

Giorgi Vashakidze
Director
National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE)
#1 Aleksidze st
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Bern, 13 May 2019

Subject: Membership of NCEQE in ENQA

Dear Mr. Vashakidze,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting of 25 April 2019, the Board of ENQA took the decision to grant the NCEQE membership of ENQA for five years from that date. The Board concluded that NCEQE is in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) and thus fulfils the membership criteria according to article 6, paragraph 1 of ENQA's rules of procedure.

The Board would like to receive a follow-up report within two years of its decision, i.e. by April 2021 where NCEQE is expected to address the panel's recommendations. With specific emphasis, the Board seconds the critical remarks on standard 3.3 Independence, where the panel recommends comprehensive actions to be taken to gain absolute independence from the government where the Minister cannot dismiss the director or council member without serious reasons. The Board is concerned that such frequent changes in the management have a negative impact also in the stability and long-term planning of the agency. The follow-up report should hence provide clear evidence on any steps taken to address the concerns under ESG 3.3.

Linked with the above-mentioned issues, the follow-up report should also include an update on the status and planned activities of the Coordinating Council.

Furthermore, the Board encourages NCEQE to take advantage of the voluntary progress visit – an enhancement-led feature in the review process. The visit would take place in about two years' time from this decision. The ENQA Secretariat will be in touch with you in about a year's

time to discuss this possibility. The costs of this visit have already been included as part of the review fee and are non-refundable except for the travel costs of the experts. More information about the progress visit can be found in the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the ENQA Secretariat.

Please accept my congratulations for the confirmation of membership of NCEQE.

Yours sincerely,



Christoph Grolimund
President

Annex: Areas for development

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

ESG 3.1:

The involvement of all stakeholder groups in the governance should be improved, in particular since the Coordinating Council is not yet instituted and will not have a decision-making role. A student should be imperatively included in the Coordinating Council and efforts should be made to fill current vacancies.

ESG 3.3:

It should be ensured that there is absolute independence from the government in that the Minister cannot dismiss director or council member without serious reasons, the circumstances of which should be more transparently defined beyond a mere “inappropriate manner”.

The agency should take more ownership of how councils as decision-making bodies are nominated under the new Rules which give this power to the Ministry.

ESG 3.4:

The agency should make use of the Twinning project to establish a sustainable methodology for implementing systematic analysis, also beyond the lifetime of the project.

ESG 2.2:

It is recommended to use the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

It is recommended to detail and specify how recognition of decisions or reviews by international agencies would function, for example with regard to establishing compatibility and implementing follow-up procedures.

NCEQE is recommended to provide more guidance to experts and the Authorization Council on how to analyse the standard dealing with determining students’ quota.

ESG 2.3:

NCEQE has to define the details of the different follow-up procedures.

ESG 2.4:

The approach to the training of the experts should be revised, with a particular focus on more detailed, informative briefing for international experts, also available at a longer time ahead of the onsite visit, as well as on more systematic joint training of national and international experts.

ESG 2.5:

NCEQE should assess whether the terms of office, working methodology and voting methodology of the Authorization and the Accreditation Councils contribute to systematically ensuring consistency.

ESG 2.7:

NCEQE should make the process for complaints, i.e. dissatisfaction about the conduct of the authorization or accreditation process or the experts or staff members involved, accessible, understandable and transparent for all stakeholders.