Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

Evidence

RD 1393/2007 of October 27 (amended by RD 861/2010) establishes that membership of ENQA and registration at EQAR is a condition to carry out evaluation of programmes in the Spanish territory. The Foundation applied to ENQA membership in 2014 for the first time. In March 2015 it was admitted as full member. In June that same year the Foundation was registered in EQAR. In 2017, the agency submitted a follow-up report on the actions taken upon the recommendations made by the ENQA review panel. In 2018 this report was examined by ENQA, who expressed satisfaction with the improvements that were being performed.

Analysis

The Foundation undergoes a periodic external review to prove its adherence to the principles of the ESG. It is clear to the panel that the Foundation is committed to continuous improvement, professional development and compliance with the ESG.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG PART 2: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

Evidence

The following table shows the evaluation activities of the agency in relation to ESG standards 1.1 to 1.10. It shows sections of the protocols where each criterion is covered. The information contained in it has been extracted from the SAR of the Foundation (p. 61).

Part 1	Activities of the Foundation within ESG						
	Programme level			Institutional level			
	Ex-ante	Monitoring	Renewal	SISCAL	DOCENTIA	Programmes Development	Institutional accreditation
1.1	9	6	9	1	5	NA	Through SISCAL and Accreditation Renewal
1.2	2, 5, 8	1	2, 5, 8	2	NA	1	
1.3	5, 8	1,7	5, 8	3	NA	NA	
1.4	4	2	4	3	NA	1	
1.5	6	3	6	4	1, 3, 5	2	
1.6	7	4, 5	7	5	NA	3	
1.7	8, 9	6, 7	8, 9	6	2	3, 4	
1.8	4	TRANS	4	7	4	1	
1.9	8,9	6, 7	8, 9	3. 8	5	NA	
1.10	1	2	1	3	4	5	6

The agency addresses all the ESG criteria at the programme and institutional levels. Because DOCENTIA is a scheme of evaluation focused on the quality of teaching, it does not directly address standards 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6. Since the evaluation of programmes development plans focuses on the overall capacity of new universities and university centres to provide higher education, the criteria used for evaluation do not cover standards 1.1, 1.3 and 1.9. These are assessed in depth through the processes of ex-ante accreditation, accreditation renewal and SISCAL.

The agency supervises the quality assurance programmes of institutions regularly and makes sure they undergo cyclical reviews:

- Initially verified programmes are renewed accreditation every 4 years (master programmes) and every 6 years (bachelor and doctorate programmes).
- Monitoring takes place one year after verification or accreditation renewal in case of special recommendations follow up, and every 2 years (master) or 3 (bachelor) after verification or accreditation renewal.
- A follow up on the implementation of the IQAS is required every year after SISCAL certification.
- Renewal of Institutional Accreditation takes place every 5 years.

The agency evaluates if the programmes meet legal requirements and examine student admission processes, learning resources, learning outcomes, appeals and complaints policies, competence of teachers and information management.

Analysis

During the site visit the panel confirmed that the agency aims at supporting institutions to meet internal quality assurance criteria through its assessment activities. External experts involved in programme and institutional accreditation explained that the work of the agency provided a way to learn about and for their own institutions. For their part, representatives of HEIs corroborated that regular reviews of the implementation of their quality assurance systems and their effectiveness emphasised their responsibility for QA. They acknowledged that by aligning their quality assurance systems with the agency's processes of accreditation they had standardised quality measures and improved the quality of study programmes, teaching and management of information. Likewise, students recognized that, as a result of the agency, the Madrid education system has bettered in terms of programme coordination, study plans and the involvement of students in creating the learning process. Based on descriptions of the different external reviews which Madri+d conducts, statements of review experts involved in these reviews and positive outlook of HEI representatives regarding usefulness and beneficial effects of external quality assurance on their systems of internal quality assurance, the panel sees clear evidence of the ESG Part 1 being used in the development and implementation of evaluation criteria for programmes and institutions.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE

Standard:

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

2015 review recommendation

(2005 ESG 2.4):

- The Foundation should further invest in finding more students who would be willing to engage in external quality assurance processes.
- The Foundation should develop procedures which encourage the participation of international experts in reviews.

Evidence

The procedures for evaluation and accreditation at the programme and institutional levels have been described above, in the section on the Foundation's organisation and structure. All procedures for all evaluation activities are designed within the legal framework and in close coordination with the Network of Spanish Quality Agencies (REACU) to keep consistency between autonomous regions and ensure objectivity. The Foundation, however, can decide on key features of the design of external evaluation schemes. Thus, the agency has created working groups to elaborate and update protocols according to the feedback received from stakeholders.

The Foundation conducts regular metaevaluations of its evaluation processes based on surveys of procedures and training sessions. Surveys of procedures focus on computer tools used, calendar, protocols, reports issued, and support received by the agency. Surveys of training sessions focus on organisation, information provided, duration, effort of the agency to speed up processes and adapt them to the needs of the universities, analytical rigour of operations, openness and capacity of dialogue of the Foundation, alongside prestige of the agency. During the site visit external experts

confirmed that they are regularly asked for feedback and their suggestions are listened to by the agency. Representatives of HEIs acknowledged the accessibility of the agency and the involvement of their Vice-Rectors of Quality in the design and continuous improvement of EQA.

Results of working groups are presented to the Advisory Council of the agency for consultation. When approved by the Foundation's Director, they are published on the agency's website and implemented. According to the SAR: "Even though there is not a fixed periodicity for the updating of protocols, most of them have new editions every three to five years" (p. 63).

During the interview with the quality assurance officers of higher education institutions, the panel learned that they review the drafts of guides, procedures and protocols drawn up by the Foundation and that the agency is highly supportive of the initiatives from universities. They expressed satisfaction with the proactive role the Foundation takes in organizing scientific events on quality assurance and its sensitivity to differences between universities, even though the *Spanish Qualifications Framework* (RD 1027/2011 of July 15) does not map the diversity of educational and training models in the country.

Stakeholders reported that the processes of verification and modification can be slow and take a long time but pointed out that this is for the most part due to legal constraints. The Government also determines the levels of staffing which were perceived as low at peaks of overwork. In general, stakeholders felt that the agency organises evaluation processes to avoid overlapping and aims at simplifying the procedures within the context of the law.

Analysis

Based on the evidence presented in the foregoing paragraphs, it is clear to this panel that stakeholders are highly satisfied with the agency's support, protocols and follow-up processes. All procedures were understood and accepted by all interviewees because of the clear and fluid communication with the staff of the Foundation. The panel welcomes the agency's efforts to avoid overlapping of procedures and reduce bureaucracy. The methodologies used by the Foundation take into account the need to support institutions to improve quality and demonstrate this improvement without overburdening them. The panel believes the shift towards institutional accreditation along with the agency's support of universities in the improvement of quality will help institutions grow to secure permanency.

As to the 2015 review recommendations, see ESG 2.4. below. Although the panel has clear evidence that students are involved in the activities of the agency, it seems to be a mix of formal and informal processes. Consequently, this panel suggests that the agency formally involves national/regional student unions in consultation processes, when developing and improving methodologies.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

- The panel suggests that the agency formally involves national/regional student unions in consultation processes, when developing and improving methodologies.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES

Standard:

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent
- an external assessment normally including a site visit
- a report resulting from the external assessment
- a consistent follow-up

2015 review recommendation

(2005 ESG 2.6):

- The Foundation should consider to focus more on quality within the monitoring process, rather than on mere implementation.
- The Foundation should implement a follow-up procedure within one year at most following accreditation renewal.

Evidence

The Foundation outlines its procedures of external evaluation in the SAR. Guidelines of evaluation are also published on its website under the tab “Guías y protocolos.”² They include protocols for ex-ante accreditation, monitoring, accreditation renewal, assessment of programmes development plan, SISCAL, DOCENTIA and institutional evaluation. On the same tab a link may be found to a support guide for the elaboration of the evaluation report of master degrees in the arts. These guides contain information on legislative frameworks, objectives, compatibility with other evaluation models, requisites for panels and commissions, processes, documentation required, reports, follow-up and criteria to be used.

In the case of accreditation renewal, SISCAL and DOCENTIA, a SAR is sent by the institution to the review panel. After analysis a site visit takes place. While all other processes (except for institutional accreditation) include a SAR that is examined by a panel of experts, they do not include a site visit, either because the degree has not been implemented yet (ex-ante accreditation and assessment of programmes development plan), or because the type of accreditation applied relies on processes that already involve a site visit and just requires checking validity of certain facts (like in institutional accreditation). As seen above, institutional accreditation is based on the ex-post accreditation of at least half of the official bachelor and master programmes of a university centre in combination with the accreditation of its internal quality assurance system.

After the site visit panels send their report to the corresponding certification or accreditation commission that issues a provisional report. A report is prepared for all activities. Universities may appeal the decision of the commission or design an improvement plan. Once the final report is complete and published it is sent to the Council of Universities who makes the formal decision. All decisions can be appealed by universities.

Except for institutional accreditation and assessment of programmes development plan, all processes include a follow-up. For DOCENTIA and SISCAL a follow-up is conducted annually. As seen above, the methodology for reviewing institutional accreditation is still under construction but will include a follow-up. Concerning the assessment of programmes development plan, once implemented programmes will be assessed via other processes such as verification, accreditation renewal and SISCAL (SAR, p. 61).

² This can be retrieved from: < <http://www.madrimasd.org/universidades/guias-protocolos>>

Representatives of institutions confirmed during the interviews that they find the recommendations contained in reports helpful to improve their programmes, and that the evaluation processes of the agency help them reflect on their own activities. They reported that the procedures are clear and are carried out consistently. The following table informs of the activities involved in each evaluation process (it can be found in the agency's SAR, p. 64).

		SAR	Desk Review	Panel Site Visit	Committee Revision & Report	Appeals	Report Publication	Follow-Up
Evaluation of programmes	Verification	X	X		X	X	X	X
	Monitoring	X	X		X	X	X	X
	Accreditation Renewal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Institutional Accreditation	SISCAL	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	DOCENTIA		X	X	X	X	X	X
	Assessment of Programmes Development Plan	X	X		X	X		
	Institutional Accreditation		X		X	X		

No reports have been published yet on institutional accreditation. “Regarding the evaluation of study plans, they are all issued on demand from universities and are not published. They are all added to a file on management of authorization of new centres at the Regional Ministry of Education, in charge of this process” (SAR, p. 71).

Analysis

As already indicated, institutional accreditation aims to simplify the process of evaluation and is based on the result of ex-post accreditation along with the accreditation of the internal QA system of the university centre involved. The methodology for reviewing institutional accreditation is still under construction but will include a site visit. The assessment of Programmes Development Plan applies to new universities or university centres. It is a procedure to authorise their operation. Since the programmes have not yet been implemented no site visit is required. Once the programmes are implemented they are validated through the procedures indicated in the evidence section. It is for this reason that no report is published. As to institutional accreditation, the panel understands that the process has been implemented recently but urges the Foundation to publish the report of the two university centres accredited in July 2019.

The panel considers that the follow-up process currently in place removes unnecessary burdens to the agency. Overall, the panel notes that follow-up has improved from the last review. The panel opines that the agency has reviewed the monitoring process between ex-ante accreditation and accreditation renewal so that it now focusses on the management of implementation and provides quality evaluation of progress, assessing whether the programme is still fit for purpose and has kept up with recent developments in the area of study. It is clear to the panel that now the agency follows up on

the recommendations of all accreditation renewals, even when reports are positive, and no deficits are identified.

Based on the evidence gathered, the panel finds that the external quality assurance processes of the agency are pre-defined, published online and implemented consistently. They are useful because they stimulate institutions to think about their own processes and improve their work performance. The panel thinks that they are also reliable in the sense that experts are specifically trained for different evaluation activities (see below, ESG 2.4), reports are published online, and the agency is held accountable for its decisions.

Panel commendations

- The panel commends the agency for improving and maintaining a consistent follow up of its evaluation processes.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS

Standard:

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

Evidence

Experts register online in the agency's database of evaluators under the corresponding profile (academic, student, professional practitioner or expert in higher education). There is no public call and they can enrol at any time. They are selected according to merit, areas of knowledge and the rates set up by the agency whereby 55% are from outside the University System of Madrid (except for verification and monitoring processes where the majority of experts are from the Madrid region), 17% come from private institutions and 40% must be women. During the site visit the panel learned that stakeholders were unaware of selection criteria and processes.

Once they are appointed by the Director of the Foundation, all the evaluators receive training in specific criteria, procedures, IT tools, composition and operation of assessment bodies, administrative tasks and good practices. Training lasts 6/7 hours (one day) and includes a practical component using real cases. The agency organises sessions for different panels and profiles. In them evaluators are informed about the *Code of Ethics* and the mechanisms in place to ensure confidentiality of data, guarantee exercise of independent judgment and prevent conflicts of interest. Stakeholder representatives are not involved in conducting trainings. As seen above, the composition of evaluation panels is published on the agency's website and universities may ask to recuse a member with a potential conflict of interest.

Evaluators are also trained on the management of SICAM, the platform used to upload evaluations and supporting evidence. When protocols are modified training sessions are arranged for updating. All training sessions are surveyed to measure satisfaction with the service. During the interviews, evaluators confirmed that they received continuous training and were satisfied with it.

The composition of Committees is determined by the nature of the assessment process. The SAR specifies the number of evaluators involved in the different processes and the number of training sessions received. It also describes the exact composition of Committees. Students and academics are involved in all of them. Two quality assurance experts participate in SISCAL evaluation panels and one professional practitioner participates in each one of the Evaluation and Verification Committees. The agency reports that it needs to include more international evaluators and it is within its plans to develop this area.

Student reviewers who were interviewed felt that they are fully equal members of the panels and there were even cases where a student served as the secretary of the panel. On this account, the SAR reports that: "madri+d has been very active establishing relations with the university representatives in order to foster the participation of students in the evaluations and providing training to student evaluators. A specific training action was scheduled at the end of 2015 (December), another one, in cooperation with the ACPUA (Aragon's Agency) was arranged in 2016 (October) and students have participated in other training actions directed to both faculty and students" (p. 83).

Analysis

Based on the information gathered, the panel concludes that experts are supported by appropriate training and have appropriate skills to perform their task. While review panels include experts from institutions, academics, students and employers/professional practitioners and their composition is in line with the ESG, this panel believes that the agency should increase the number of practitioners from different disciplines in their evaluation panels. In the view of this panel, they will add practical dimensions to the assessment processes and, therefore, the panel encourages the agency to use more expertise by professional practitioners. Likewise, the panel encourages the agency to inform stakeholders of the criteria and procedures used to select evaluators on its website. The information currently available online solely indicates that the Foundation will evaluate applications to ensure that they fulfil the requisites established in the processes of evaluation. On account of international experts, the panel strongly suggests that the agency includes at least one international expert in every panel.

During interviews the panel was informed that new students are involved through individual recommendations. The panel suggests that the agency improves the selection of student experts through collaboration with Student Unions in such a way that selection and training are done on a regular basis (yearly or every two years).

As expressed above, the panel considers that the agency could involve more foreign experts in evaluation panels, committees and governing bodies. It appears to this panel that no progress has been made on this issue since 2015. The arguments made by the interviewees were the same as in the previous review. This panel, therefore, suggests that the agency develops procedures to encourage their participation. Likewise, the panel suggests including students in all its governing bodies and engaging new students through the Council of Students and Student Unions.

Panel commendations

- The panel commends the agency for its well-designed database of experts.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

- The panel suggests that the agency increases the number of professional practitioners in their evaluation panels to add practical dimensions to the assessment processes.
- The panel suggests that the agency increases the number of foreign experts in their evaluation panels to add international dimensions to the assessment processes.
- The panel suggests that the agency increases the number of experts from outside the region of Madrid in processes of verification and monitoring.
- The panel suggests that the agency publishes the criteria and procedures used to select evaluators for assessment activities on its website.
- The panel suggests that the agency improves the selection of student experts through collaboration with Student Unions in such a way that selection and training are done on a regular basis (yearly or every two years).

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES

Standard:

Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

Evidence

Criteria for outcomes are specific to each evaluation process and are included in the protocols published on the agency's website. As seen above, these criteria are set up by working groups that are composed of relevant stakeholders who discuss and consider potential criteria. All interested parties are invited to comment before finalisation of the criteria. Consistency of application of assessment criteria in all activities is attained through:

- Training sessions in criteria specific to the evaluation activity undertaken. These reduce arbitrariness and disparity in regard to interpretation.
- Certification and Accreditation Committees and Commissions. They ensure that criteria are homogeneously applied in all final reports.
- Surveys and metaevaluations. These are regularly conducted to help identify limitations and contradictions in the system and propose actions to correct them.
- Secretarial work by the technical staff of the agency. They make sure that every criterion is covered and that reports are coherent within and between areas of knowledge.

Analysis

During the site visit the panel confirmed that criteria and protocols are available to the public, accessible to stakeholders and that stakeholders are trained in them before an evaluation starts. The panel concludes that there is evidence that evaluations are based on pre-defined and published criteria. Stakeholders agreed that the system is consistent and review processes are fair. Although some of the interviewees stated that consistency in assessment between different review panels should be improved, this panel considers that consistency of the use and understanding of the criteria by different panels does imply that criteria are not being applied consistently. The panel believes that

the agency invests time and effort to ensure their consistent application through training, certification and accreditation committees and commissions, surveys, meta-evaluation and the secretarial work performed by the technical staff of the agency. To continue to ensure consistency the panel suggests that the agency work with universities on thematic analysis focused on the consistent application of criteria.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

- The panel suggests that the agency work with universities on thematic analyses focused on the application of criteria to continue to ensure consistency.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 2.6 REPORTING

Standard:

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

2015 review recommendation

(2005 ESG 2.5):

- The Foundation should relate key findings to conclusions more explicitly in its reports, making the deliberation by the panel visible.
- The Foundation should consider the style of reports, to make them useful to a wider readership.

Evidence

All evaluation processes that have a formal outcome result in a written report. As seen above, in ESG 2.3, the process of institutional accreditation has been recently implemented and no report has been published yet. In the case of Assessment of Programmes Development Plan, once implemented, programmes are assessed through verification, accreditation renewal and SISCAL, all of which result in a published report. The SAR explains that reports are prepared according to templates created to standardise processes. They are based on pre-established guidelines and protocols that are published on the agency's website. They include an overview of the context, a descriptive and findings section that addresses each criterion, and a conclusion that highlights strengths and weaknesses, presents recommendations and emphasises areas of improvement. To ensure consistency the agency elaborated a document in 2016 providing guidance to writing a report and commenting on all criteria. Currently drafting reports is an important part of the training of evaluators. During training sessions evaluators see previous reports and examine how guidelines are adhered to.

In the section on the agency's functions, activities and procedures above, it is explained how reporting is done in every activity. In ex-ante accreditation, monitoring and accreditation renewal processes, three different panels are involved before issuing the final report:

- Review panel: Reviews the programme and drafts provisional report.
- Branch committee: Examines provisional report to ensure that it is consistent (in consultation with the panel secretary). Then it sends a preliminary report to the institution. Universities

can accept this report, check factual errors, comment on its contents and conclusions or appeal.

- Plenary of the committee: Reviews the response from the institution, corrects possible errors and issues a final accreditation report.

Stakeholders and the agency's staff confirmed that there is always feedback between panels and committees and any changes made to reports are approved by both.

The SISCAL and DOCENTIA processes involve a review panel and a certification commission that issues the final report. In institutional accreditation and the assessment of programmes development plan the corresponding commission evaluates the information provided by the university and issues the final report.

Reports, positive and negative, are published in full. They include all recommendations. At the time of writing this review, no results for SISCAL and institutional evaluation processes have been published on the agency's website, but they will. As already explained, these procedures have been implemented recently. Regarding the assessment of programmes development plan, the SAR explains that reports "are all issued on demand from universities and are not published" because programmes have not started yet. "They are added to a file on management of authorisation of new centres at the Regional Ministry of Education, in charge of this process" (p. 71).

After every evaluation, for each activity, a questionnaire is sent to all the evaluators involved in the process where they are asked about the quality of the report as modified by the committees. Previously the panel has agreed to the changes. All official reports have follow-up monitoring.

Analysis

The agency publishes the reports of its evaluation activities on the website so that they are accessible to stakeholders and other interested individuals. The panel found that reports have a clear structure and are easy to read. The panel confirmed that there is consistency between findings and conclusions.

The 2015 review report by the ENQA panel stated that while the three-layered system used in accreditation processes "contributes to the consistency of decision making, " it still "bears some risks. As reports are adapted by committee members who have not been involved in the peer review itself, errors could be introduced during the process." The 2015 ENQA review panel, therefore suggested: "that the Foundation involve the panel members in the feedback procedure and has the final report checked by the review panel before the Evaluation and Accreditation Committee finally publishes the report" (p. 14). During the site visit, it became evident to this review panel that there is feedback between programme review panels and committees and that changes on reports can be easily tracked on the platform. In the interview with heads and members of evaluation and certification commissions, this review panel confirmed that panels are appropriately involved in the production of final reports and do approve of them but do so through informal mechanisms (by e-mail correspondence, phone or private conversation). Thus, this panel strongly suggests that the final report issued by the plenary is formally approved by the panel so that the transparency of the process is enhanced.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

- The panel suggests the agency that the final reports issued by committees be formally approved by review panels to further reinforce the transparency of the process.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Standard:

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

2015 review recommendation

(ENQA membership criterion 8):

- The Foundation should clearly communicate the appeal procedures.

Evidence

All evaluation processes are appealable. Upon reception of provisional reports, universities may raise objections, request clarifications and suggest improvements on them. Within a period of 20 days they can submit appeals in case of factual mistakes, gaps in the evidence trail or disagreement with contents and conclusions. Appeals are examined by the corresponding certification and accreditation commission, which is "composed of professionals, faculty members and students and guarantee independent expert results" (SAR, p. 45).

After the final report is issued, universities may also issue an appeal. This is submitted either to the Foundation or the National Council of Universities who requests from the Foundation that the appeal is examined by the Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee of the Foundation is composed of 6 academics from different areas of knowledge. The *Code of Ethics* ensures that any conflict of interest is resolved (see ESG 3.6 above). Three of these academics come from the education system of Madrid and three from outside. All of them have experience in quality assurance processes although none participates in the evaluation activities of the agency. They meet on demand and issue a report explaining the reasons for endorsing or revoking the original decision. This report is sent to the universities, the corresponding branch committee and the Council of Universities. The decision of the appeals committee cannot be amended by any other regulatory body in the Foundation.

During the site visit the panel learned that since 2015 there have been 11 appeals, out of which 6 were recommended to be upheld and 5 were not. The reason for this low number is that the appeals procedure is clearly communicated in the protocols, during training sessions and events disseminating the activities of the agency. This means that everyone is certain on the basis for lodging a valid appeal and thus frivolous or invalid appeals are discouraged. The Council of Universities endorsed recommendations in 8 of 11 cases. Non-endorsement of the remaining two was owing to a political decision not to accept master degrees in excess of 180 credits. The institutions appear to be satisfied with the appeals procedure and have trust that they can use this option reliably in case they feel that the decision is not justified or consistent.

For complaints the agency uses different channels. According to the SAR, these "include the direct attention by Madri+d staff and Direction, the regular surveys after each evaluation process, the participation of the universities in the Board of Trustees and in the Advisory Council and the communications through the Contact form available in the homepage of Madri+d" (p. 73).

Analysis

In interviews all stakeholders seemed satisfied with the appeals procedures and felt them to be adequate for the purpose. The panel has evidence that the Foundation has improved its system of appeals so that it is well-managed, impartial and handled with fairness. The procedures to appeal a negative report are presented in the protocols and made public on the agency's website.

It is clear to this panel that the agency distinguishes between an appeals procedure, whereby the formal outcomes of a process are put into question, and a complaints procedure that states dissatisfaction about the conduct of the process or those carrying it out. However, there is no fixed procedure to handle complaints. The panel believes that the variety of communication channels used by the agency makes handling complaints time inefficient. Besides, some complaints may be lost. The panel recommends the agency to set up and publish a protocol for complaints that is different from appeals with clear instructions for the users.

Panel recommendations

- The panel recommends the agency to establish and publish a protocol for complaints that is different from appeals with clear instructions for the users.

Panel conclusion: substantially compliant

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS

ESG 3.1

- The panel commends the strong influence of the Foundation across the university education system of Madrid to ensure the quality in higher education institutions.

ESG 3.3

- The panel commends the improvement of the procedure of appointment of the Board of Trustees and the implementation of the recommendation of the 2015 review panel.

ESG 3.5

- The panel commends the Foundation for its efforts in informing the public of its activities and the broad reach of the agency's online platform (newsletter, social media).

ESG 3.6

- The panel commends the agency for the ability to take on suggestions to amend methodologies and procedures and for the amount of feedback given and received by the Assessment and Accreditation Area.

ESG 2.3

- The panel commends the agency for improving and maintaining a consistent follow up of its evaluation processes.

ESG 2.4

- The panel commends the agency for its well-designed database of experts.

OVERVIEW OF JUDGEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the panel is satisfied that, in the performance of its functions, the Foundation is in compliance with the ESG.

The summary of the compliance assessment by the panel is as follows:

- Fully compliant for the following ESGs: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6.
- Substantially compliant in ESG 2.7.
- Partially compliant in ESG 3.4.

ESG 3.1 – Fully compliant

ESG 3.2 – Fully compliant

ESG 3.3 – Fully compliant

ESG 3.4 – Partially compliant

Panel recommendations:

- The panel recommends that the agency conducts more thematic analysis and focus on smaller areas instead of big ones so that it can be useful.
- The panel recommends that the agency publishes reports of thematic analysis every year.

ESG 3.5 – Fully compliant

ESG 3.6 – Fully compliant

ESG 3.7 – Fully compliant

ESG 2.1 – Fully compliant

ESG 2.2 – Fully compliant

ESG 2.3 – Fully compliant

ESG 2.4 – Fully compliant

ESG 2.5 – Fully compliant

ESG 2.6 – Fully compliant

ESG 2.7 – Substantially compliant

Panel recommendations:

- The panel recommends the agency to establish and publish a protocol for complaints that is different from appeals with clear instructions for the users.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The panel would like to make some general and more detailed suggestions, extending beyond strictly interpreted ESG and/or linking several ESG, which the Foundation may wish to consider when reflecting on its further development. Some of them have already been signalled in the previous sections.

ESG 3.1

- The panel suggests including more international experts as members of panels, committees and governing bodies of the agency. They will bring valuable experience and knowledge to quality assurance in Madrid and will help the plans of the agency for internationalisation.
- The panel suggests including students in all its governing bodies and engaging new students through the Council of Students and Student Unions. Students should also be more thoroughly included in developing the content of the long-term strategic documents.

ESG 3.6

- The panel suggests that the agency systematizes feedback through its evaluation application so that it becomes routinized.

ESG 2.2

- The panel suggests that the agency formally involves national/regional student unions in consultation processes, when developing and improving methodologies.

ESG 2.4

- The panel suggests that the agency increases the number of professional practitioners in their evaluation panels to add practical dimensions to the assessment processes.
- The panel suggests that the agency increases the number of foreign experts in their evaluation panels to add international dimensions to the assessment processes.
- The panel suggests that the agency increases the number of experts from outside the region of Madrid in processes of verification and monitoring.
- The panel suggests that the agency publishes the criteria and procedures used to select evaluators for assessment activities on its website.
- The panel suggests that the agency improves the selection of student experts through collaboration with Student Unions in such a way that selection and training are done on a regular basis (yearly or every two years).

ESG 2.5

- The panel suggests that the agency work with universities on thematic analyses focused on the application of criteria to continue to ensure consistency.

ESG 2.6

- The panel suggests the agency that the final reports issued by committees be formally approved by review panels to further reinforce the transparency of the process.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

SEPTEMBER 23 (MADRID+D OFFICES)				
16.00-18.00	Review panel's kick-off meeting and preparations for day I			
18.00-19.00	A pre-visit meeting with the agency contact person to clarify elements related to the overall system and context (if requested)	Federico Morán Abad, Director	Description/History of the Higher Education System in which madrid+d operates. Description of the history and role of Quality Assurance in Spanish Higher Education.	

SEPTEMBER 24 (MADRID+D OFFICES)				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
8.30-9.00	Review panel's private meeting			
9.00-9.45	Director	Federico Morán Abad, Director	Appointment and re-appointment, removal, new multi-annual strategic plan (strategic program teams), Quality Policy, resources, system reviews, independence from Regional Government, budget, internationalization	
9.55-10.35	Meeting with team responsible for preparation of self-assessment report	Raúl de Andrés Pérez, Head of Internal Quality Beatriz López Medina, Externalexpert. Universidad Complutense de Madrid	Review process, role of expert consultant hired, work method employed and management of external review, VALPATRUM, SWOT analysis	

SEPTEMBER 24 (MADRID+D OFFICES)				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
10.35-10.50	Review panel's private discussion			
10.50-11.20	Heads of Communication and Internal Quality	Raúl de Andrés Pérez, Head of Internal Quality Teresa Barbado, Head of Communication and Scientific Culture Rafael Moreno, Strategic Plan advisor	Dissemination of the work of the Foundation, implementation of procedures and strategic plan, system reviews, surveys, VALPATRUM, Annual Activity Report	
11.30-12.15	Members of Secretariat (Technical, administration and support staff)	Óscar Vadillo, Higher Education Quality Assurance Coordinator Concha Serrano, Head of Programmes Verification Marta Fernández, Head of Monitoring and Analysis Teresa Nuñez, Quality technician Irene Santos, Quality technician Irene de la Jara, Quality technician	Daily work, administrative support, databases, training/professional development opportunities	
12.15-12.50	Lunch (panel only)			
12.50-13.35	Heads and Members of Evaluation and Certification Commissions. Evaluation of programmes: Verification and Modification Monitoring Accreditation Renewal	Matilde Sierra, Universidad de León Luis Unceta, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid Antonio Gómez Sal, Universidad de Alcalá Gemma Herranz, Universidad de Castilla la Mancha Laureano González, Universidad de Cantabria Manuel González, Universidad de Cantabria	Monitoring 'ad hoc' programmes, failure of accreditation and accreditation renewal, role of Council of Universities in the final evaluation/monitoring decision, involvement of the Ministry of Education, inclusion of students, training of experts, publication of reports	

SEPTEMBER 24 (MADRID+D OFFICES)				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
13.30-14.15	Meeting with President and Vice-President of the Board of Trustees	Eduardo Sicilia, Madrid Ministry of Universities, Science and Innovation Sara Gómez, General Director of Universities and Artistic studies Alfonso González Hermoso de Mendoza, Vice-Ministry of Universities, Science and Innovation	Independence from Regional Government, Quality Policy, strategic plan	
14.15-14.45	Review panel's private discussion			
14.45-15.30	Members of Advisory Committee and Advisory Council	Juan Garbajosa, Assistant to the Vicerrector of Quality and Efficiency Universidad Politécnica de Madrid Juan Antonio Huertas, Vicerrector of Teaching, Innovation in the education and Quality Universidad Autónoma de Madrid Yolanda Cerezo, Vicerrector of Quality, Universidad Francisco de Vitoria FranciscoGabiola, Vicerrector of Quality and European Convergence. Universidad Alfonso X el Sabio Marisol Pastor, Head of the Technical office. Fundación Universidad Empresa	Appointment, strategic plan, prospect of working subcommittees, IQA system procedures, system reviews, surveys, external stakeholders' involvement, student participation	
15.40-16.35	Board of Appeals/Claims Commission	José Miguel Serrano, Instituto de Estudios Bursátiles Rosa Soriano, Universidad de Granada Ana Marta González González, Universidad de Navarra	QA aspects to the appointment and functioning of the Board, distinction made between appeals and complaints, statistics on appeals and complaints	

SEPTEMBER 24 (MADRID+D OFFICES)				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
16:45-17:30	Head and members of Institutional Evaluation Commissions: DOCENTIA SISCAL Institutional Accreditation	Eduardo García, Universidad de Sevilla Sara Junquera, IE University	Appeals and complaints, length of validity of accreditation, role of Council of Universities (capacity to overturn reports issued by the Foundation), implementation, DOCENTIA evaluations, publication of reports	
17.30-18.00	Wrap-up meeting among panel members and preparations for day 2			

SEPTEMBER 25 (MADRID+D OFFICES)				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
8.15-8.45	Review panel private meeting			
8.45-9.30	Manager and Accounting Department	María Jesús García Alarilla, Manager José de la Sota, General Coordinator	Appointment, resources (are they guaranteed?), role of Ministry, funding from evaluation of faculty, procedures and regulations	
9.40-10.25	Meeting with external experts involved in programme accreditation (including foreign experts and external secretaries). Visit panels	MartaJerez, Panel secretary GuillermoGarcía Badell, Panel secretary AlbertoPeinado, Universidad de Málaga M ^a Antonia Manassero Mas, Universitat de les Illes Balears	Responsibilities, involvement in the design of processes, training, participation of students	
10.25-10.40	Review panel's private discussion			

SEPTEMBER 25 (MADRID+D OFFICES)				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
10.40-11.25	Meeting with external experts involved in institutional accreditation (including foreign experts and external secretaries). Visit panels DOCENTIA SISCAL madri+d	Miguel Santamaría, UNED Juan Pedro Montañés, Universidad Pontificia Comillas	Responsibilities, involvement in the design of processes, training, participation of students	
11.35-12.20	Meeting with heads of privately-funded and public-funded universities reviewed	ElenaGazapo, RectorUniversidad Europea de Madrid DanielSada, RectorUniversidad Francisco de Vitoria Rafael Garesse, RectorUniversidad Autónoma de Madrid Guillermo Cisneros, RectorUniversidad Politécnica de Madrid José Antonio Campo Santillana, Vicerrector of Quality. Universidad Complutense de Madrid	Involvement in the review criteria and processes of committees, the Foundation's dissemination of information about its work, appeals and complaints, differences in the procedures for public and private universities	
12.20-13.05	Lunch (panel only)			

SEPTEMBER 25 (MADRID+D OFFICES)

TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
13.05-14.05	Meeting with students involved in recent accreditation procedures (Student in the Board of Trustees, representatives of Council of Students and members of panels)	<p>Carlos de la Rubia, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Student in the Board of Trustees)</p> <p>Clara Urbán, Universidad de Burgos</p> <p>Mar Fernández Antolín, Universidad CEU San Pablo</p> <p>Cristina Cadenas, Universidad de Granada</p> <p>Víctor Alba, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia</p> <p>Celia Moreno, Universidad de Sevilla</p> <p>Silvia Maiorana, Universidad Complutense de Madrid</p>	Participation in the activities of the Foundation and decisions (Boards, Committees), training	
14.15-15.00	Meeting with quality assurance officers of HEIs	<p>Agustín Martínez, Universidad CEU San Pablo</p> <p>David Sánchez Alonso, UDIMA</p> <p>Rocío Pérez, Universidad Complutense de Madrid</p> <p>Saray Navas, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos</p> <p>Gracia Serrano, ESIC</p>	Involvement in the review criteria and processes of the Foundation, training, participation of students, dissemination of information about their work	
15.00-15.15	Review's panel private discussion			

SEPTEMBER 25 (MADRID+D OFFICES)				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
15.00-16.15	Meeting with other stakeholders (Council of Employment, Business Confederation, IMDEA Foundations, Social Councils, Trade Unions, CSIC)	Ignacio Romero Olleros, IMDEA Materiales Jesús Escribano Martínez, Comisiones Obreras (Trade Unions) Julio Lage (Social Council Universidad Politécnica de Madrid) María Villegas (Assistant to the President - Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas)	Participation in the activities of the Foundation and decisions (Boards, Committees), training, surveys	
16:15-16:30	Transport to the Ministry			
16.30-17.15	Meeting with representatives of Council of Universities and National Ministry of Education	José Manuel Pingarrón, Spain General Secretary of Universities Enrique Collell Blanco. Director of the Cabinet of the General Secretary of Universities Cristina Rodríguez Coarasa, Spain General Secretary on Organization, Monitoring and Management of University Studies	Independence of the Foundation, resources, development plans	
17.15-18.15	Wrap-up meeting among panel members and preparations for day 3			

SEPTEMBER 26 (MADRID+D OFFICES)				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
9.00-9.45	Meeting among panel members to agree on final issues to clarify			

9.45-10.45	Meeting with Director to clarify any pending issues	Federico Morán Abad, Director		
10.45-12.00	Private meeting among panel members to agree on the main findings			
12.00-13.00	Lunch (panel only)			
13.00-14.00	Final de-briefing meeting with staff and Council/Board members of the agency to inform about preliminary findings	<p>Federico Morán Abad, Director</p> <p>María Jesús García Alarilla, Manager</p> <p>José de la Sota, General Coordinator</p> <p>Óscar Vadillo, Higher Education Quality Assurance Coordinator</p> <p>Concha Serrano, Head of Programmes Verification</p> <p>Marta Fernández, Head of Monitoring and Analysis</p> <p>Raúl de Andrés Pérez, Head of Internal Quality</p> <p>Teresa Nuñez, Quality technician</p> <p>Irene Santos, Quality technician</p> <p>Irene de la Jara, Quality technician</p>		

ANNEX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW

External review of the Fundación para el Conocimiento madrimasd (madri+d) by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

Annex I: TERMS OF REFERENCE

July 2018

1. Background and Context

The Fundación para el Conocimiento madrimasd (madri+d) is a non-profit organization established in 2002 on the initiative of the Regional Government of Madrid. Its objectives are strengthening and coordinating the Madrid R&D and Innovation Regional System through joint projects and actions in the areas of:

- Quality Assurance of the Madrid Higher Education System
- Technology-based entrepreneurship
- Technology transfer
- Promotion of the European Research Area
- Scientific dissemination

madri+d aims at promoting the development of science and technology knowledge and, enhancing technology innovation and consolidating joint actions between the scientific and business communities, supporting technology transfer and commercialization activities, developing a framework to encourage start-ups from R&D and Innovation projects, fostering the participation in European R&D and Innovation programmes, and improving the quality of the Higher Education system in the Region of Madrid.

The Decree 63/2014, of 29 May, which designates the Fundación para el Conocimiento madrimasd as the official assessment body for the Madrid Higher Education System.

Regarding the Quality Assurance of the Madrid Higher Education System, the Foundation's objective is to contribute to the improvement of higher education by means of evaluation reports and others leading to accreditation and quality certification in the university environment, as well as to the measurement of the performance of the public service of higher education in accordance with objective procedures and transparent processes, considering the Spanish, European and international framework.

The Region of Madrid is located in the centre of Spain, it holds fifteen universities in its territory, both public and private, most of them with a long tradition and history. Thirteen of them are evaluated by madri+d, while UNED (National Online Teaching University) and Universidad Pontificia Comillas (Catholic Church owned) are evaluated by the national agency ANECA. More than 280.000 students are enrolled in the over 1400 official programmes provided by the Madrid Universities, according to last data available (2017).

madri+d has been an ENQA member since March 2015 and is applying for renewal of its membership.

madri+d has been registered on EQAR since June 2015 and is applying for renewal of registration.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

This review, will evaluate the way in which and to what extent madri+d fulfils the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Consequently, the review will provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether membership of madri+d should be reconfirmed and to EQAR to support madri+d application to the register.

The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards granting membership.

2.1 Activities of madri+d within the scope of the ESG

In order for madri+d to apply for ENQA membership and for registration in EQAR, this review will analyse all madri+d activities that are within the scope of the ESG, i.e. reviews, audits, evaluations or accreditation of higher education institutions or programmes that relate to teaching and learning (and their relevant links to research and innovation). This is regardless of whether these activities are carried out within or outside the EHEA, and whether they are obligatory or voluntary.

The following activities of madri+d have to be addressed in the external review:

- Ex-Ante Verification and Modification of Official Programmes
- Ex-ante evaluation of master programmes in the arts
- Accreditation Renewal of official programmes
- SISCAL madri+d, Internal Quality Assurance Systems of University Centres certification
- DOCENTIA, assessment and certification of internal evaluation of teaching systems
- Faculty assessment
- Assessment of the programmes' development plan, related to the creation, admission, authorisation and accreditation of universities and centres, as foreseen in the RD 420/2015

In addition, the self-evaluation report and external review report should address how madri+d checks and ensures ESG compliance when taking into account the results of an evaluation process by a different agency, where that agency is not registered on EQAR.

3. The Review Process

The process is designed in the light of the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and in line with the requirements of the *EQAR Procedures for Applications*.

The evaluation procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of the Terms of Reference and protocol for the review;
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-assessment by madri+d including the preparation of a self-assessment report;
- A site visit by the review panel to madri+d;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final evaluation report by the ENQA Review Committee;
- Analysis of the scrutiny by the ENQA Board and their decision regarding ENQA membership;
- Follow-up of the panel's and/or ENQA Board's recommendations by the agency, including a voluntary follow-up visit.

3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review team members

The review panel consists of four members: one or two quality assurance experts, an academic employed by a higher education institution and student member. One of the members will serve as the chair of the review panel, and another member as a review secretary. For ENQA Agency Reviews at least one of the reviewers is an ENQA nominee (most often the QA professional[s]). At least one of the reviewers is appointed from the nominees of either the European University Association (EUA) or the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), and the student member is always selected from among the ESU-nominated reviewers.

In addition to the four members, the panel will be supported by the ENQA Secretariat review coordinator who will monitor the integrity of the process and ensure that ENQA expectations are met throughout the process. The ENQA staff member will not be the Secretary of the review and will not participate in the discussions during the site visit interviews.

Current members of the ENQA Board are not eligible to serve as reviewers.

ENQA will provide madri+d with the list of suggested experts with their respective curriculum vitae to establish that there are no known conflicts of interest. The experts will have to sign a non-conflict of interest statement as regards madri+d review.

3.2 Self-assessment by madri+d, including the preparation of a self-assessment report

Madri+d is responsible for the execution and organisation of its own self-assessment process and shall take into account the following guidance:

- Self-assessment is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- The self-assessment report is broken down by the topics of the evaluation and is expected to contain, among others: a brief description of the national HE and QA system; background description of the current situation of the Agency; an analysis and appraisal of the current situation; proposals for improvement and measures already planned; a SWOT analysis; each criterion (ESG part II and III) addressed individually. All agency's QA activities (whether within their national jurisdiction or outside of it, and whether obligatory or voluntary) will be described and their compliance with the ESG analysed.

- The report is well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which madri+d fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the ESG and thus the requirements of ENQA membership.
- The self-assessment report is submitted to the ENQA Secretariat who has 4 weeks to pre-scrutinise it before forwarding the report to the panel of experts. The purpose of the pre-scrutiny is to ensure that the self-assessment report is satisfactory for the consideration of the panel. The Secretariat will not judge the content of information itself but whether the necessary information, as stated in the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews, is present. For the second and subsequent reviews, the agency is expected to enlist the recommendations provided in the previous review and to outline actions taken to meet these recommendations. In case the self-assessment report does not contain the necessary information and fails to respect the requested form and content, the ENQA Secretariat reserves the right to reject the report and ask for a revised version within 4 weeks. In such cases, an additional fee of 1000 € will be charged to the agency.
- The report is submitted to the review panel a minimum of six weeks prior to the site visit.

3.3 A Site Visit by the Review Panel

madri+d will draw up a draft proposal of the schedule for the site visit to be submitted to the review panel at least two months before the planned dates of the visit. The schedule includes an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises to be undertaken by the review panel during the site visit, the duration of which is 2,5 days. The approved schedule shall be given to madri+d at least one month before the site visit, in order to properly organise the requested interviews.

The review panel will be assisted by madri+d in arriving in Madrid, Spain.

The site visit will close with a final de-briefing meeting outlining the panel's overall impressions but not its judgement on compliance or granting of ENQA membership.

3.4 Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report

On the basis of the review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report in consultation with the review panel. The report will take into account the purpose and scope of the evaluation as defined under articles 2 and 2.1. It will also provide a clear rationale for its findings with regards to each ESG. A draft will be first submitted to the ENQA review coordinator who will check the report for consistency, clarity and language and it will be then submitted to madri+d within 11 weeks of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If madri+d chooses to provide a statement in reference to the draft report it will be submitted to the chair of the review panel within two weeks after the receipt of the draft report. Thereafter the review panel will take into account the statement by madri+d, finalise the document and submit it to ENQA.

The report is to be finalised within three months of the site visit and will not exceed 40 pages in length.

When preparing the report, the review panel should also bear in mind the *EQAR Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG*, so as to ensure that the report will contain sufficient information for the Register Committee for application to EQAR.

madri+d is also requested to provide a letter addressed to the ENQA Board outlining its motivation applying for membership and the ways in which madri+d expects to contribute to the work and objectives of ENQA during its membership. This letter will be discussed along with the final evaluation report.

4. Follow-up Process and Publication of the Report

madri+d will consider the expert panel’s report and will publish it on its website once the ENQA Board has made its decision. The report will also be published on the ENQA website, regardless of the review outcome and decision by the ENQA Board. madri+d commits to preparing a follow-up plan in which it addresses the recommendations of the review panel and to submitting a follow-up report to the ENQA Board. The follow-up report will be published on the ENQA website, in addition to the full review report and the Board’s decision.

The follow-up report will be complemented by a small-scale visit to the agency performed by two members of the original panel (whenever possible). This visit will be used to discuss issues, based on the ESG, considered as of particular importance or challenge by madri+d. Its purpose is entirely developmental and has no impact on the judgement of membership and/or compliance of the agency with the ESG. Should the agency not wish to take advantage of this opportunity, it may opt out by informing the ENQA Review Coordinator about this.

5. Use of the report

ENQA shall retain ownership of the report. The intellectual property of all works created by the expert panel in connection with the review contract, including specifically any written reports, shall be vested in ENQA.

The review report is used by the Board of ENQA for the purpose of reaching a conclusion on whether madri+d has met the ESG and can be thus admitted/reconfirmed as a member of ENQA. The report will also be used for registration on EQAR, and is designed so as to serve these two purposes. However, the review report is to be considered final only after being approved by the ENQA Board. Once submitted to madri+d and ENQA and until it is approved by the Board the report may not be used or relied upon by madri+d, the panel and any third party and may not be disclosed without the prior written consent of ENQA. madri+d may use the report at its discretion only after the Board has approved of the report. The approval of the report is independent of the decision on membership.

The Chair of the panel shall remain available to respond to questions of clarification or further information from the EQAR Register Committee provided that the ENQA Secretariat is copied in all such requests.

6. Budget

madri+d shall pay the following review related fees:

Fee of the Chair	4,500 EUR
Fee of the Secretary	4,500 EUR
Fee of the 2 other panel members	4,000 EUR (2,000 EUR each)
Fee of 2 panel members for follow-up visit	1,000 EUR (500 EUR each)
Administrative overhead for ENQA Secretariat	7,000 EUR
Experts Training fund	1,400 EUR
Approximate travel and subsistence expenses	6,000 EUR
Travel and subsistence expenses follow-up visit	1,600 EUR

This gives a total indicative cost of 30,000.00 EUR VAT excl. for a review team of 4 members. In the case that the allowance for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, madri+d will cover any additional costs after the completion of the review. However, the ENQA Secretariat will endeavour to keep the travel and subsistence expenses in the limits of the planned budget, and will refund the difference to madri+d if the travel and subsistence expenses go under budget.

The fee of the follow-up visit is included in the overall cost of the review and will not be reimbursed in case the agency does not wish to benefit from it.

In the event of a second site visit required by the Board and aiming at completing the assessment of compliance, and should the agency accept a second visit, an additional fee of 500 EUR per expert, as well as travel and subsistence costs are recoverable from the agency.

7. Indicative Schedule of the Review

Agreement on terms of reference	June/July 2018
Appointment of review panel members	March/April 2019
Self-assessment completed	April 2019
Pre-screening of SAR by ENQA coordinator	May 2019
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	June/July 2019
Briefing of review panel members	August 2019
Review panel site visit	September 2019
Draft of evaluation report and submitting it to ENQA coordinator for pre-screening	By November 2019
Draft of evaluation report to madri+d	Early December 2019
Statement of madri+d to review panel if necessary	December 2019
Submission of final report to ENQA	By mid-January 2020
Consideration of the report by ENQA Board and response of madri+d	February 2020
Publication of the report	February 2020

ANNEX 3: GLOSSARY

ABET	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
ACAP	Agency for Quality, Accreditation and Prospective of Madrid Universities
ANECA	National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain
CRUMA	Conference of Rectors of the Public Universities of Madrid
CSIC	Spanish National Research Council
DEQAR	Database of External Quality Assurance Results
ENAE	European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQANIE	European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
ESG	<i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015</i>
HE	Higher education
HEI	higher education institution
IMDEA	Madrid Institute for Advanced Research
INAECU	Research Institute for Higher Education and Science
IQAS	Internal Quality Assurance System
QA	quality assurance
REACU	Network of Spanish Quality Agencies
RUCT	Register of Universities, Centres and Titles
SAR	self-assessment report

ANNEX4. DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE REVIEW

DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY THE FOUNDATION

SAR

DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY THE FOUNDATION UPON THE REQUEST OF THE PANEL

Articles of Association

Spanish Qualifications Framework

Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

Survey for Advisory Council

Survey for Vicerectors of Quality Assurance

Survey for Training in Verification process

Survey for training on follow-up on bachelor and master degrees

Webpage activity report

OTHER SOURCES USED BY THE REVIEW PANEL

Statistics Report on the Spanish University System. Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, 2019.

Webpage of the Foundation



THIS REPORT presents findings of the ENQA Agency Review of the Fundación para el conocimiento madridsd (madr+d), undertaken in 2019.



2020 ENQA AGENCY REVIEW