



Quality Agency for
Higher Education

Self-assessment process for further development of the agency

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Outline

- National context
- Self-assessment process
- Preparing the self-assessment report
- Preparing additional information
- Lessons learned

National context



Timeline of the review

December 2014	Decision about establishing a quality assurance agency
July 2015	The official date when agency started to operate
Augusts 2017	Terms of reference for the ENQA review are drafted
September – October 2017	EQAR confirms the eligibility
30th November 2017	Self-evaluation report is submitted
December 2017	Pre-screening of the report, requests for additional information
19th – 22nd February 2018	Site visit of ENQA experts panel
By 1st May 2018	Draft report is received
Middle of May 2018	AIC submits comments to the review report
21st June 2018	ENQA Board takes decision about AIC
17th July 2018	ENQA Board decision is received
14th September 2018	Documents are submitted to EQAR

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SELF-EVALUATION REPORT 2017

Academic Information Centre (AIC)
Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA)

<https://www.aika.lv/en/laws-and-regulations/publications/informative-reports/>

Catalysts for self-assessment process

- Historical issues with the former quality assurance agency
- Political will to establish an agency that is compliant with ESG/ internationally recognised
- Strong voice and participation of the stakeholders and higher education institutions
- Revision of the ESG (ESG 2015)
- Specially designated funding for becoming an EQAR registered agency (ESF)

Self-assessment process

- Open and critical, including extensive discussions with stakeholders – students, employers, higher education institutions, trade unions, ministries etc.
 - Development of new policy documents (regulations, guidelines);
 - Working groups;
 - Consultations ;
- Lead by the agency staff
- Complemented by consultations with foreign agencies

Preparation of the self-assessment report

- A self-evaluation group of 4 persons but all staff members involved in preparing certain sections of the report
- Structure of the report as set in the «Guidelines for ENQA agency reviews»
- Discussions of the report and presentations of the progress at:
 - weekly staff meetings
 - meetings of decision making and strategic bodies of the agency

Preparing additional information

- The additional information requested by the experts:
 - 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
- Translations

Lessons learned

- 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;
- A small team that is responsible for writing the self-evaluation report functions the best;
- All 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» as 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;
- It is better to write in English rather to use translator;

- When writing the report, it must be looked at from the viewpoint of an external reader;
- A large number of requests for additional information 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.



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