



NATIONAL
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INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE

How did we do it? Case examples from AIC

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Support for Meeting the Requirements Set for EQAR
Agency
Nr.8.2.4.0/15/I/001



Outline

- Self-evaluation process
- Preparing the self-evaluation report
- Preparing additional information
- Preparation for the site visit
- Commenting on the draft report
- Waiting for the final decision

How it all started?

1995-2013



2013-2015



Izglītības un zinātnes
ministrija

2015



Timeline of the review

- **December 2014** – decision on quality assurance agency
- **July 2015** – the official date when agency started to operate
- **August 2017** – Terms of reference for the ENQA review are drafted
- **September – October 2017** EQAR confirms the eligibility
- **30th November 2018** – the self-evaluation report is submitted
- **December 2017** – pre-screening of the report, requests for additional information
- **19th – 22nd February 2018** – the site visit of ENQA experts panel
- **By 1st May 2018** – the draft panel report is received
- **Middle of May 2018** – AIC submits comments to the review report
- **21st June 2018** – ENQA Board take decision about AIC
- **17th July** – ENQA Board decision is received
- **14th September** – documents are submitted to EQAR

Self-evaluation process

- Assessing the existing practice in a structured and coordinated way
- The self-evaluation of the overall system started well before the agency was established
- The self-evaluation of the agency and its activities started at the same time with the establishment of the agency
- Self-evaluation was at the same time when the ESG were revised and approved in 2015
- ESF project Support for Meeting the Requirements Set for EQAR Agency Nr.8.2.4.0/15/I/001
- The self-evaluation included extensive discussions with stakeholders – students, employers, higher education institutions, Ministry etc.
 - Development of policy documents
 - Working groups
 - Consultations

Lessons learned: self-evaluation process

- Stakeholders involvement is crucial already in the development process of a new system
- It is easier to design a new system from the beginning than to adjust an existing one



Preparing the self-evaluation report

- A self-evaluation group of 4 persons (Head, Deputy Head, Expert, Lawyer)
- Structure as set in the «Guidelines for ENQA agency reviews»
- All staff members involved in preparing certain sections of the self-evaluation report
- The self-evaluation report discussed in the weekly staff meetings and also special meetings
- The self-evaluation report discussed/ presented during the meetings of decision making and strategic bodies of the agency

Lessons learned: Preparing the self-evaluation report

- A small team that is responsible for writing the self-evaluation report functions the best
- Other staff members have to be involved in the self-evaluation process and need to be informed about the progress with the report
- It is crucial to follow the ENQA «Guidelines for ENQA agency reviews» and it reduces the additional work that might be required on the report
- The report must be analytical and evaluate the situation, not describe it
- The report must be fair, self-critical but not overly critical, give credit to yourself for the things that are done well
- When writing the report, it must be looked at from the viewpoint of an external reader
- It's better to write it in English rather to use translator

Preparing additional information

- The additional information that experts panel required was extensive
 - Additional regulatory documents
 - Detailed descriptions/ explanations of information mentioned in the self-evaluation report
 - Translations of documents that are available only in Latvian
- Most of the requests did not require additional facts/evidence but rather a more detailed/ differently structured description
- The most time-consuming element was the preparation of translations

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Lessons learned: Preparing additional information

- A large number of additional information that was requested does not necessarily mean that the self-evaluation report is of bad quality
- The additional information provided by the agency should be structured as requested by the panel and easy to navigate
- The requests of additional information can help to identify which elements of the procedures, structure are not clearly understandable for an external person (need improvements, re-thinking)



Site visit

- 4 days (2 full days and 2 half days); 19 meetings with 70 interviewees
- Diverse group of participants, including the representatives of organisations/ higher education institutions that have not only positive experience in our assessment procedures (e.g. not only maximum accreditation terms, experience with appeals and complaints)
- Mostly participants who are able to speak and understand English, with some minor translation needed
- Before the visit a general briefing/explanation to all participants about the purpose, schedule and outcomes of the review

Lessons learned: site visit

- Even with two full days of interviews there is not enough time to discuss all the issues, meet all the stakeholders
- Do not be afraid to invite stakeholders that are critical towards you ; it will add credibility to the review process and also improve the relations between the agency and stakeholders
- It must be ensured that all participants are familiar with the self-evaluation report and participate in briefings
- Encourage people to speak English during the interviews
- If using a translator, make sure that the translator is familiar with the higher education and quality assurance terminology



Commenting on the report

- Comments about factual errors and also about misunderstandings and interpretations of the information
- Not completely clear what to comment on and how to do it, when and whether and how the comments will be taken into account
- Comments VS clarifications VS additional information.

Lessons learned: Commenting on the report

- Not completely clear what to comment on and how to do it, when and whether the comments will be taken into account
- Comments VS clarifications VS additional information. How to ensure that comments do not become clarifications?
- Full compliance and substantial compliance – based on the evidence and analysis of the panel not always easy to differentiate between them

Waiting for the result



Academic Information Centre


PROJECTS

[Click here to view the self-assessment report on the agency's website.](#)

[Click here to view the Board's decision, including comments concerning areas for development.](#)


WORK &
POLICY AREAS

EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT OF AIC

July 2018



[Download Review Report](#)


NEWSLETTER

The Academic Information Centre (AIC) underwent an ENQA-coordinated external review in 2018. The review was chaired by Heli Mattisen, Director, Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA), Estonia.

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[Click here to view the Board's decision, including comments concerning areas for development.](#)



Current activities

- Waiting for the decision of EQAR Register Committee
- Informing the stakeholders about the ENQA decision and expressing the gratitude for support
- The recommendations from ENQA review panel already being used in policy discussions
- From January 2019 - working on the plan for a structured implementation of the ENQA recommendations and preparation for the progress visit



Thank you!

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