

Leadership Programme - Presentation of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

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QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

ENQA is not under any quality assurance system.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ENQA

HISTORY

The idea for the creation of ENQA originated a few years before the signatory of the Bologna Declaration, when the outcomes from the European Pilot Project for Evaluating Quality in Higher Education (1994-95) demonstrated the value of sharing and developing experience in the area of quality assurance. Following this and the Recommendation of the Council (98/561/EC of 24 September 1998), ENQA was established in 2000 as the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. In order to respond to growing expectations towards ENQA about European policy development, including the mandate from the Ministers of Higher Education for the drafting of the ESG, it was concluded that ENQA needed a stronger organisation and was transformed into the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in 2004.

MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

ENQA acts as a major driving force for the improvement of quality assurance across all the Bologna Process signatory countries. It is an independent, non-profit, membership association that contributes to the maintenance, enhancement and advancement of a quality culture in European higher education. As the largest association of quality assurance agencies committed to agreed European standards (the ESG), ENQA's mission is to drive "the development of quality assurance by representing agencies internationally, supporting them nationally and providing them with comprehensive services and networking opportunities."

ENQA's vision is to have a European Higher Education Area where students have access to high quality education and can achieve qualifications that are respected worldwide. ENQA acknowledges the diversity of higher education systems and quality assurance approaches and adheres to the following values:

- "Transparency: ENQA publishes its policies, procedures and criteria for decisions and reports
- Independence: ENQA actively promotes the operational independence of quality assurance agencies and supports the autonomy of higher education institutions
- Collaboration: ENQA works in a consultative manner with its members and affiliates, European partners and fellow associations
- Integrity: ENQA operates with integrity and in a fair, equitable, impartial, objective and professional manner".

ACTIVITIES

ENQA agency reviews

The ENQA Agency Review process is used by ENQA to evaluate whether the agencies' quality assurance activities are in compliance with the ESG. Agencies complying with the ESG are eligible for ENQA membership (if within the EHEA and depending on their profile). The agency review is conducted to stimulate trust in quality assurance and quality of higher education internationally, and supports and adds to the legitimacy of the reviewed agency at the national level (where relevant). Additionally, ENQA review reports are used by EQAR's Register Committee for the purpose of registration on EQAR.

Through the reviews, ENQA supports the development of independent and trustworthy QA agencies and provides mature agencies with suggestions for further improvement that help to enhance their processes, activities and procedures beyond threshold levels.

The review covers all quality assurance activities of the agency under review that fall under the scope of the ESG, regardless of whether these activities are carried out in the agency's predominant country/region of operation, in other countries of the EHEA, or outside the EHEA and regardless of whether the activities are compulsory or voluntary in nature.

Beyond the reviews

ENQA is also involved in many other activities as a membership association of QA agencies. These include principally input towards EHEA and EU policy-making in the field of higher education; coordination of members and other stakeholders for activities supporting the development of quality assurance in the EHEA and in other parts of the world; and contribution to quality assurance projects. ENQA organises regular events each year, such as statutory meetings and workshops on specific topics of interest in the field of quality assurance. ENQA provides information about European and international higher education and quality assurance through its communication channels.

International activities

Since there have been many advancements in the harmonisation of higher education quality assurance in the context of the Bologna Process, the work of ENQA is often seen as an example or benchmark for other regions of the world. ENQA has thus acquired a position with a global outreach, which has been strengthened through several projects on capacity-building and development activities in quality assurance beyond Europe. To mention a few such initiatives, ENQA has actively contributed to the development of a continental framework for quality assurance both in the ASEAN and in Africa. The international activities of ENQA can also be considered a consolidating mechanism of ENQA's review process, as they have allowed for exchange and reflection with colleagues and within systems from around the Globe. These activities also support mutual understanding and recognition between systems internationally, as different higher education systems can be studied and compared among practitioners in the field.

STRUCTURE OF ENQA

The Association has the following bodies:

- **General Assembly:** the General Assembly, composed of the representatives of ENQA member agencies, with representatives of respective European ministries and stakeholders attending as observers, is the main decision-making body of the association.

- **Board** (including the Presidency which consists of one president and two vice-presidents): as the executive body of ENQA, the Board ensures an effective management of the association current issues.
- **Secretariat**: the secretariat takes care of the day-to-day conduct of policy, administration, record-keeping and account management.
- **Appeals and Complaints Committee**: it shall hear appeals and complaints against decisions of the Board and the conduct of procedures in respect to membership matters; and the integrity of the external review and decision-making process on the basis of which the agency was admitted as a member in ENQA.

Organigram of ENQA:

