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Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AEQES)
Boulevard Leopold II, 44, 2nd floor
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Dublin, 3 March 2017

Subject: Reconfirmation of membership of AEQES in ENQA

Dear Caty,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting of 13-14 February 2017, the Board of ENQA agreed that AEQES met the necessary requirements for reconfirmation of ENQA Membership for five years from that date.

The ENQA Board concluded that AEQES is in substantial compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the Board commends AEQES for the good work done. The Board would like to receive a follow-up report on the recommendations in the panel report (as outlined in the annex attached) within two years of its decision, i.e. by February 2019.

Furthermore, the Board would like AEQES to pay specific attention to ESG 3.5 Resources. It would be important that AEQES continue its discussions with policy-makers on its financial situation, in order to ensure continuation, stability and high quality of the agency's operations. Concerning ESG 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose, AEQES should make sure that students are involved in all quality assurance processes. The agency should also put more focus on issuing of summary reports of its evaluations, as suggested in ESG 2.6 Reporting.

In addition, the Board recommends that you consider availing of the new ENQA procedure, i.e. a progress visit. The visit would take place after the submission of the follow-up report, 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 re-confirmation of membership of AEQES.

Yours sincerely,



Padraig Walsh
President

Annex: Areas for development

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ESG 3.1

The recommendation on the length of time between full programme evaluations made by the panel who conducted the ENQA review in 2011 remains valid, and the Agency should continue negotiations with the government to shorten the 10-year interval between external evaluations.

AEQES is recommended to continue supporting students and promoting quality assurance among students, in cooperation with the relevant student organisations.

ESG 3.3

It is recommended that the Agency defines, in a clearer way than at present, the role of the Steering Committee in the description of the evaluation process, and in particular place emphasis on the approval process (without any interference by the SC) of the external evaluation reports.

ESG 3.4

It is recommended that the Agency further enhances the dissemination process of its thematic analyses in such a manner that the analyses become a useful tool for all interested stakeholders. Furthermore, it might be useful for AEQES to further develop its communication strategy and its management data system.

ESG 3.5

It is recommended that the Agency continues its discussions with policy-makers on its financial situation, in order to ensure the continuation of its activities while maintaining the same level of responsibility and quality standards.

ESG 2.2

It is recommended for the Agency continue the process of involving students in its activities, and in cooperation with the relevant student organisations, to support the capacity building of student experts in quality assurance.

ESG 2.4

AEQES would benefit from involving students in the follow-up evaluation process and panels. In this way, AEQES would further ensure the continuity of the evaluation process in a consistent manner.

ESG 2.5

It is recommended for AEQES to pay more attention to the training of experts involved in the evaluation process in the German-speaking community.

ESG 2.6

It is recommended for the Agency to reconsider the implementation of the proposal made by the ENQA Review Panel in 2011 concerning the issuing of summary reports for the evaluations that are easier to read and understood by non-professionals.

ESG 2.7

AEQES should consider the complaints and appeals procedures as part of the evaluation process.

Furthermore, it is recommended for the Agency to pay attention to update the English versions of documents on the website so they are correct and align with the documents published in French.