

ROQA TNE Survey for Quality assurance agencies

Introduction

This survey is conducted as part of the [Robust Quality Assurance of Transnational Education \(ROQA-TNE\)](#) project. It aims to:

- collect data on if and how quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) are responsible for the external quality assurance of outgoing transnational education (TNE),
- explore and map the current legal frameworks and approaches to the quality assurance of TNE in EHEA sending countries,
- better define and understand the key challenges related to the implementation of quality assurance for TNE and identify future needs.

This survey is aimed specifically at quality assurance agencies in EHEA countries. A similar survey is being conducted with ministries responsible for higher education. All collected data will be anonymised and presented in a report in autumn 2026. The findings will also inform other project activities, including the update of the [QACHE toolkit](#), the development of a self-evaluation tool for agencies, and the drafting of policy principles for national authorities. Throughout the project and in synergy with other initiatives, the information gathered will serve as a basis for further in-depth consultation with relevant stakeholders in both sending and receiving countries, exploring how current challenges can be addressed and what role each stakeholder could play.

We encourage you to complete the survey to the extent that it is applicable to your agency, even if your agency does not actively engage with the quality assurance of TNE. Please forward the survey to the appropriate colleague or consult internally before submitting the answer. To support this process, here you can download a PDF version of the survey, which includes the glossary of terms. You should complete the survey in one session. Please submit only one complete response from your agency. The deadline for submission is **1 March**.

Should you have further questions about the project or the survey, please contact Alexis Fábregas Almirall at alexis.fabregas@enqa.eu

Glossary

Branch campus – Higher Education Institution (HEI) in country A (sending country) establishes a satellite campus in country B (receiving country) to deliver courses and programmes to students in country B (may also include country A students taking a semester/courses abroad). The qualification awarded is from the HEI in country A (Jane Knight, 2005).

Double degree – refers to two or more separate degrees awarded by the higher education institutions offering a single joint programme, each attesting to the successful completion of that programme (European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes).

EHEA - European Higher Education Area

External quality assurance - refers to the process of evaluation or audit of a higher education programme or institution undertaken by a specialised body outside the institution. Typically, the body may be a quality assurance or accreditation agency, or an ad hoc panel of experts and peers constituted by the responsible ministry. The evaluation will involve the collection of data, information and evidence for assessment against agreed standards (EHEA).

Franchise - an arrangement whereby a HEI in country A (sending country) authorises a HEI in country B (receiving country) to deliver their course/programme/service in country B or other countries. The qualification is awarded by the HEI in Country A (Jane Knight, 2005).

Higher Education Institution (HEI) - any institution providing services in the field of higher and/or tertiary education, as defined by national law (EHEA).

Joint degree - a single degree awarded by the higher education institutions offering a joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of that joint programme (European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes).

Joint university - an HEI co-founded and established in the receiving country involving both local and foreign sending HEIs who collaborate on academic programme development and delivery. Qualifications can be awarded by either or both receiving and sending country HEIs. Face-to face, distance and blended education can be used (Jane Knight, 2005).

Mode of delivery – methods or format for delivery of teaching and learning. It can include face-to-face, online or hybrid/blended education.

Off-shore campus - autonomous institutions established in a receiving country but belonging, in terms of their organisation and contents, to the educational systems of another country (sending country). These institutions are established in foreign countries but do not have parent awarding institution in the country whose educational system is used as reference (Lantero, 2021).

Online/distance - arrangements where HEIs deliver courses/programmes to students in different countries through distance and online modes. May include some face-to-face support for students through domestic study or support centers (Jane Knight, 2005).

– is a set of principles and recommendations supported by explanatory text and examples of how they could be implemented in practice. The toolkit provides practical advice on how quality assurance agencies can strengthen cooperation in the quality assurance of TNE and sets out general principles and recommendations for enhanced inter-agency engagement.

Receiving Country (also called host country) - the country where the transnational educational services are delivered (UNESCO, 2025).

Incoming Transnational Education (incoming TNE) - provision of any type of learning activity by an institution belonging to another (outgoing) country's education system to students who are primarily based in the host country.

Sending Country (also called home country) - the country whose domestic education system (if any) the awarding institution belongs to (UNESCO, 2025).

Outgoing Transnational Education (outgoing TNE) - provision of any type of learning activity by an institution belonging to the domestic education system to students who are primarily based in another country.

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) - are a formal policy document of the EHEA, adopted and endorsed by ministers in charge of higher education. The scope of the ESG is “quality assurance related to learning and teaching in higher education, including the learning environment and relevant links to research and innovation” (ESG 2015, p. 7).

Transnational Education (TNE) (also referred to as cross-border higher education (CBHE)) - any learning activity in which the students are mainly based in a country different from that in which the institution providing the education is located (ENQA, QACHE project).

Twinning - a situation whereby a HEI in country A collaborates with a HEI located in country B to develop an articulation system allowing student to take course credits in country B and/or sending country A. Only one qualification is awarded by the HEI in a country A. This may or may not be on a commercial basis (Jane Knight, 2005).

UNESCO/OECD guidelines - these are international, non-binding principles designed to promote quality, transparency and mutual trust in higher education delivered across borders. They provide guidance for governments, higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies, student bodies and professional organisations to ensure that cross-border higher education is well-regulated, credible, fair to students and recognised across countries.

Validation - validation arrangements between HEIs in different countries which allow HEI B in receiving country to award a qualification of HEI A in sending country (Jane Knight, 2005).

Survey

Part I – Profile of the respondent(s) and organisation

1. Name of the agency*¹
2. Name and surname of the respondent(s)*
3. Email address(es)*
4. Position(s)*
5. Country where your agency is located*
6. Are HEIs in your system allowed to provide TNE?*
- ☐ Yes, all types of TNE but only within the EHEA
 - ☐ Yes, some types of TNE but only within the EHEA
 - ☐ Yes, all types of TNE but only outside the EHEA
 - ☐ Yes, some types of TNE but only outside the EHEA
 - ☐ Yes, all types of TNE, within and outside the EHEA
 - ☐ Yes, some types of TNE, within and outside the EHEA
 - ☐ No, but we plan to allow it in the future
 - ☐ No, and we don't plan to allow it in the future
 - ☐ Other (please specify)

7. If yes, Q6.

Which types of TNE are HEIs in your system allowed to provide? (please select all that apply)*

- ☐ Franchise
- ☐ Twinning
- ☐ Double degree
- ☐ Joint degree
- ☐ Validation
- ☐ Branch campus
- ☐ Off-shore campus
- ☐ Joint university

¹ Questions marked with an * are mandatory

- Online/distance
- Not applicable
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

8. *If no but there are plans to allow it in the future Q6.*

What are the plans and rationale for introducing the possibility for HEIs to offer TNE?*

9. *If no and there are no plans to allow it in the future or If no but there are plans to allow it in the future Q6*

What are the reasons for not allowing the provision of TNE?*

Part 2 – Data collection on TNE

10. Does your agency or any other organisation in your system collect data regarding TNE (e.g. on TNE study programmes, number of students, etc.)?*

- ☐ Yes, the agency collects it
- ☐ Yes, another organisation collects it
- ☐ Yes, the agency and other organisation(s) collect it
- ☐ No, the agency does not collect any data, but plans to do it in the future
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

11. *If yes, another organisation collects it Q10.*

Which organisation(s) in your system collect(s) data regarding outgoing TNE?*

12. *If yes the agency collects it or yes, the agency and other organisation(s) collect it Q10.*

What type of data is collected by the agency?*

	Only on outgoing TNE	Only on incoming TNE	On both outgoing and incoming TNE	Not applicable	I don't know
Countries					
TNE study programmes' qualification level					
TNE study programmes mode of delivery					
Accreditation status of the TNE programmes					

Number of students studying in TNE programmes					
Other (please specify)					

13. *If yes Q10.* Is this data made public?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Yes, partially
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

14. *If yes Q13.* Please share the database link(s).

15. *If no Q13.* What are the main reasons for not collecting data on TNE?*

	On outgoing TNE	On incoming TNE	On both outgoing and incoming TNE	Not an issue	I don't know
Lack of financial resources					
Lack of human resources					
Lack of appropriate data collection mechanisms					

Lack of cooperation from HEIs providing TNE					
Lack of cooperation from foreign competent authorities					
No legal mandate to do so					
No perceived need to collect such data					
It has been an oversight					
Other (please specify)					

Part 3 – Frameworks for (External) QA of TNE

16. Has your agency used the [UNESCO/OECD guidelines](#) on cross-border higher education?*

- ☐ Yes, we have implemented these in our work on QA of TNE
- ☐ Yes, to develop our own guidelines on QA of TNE
- ☐ No, we were not aware of these guidelines
- ☐ No, we have not implemented or used these guidelines
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

17. *If no, we have not implemented or used these guidelines Q16.*

What are the reasons for not using the UNESCO/OECD guidelines?

18. Has your agency used the [QACHE toolkit](#)?*

- ☐ Yes, we have implemented it in our work on TNE
- ☐ Yes, to develop our own guidelines on QA of TNE
- ☐ No, we have not used the QACHE toolkit
- ☐ No, we were not aware of the QACHE toolkit
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

19. *If no, we have not used the QACHE toolkit Q18.*

What are the reasons for not using QACHE toolkit?

20. *If yes Q18.*

What changes do you think should be made to the QACHE toolkit? (please select all that apply)*

- ☐ Update the text to better reflect recent developments in the field
- ☐ Make the text clearer and easier to understand
- ☐ Expand the toolkit to include principles and recommendations for national authorities
- ☐ Expand the toolkit to include principles and recommendations for HEIs
- ☐ No changes are needed
- ☐ I don't know

- Other (please specify)
21. How is outgoing TNE regulated in your national legal framework?*
- There is a specific legal framework for outgoing TNE
 - There is a specific legal framework for TNE that includes outgoing TNE
 - There is a general legal framework applicable to domestic HE with some specific provisions for outgoing TNE
 - The general legal framework applicable to domestic HE is also applicable to outgoing TNE without specific provisions
 - There is no legal framework applicable to outgoing TNE, but there are plans to develop a specific legal framework
 - There is no legal framework applicable to outgoing TNE but there are plans to include specific provisions in the existing legal framework for HE
 - There is no legal framework applicable to outgoing TNE and there are no plans to change this
 - I don't know
 - Other (please specify)
22. *If TNE is regulated (either through a specific framework or within general legislation) Q21.*
Please provide details of the applicable legal provisions or a link to the legal framework if available in English.
23. How is TNE officially defined in your national context or by your agency?*
24. At what level is QA of TNE regulated in your system?*
- At national level
 - At the QA agency level
 - At both the national and agency levels
 - I don't know
 - Other (please specify)
25. *If one of the first three options are chosen for Q24.*
How is QA of TNE addressed in your QA framework at national and/or agency levels?*
- The same general QA framework for domestic HE provision applies to TNE
 - The general QA framework for domestic HE provision applies to TNE, with specific provisions
 - There is a dedicated QA framework for TNE covering both outgoing and incoming TNE
 - There is a dedicated QA framework for TNE covering only outgoing TNE
 - There is a dedicated QA framework for TNE covering only incoming TNE
 - TNE is addressed voluntarily by the QA agency and is not included in the national QA framework

- ☐ TNE is not currently addressed within the national QA framework
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

26. *If TNE is addressed within the general QA framework with specific provisions Q25.*
Please briefly list the main specific provisions.*

27. Which of the following TNE provision is covered by the QA framework at national and/or agency levels? (please select all that apply)*

- ☐ Franchise
- ☐ Twinning
- ☐ Double degree
- ☐ Joint degree
- ☐ Validation
- ☐ Branch campus
- ☐ Off-shore campus
- ☐ Joint university
- ☐ Online/distance
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

28. Is TNE subject to mandatory and cyclical external quality assurance?*

- ☐ Yes, to mandatory external quality assurance
- ☐ Yes, to periodical external quality assurance
- ☐ Yes, to mandatory and periodical external quality assurance
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Part 4 – Implementation of external QA for outgoing TNE

29. Does your agency conduct external quality assurance of outgoing TNE delivered by your country's HEIs?*

- ☐ Yes, only within the EHEA
- ☐ Yes, only outside the EHEA
- ☐ Yes, within and outside the EHEA
- ☐ No, but there are plans to do it in the future
- ☐ No, the agency has no mandate to do it
- ☐ Other (please specify)

30. *If yes, only outside the EHEA or yes, within and outside the EHEA*

Region(s) where your agency conducts most of its external quality assurance of outgoing TNE delivered by your country's HEIs (please select all that apply)*

- ☐ EHEA
- ☐ Australasia
- ☐ Asia Pacific
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Middle East
- ☐ North America
- ☐ Latin America and Caribbean
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

31. *If yes, only within EHEA, only outside the EHEA or yes, within and outside the EHEA to Q29.*

What standards/criteria does your agency use for the evaluation of TNE?*

- ☐ The same standards/criteria as for domestic higher education provision
- ☐ The same standards/criteria as for domestic higher education provision, with specific adjustments for outgoing TNE
- ☐ There are separate standards/criteria for the evaluation of outgoing TNE
- ☐ There are separate standards/criteria for the evaluation of incoming TNE
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

32. Which aspects of the external quality assurance methodology are handled differently for outgoing TNE compared with domestic higher education? (please select all that apply)*

- ☐ Self-evaluation
- ☐ Site visit
- ☐ Selection/recruitment of review experts
- ☐ Review experts' training
- ☐ Panel composition
- ☐ Reporting
- ☐ Decision-making process
- ☐ There are no differences
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

33. Which frameworks has your agency used when developing the external quality assurance standards/criteria for outgoing TNE?*

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	I don't know
The ESG				
The UNESCO/OECD Guidelines				
The UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of good practice in the provision of TNE				

The national criteria for higher education				
Other (please specify)				

34. Which stakeholder groups have been consulted when developing your agency's external quality assurance standards/criteria and methodology for TNE?*

	On standards/criteria	On external quality assurance methodology	Not applicable
Relevant national authorities of your country/system			
Relevant authorities of the receiving countries/systems			
HEIs from your country			
HEIs from the receiving countries/systems			
QA agency from the receiving countries/systems			
Experts in QA of TNE			

Experts from the QA networks in the region of the receiving countries			
Students from the receiving countries/systems			
None of the above			
I don't know			
Other (please specify)			

35. Who usually conducts the external quality assurance of outgoing TNE? (please select all that apply)*

- ☐ Sending country's agency alone
- ☐ Agency in the sending country and the agency/competent authority of the receiving country separately
- ☐ Agency in the sending country and the agency/competent authority of the receiving country jointly
- ☐ Agency/competent authority of the receiving country alone
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

36. Please add a comment/further information if necessary.

37. Which factors most influence the decision on who conducts the external quality assurance of outgoing TNE? (please select all that apply)*

- ☐ Regulatory requirements in the receiving country
- ☐ Regulatory requirements in the sending country
- ☐ Type of TNE (e.g. franchising, validation, joint programmes)
- ☐ Subject area(s) of the TNE
- ☐ Mode of delivery (e.g. face-to-face, online or hybrid/blended education)
- ☐ Development stage of the TNE (e.g. new, established)

- Type of HEIs (e.g. public, private)
- Previous quality assurance outcomes
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

38. What are the main challenges your agency faces when implementing external quality assurance for outgoing TNE?* (please select all that apply)

- Limited cooperation from partner HEIs abroad
- Difficulty organising on-site visits
- Difficulty of gathering reliable information about the local higher education context
- Differences in regulatory frameworks between countries
- Difficulty ensuring consistent application of standards across borders
- Language or communication barriers
- Legal or contractual constraints
- Limited inter-agency cooperation
- Limited financial resources
- Limited staff capacity
- Challenges posed by digital delivery modes
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

39. How does your agency address or overcome the challenges related to conducting external quality assurance of outgoing TNE?*

40. When conducting the external quality assurance of outgoing TNE, how does your agency cooperate with the local agency/competent authority?*(please select all that apply)

- Cooperation depends whether the external quality assurance is voluntary or mandatory
- Cooperation depends on the country
- We do not cooperate with the local agency/authority
- We notify them about the external quality assurance procedure for information purposes
- We exchange information on the HEI and/or programme
- We consider the results of the local agency's/authority's previous external quality assurance procedures
- We request information about the recognition of the external quality assurance results
- We exchange information about the applicable standards/criteria and methodology

- We request input or documentation from the local agency/authority
- We ask for support in identifying local experts
- We provide detailed information, including timelines and site-visit arrangements
- We invite representatives of the local agency/authority to participate as observers
- We notify them of the external quality assurance results
- We conduct joint external quality assurance procedures
- We coordinate our external quality assurance procedures to reduce the burden for the institution
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

41. *If cooperation depends whether the external quality assurance is voluntary or mandatory Q40.*

What are the main differences in cooperation between voluntary and mandatory external quality assurance?*

42. Are the TNE external quality assurance results published by your agency?*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

Part 5 – Cooperation and information sharing

43. Has your agency set up any cooperation agreements (e.g MoU, bilateral cooperation agreements) with non-EHEA QA agencies/competent authorities in relation to QA of TNE?*

- ☐ Yes, with all countries where TNE is sent
- ☐ Yes, with all countries where the agency conducted external quality assurance of TNE
- ☐ Yes, with some countries where TNE is sent
- ☐ Yes, with some countries where the agency conducted external quality assurance of TNE
- ☐ No, but we are not currently planning to do so in the future
- ☐ No, and we don't plan to do so in the future
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

44. If yes Q43.

How have cooperation agreements regarding QA of TNE improved cooperation with non-EHEA QA agencies/competent authorities?* (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Improved communication and information exchange
- ☐ Increased mutual trust and understanding
- ☐ Streamlined procedures for handling QA-related matters
- ☐ Enhanced coordination in monitoring and evaluation activities
- ☐ Clarified roles and responsibilities between parties
- ☐ Facilitated quicker and more efficient decision-making
- ☐ Provided access to relevant local data and documentation
- ☐ No significant improvement observed
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

45. Does your agency have a standardised procedure regarding cooperation with the local QA agency/competent authority?*

- ☐ Yes, we have a specific internal procedure
- ☐ Yes, the procedure is outlined in national legislation or regulations
- ☐ Yes, the procedure is described in formal bilateral or multilateral agreements with local QA agency/competent authority
- ☐ No, we engage with them on an ad hoc basis

- ☐ No, we do not have any cooperation with any local QA agency/competent authority
- ☐ Cooperation depends on the country/context
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

46. Is your agency a member of any QA network outside the EHEA?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

47. If yes Q46.

What are the main reasons for your agency to join QA networks outside the EHEA?* (please select all that apply)

- ☐ To strengthen international cooperation and partnerships
- ☐ To exchange good practices and expertise in general
- ☐ To exchange good practices and expertise on QA of TNE
- ☐ To gain insights into QA systems and developments outside the EHEA
- ☐ To support the quality assurance of programmes delivered abroad
- ☐ To enhance the agency's international visibility and reputation
- ☐ To participate in joint projects or capacity-building activities
- ☐ To harmonise or align approaches to QA of TNE
- ☐ To facilitate cooperation with local QA agencies/competent authorities
- ☐ It is required or encouraged by national legislation or policy
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

48. Has your country signed any recognition agreements with countries from outside the EHEA? (please select all that apply)*

- ☐ Yes, for recognition of external quality assurance results
- ☐ Yes, for recognition of qualifications
- ☐ Yes, for recognition of credits
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

49. If yes Q48.

Please provide information with which countries?*

Part 6 - Future needs

50. What additional support would be useful for further developing the QA of outgoing TNE?* (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Capacity-building activities for QA agencies
- ☐ Capacity building activities for other stakeholders (e.g. ministries, HEIs, students etc.)
- ☐ Opportunities for peer-learning and dissemination of good practice on QA of TNE
- ☐ Opportunities for participation in QA networks from other regions
- ☐ Facilitated exchanges with foreign competent authorities
- ☐ Establishment of regional agreements on QA of TNE
- ☐ Research/studies on TNE (e.g on trends, risks, etc.)
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

51. What additional resources would be useful for further developing the QA of outgoing TNE?* (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Development of a reference framework, based on the ESG
- ☐ Guidelines on cooperation with agencies/competent authorities based outside of the EHEA
- ☐ Templates for MoU and other cooperation agreements with agencies/competent authorities based outside of the EHEA
- ☐ Guidelines on collection and sharing of data
- ☐ Development of a self-assessment tool for agencies to support the implementation of good practices
- ☐ Establish a national online repository of TNE resources (publications, regulatory information, case studies, possible risks, etc.)
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

52. Please add any additional information or comment to this survey.