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Bern, 17 July 2018

**Subject: Reconfirmation of membership of NOKUT in ENQA**

Dear Mr. Mørland,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting of 21 June 2018, the Board of ENQA agreed to reconfirm the NOKUT membership of ENQA for five years from that date. The Board concluded that NOKUT is in substantial compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

Overall, the Board appreciates NOKUT's commitment to quality enhancement and commends the interlinked and risk-based model which is complex but at the same time coherent and holistic enabling oversight of the quality of educational provision without over-burdening the institutions.

The ENQA Board provides here the articulation regarding specific standards of the ESG where their opinion differs from that of the panel:

**ESG 2.3 Implementing processes**

The review panel confirms and appreciates that NOKUT has taken the initiative to relieve the administrative burden of the institutions in their processes taking into account the fact that institutions already enter the 3rd cycle of audits and the system has hence already matured. At the same time, the panel stresses the need to formalise the follow-up procedures. The Board is of the opinion that there can be various approaches to follow-up depending on the design of the external quality assurance and it is up to the agency to determine the nature of the follow-up in light of its mission and context. In the opinion of the Board, NOKUT's approach to follow up is compatible with the maturity of the Norwegian system i.e. *"institutions had been invited to discuss implementation of audit recommendations during seminars and conferences for institutions organised by NOKUT"; "supervisions and revisions are a form of follow-up measures themselves, focused on specific issues with a built-in checking of*

*implementation of recommendations*". The panel also states that *"when it comes to programme accreditations, the decision to discontinue the follow-up survey may be a less important problem, as the current national strategy looks at further reducing the number of programme accreditations as more institutions receive self-accrediting rights"* and that it *"finds NOKUT's plan for follow-up on recommendations in the 3rd cycle of audits with seminars for targeted groups of institutions much more systematic in its approach [comparing to 2nd cycle of audits]"*. The panel's recommendation remains relevant and NOKUT might consider how to further systematise its current approach to follow up, while at the same time the Board agrees with the ENQA Review Committee that in the light of the evidence, the panel's judgement of the ESG 2.3 as partially compliant is overly strict.

The Board would like to receive a follow-up report within two years of its decision, i.e. by June 2020.

The Board also encourages NOKUT to take advantage of the voluntary progress visit – a new 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 re-confirmation of membership of NOKUT.

Yours sincerely,



Christoph Grolimund  
President

Annex: Areas for development

## **Annex: Areas for development**

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

### **ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis**

It is recommended that NOKUT completes and publishes the two meta-analyses of institutional audits and programme accreditations, and implements its plan to publish regular meta-evaluations of their own work. In addition to the meta-evaluations, it would be of specific interest to HEIs to publish summarised findings of NOKUT's evaluations also as separate reports, and not only as part of wider analytical exercises. Such reports should also highlight good practices identified at HEIs. By the time of follow-up, NOKUT should also be able to produce such a report on the basis of the pilot of the 3rd cycle of audits.

### **ESG 2.3 Implementing processes**

NOKUT is recommended to implement the plans for follow-up in the 3rd cycle of audits while making sure that there is some form of checking if and how the recommendations from the previous cycle had been implemented. NOKUT is recommended to also consider introducing a follow-up procedure for programme accreditations.