

**13TH ENQA TRAINING OF AGENCY
REVIEWERS**

INSIGHTS FROM THE ENQA BOARD

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enqa.

TOPIC OF THIS SESSION

- Degree of compliance with ESG standards in ENQA review panel reports
- Recurrent issues regarding reviews discussed in the ENQA Board

ENQA BOARD DISCUSSION OF REVIEW REPORTS

- Agency review reports on Board meeting agenda are discussed based on:
 - Agency application letter
 - Review panel report
 - Scrutiny form filled out by in one of 4 Scrutiny Committees
 - Each with 2 Board members + 1 experienced external member

ENQA BOARD DISCUSSION OF REVIEW REPORTS

- Scrutiny form asks about:
 - Integrity of review process & conclusiveness of Panel's findings substantiated by evidence and analysis
 - Compliance with ESG
 - Panel recommendation (vs. scrutinizer's judgment?)
 - Main recommendations/issues to be stressed in ENQA Board letter to agency
 - Which will be the focus in the agency's follow-up report

REVIEWS AGAINST ESG 2015

- As of February 2021 ENQA has passed decisions on 57 agencies reviewed against ESG 2015
 - 4 agencies given „under review” status
 - no progress in thematic analyses since last review; no thematic analysis done
 - Conflict of interest (overlap) between external review and decision-making
 - Closed system with minimal external stakeholder involvement
 - 5 agencies given “no member” status
 - 1 or 2 NC plus also PC

FREQUENCY OF STANDARDS NOTED IN ENQA INTERNAL DOCUMENT „BOOK OF PRECEDENTS” (FEBRUARY 2021)



- ESG Part 3

- 3.1: **ten** times
- 3.2: one times
- 3.3: **eight** times
- 3.4: **twenty-one** times
- 3.5: five times
- 3.6: **eight** times
- 3.7: /

- ESG Part 2

- 2.1: **five** times
- 2.2: three times
- 2.3: **five** times
- 2.4: **six** times
- 2.5: three times
- 2.6: **ten** times
- 2.7: **eight** times

ENQA BOARD RECURRING ISSUES OF NOTE

- Ad 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance:
 - The Board acknowledged that there were difficulties interpreting standard 3.1. This standard contains few different elements and all of them should be covered.
 - „Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the Agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.”
 - Of utmost importance is the development of a clear and detailed strategic plan that will guide effectively the agency’s activities towards the aims set. Coherence between mission, strategic plan and activity plan. There should be a sector-wide consensus. All management and other bodies and levels of agency, as well as external stakeholders, should be involved in its planning and execution

ENQA BOARD RECURRING ISSUES OF NOTE

- Ad 3.3 Independence:
 - Where decision-making body is a separate organization from the agency organizing the evaluations – both should be interviewed for the ENQA review and relationship explored
 - Panel should present not only official documents declaring agency independence but also describe how operational independence is safeguarded in practice
 - Become fully separated from the Ministry in organisational terms, including the staff recruitment process and financial services; unclear selection criteria for the appointment of students and professionals into the pool of experts; imprecise procedure/methodology for the appointment and dismissal of the Council members

ENQA BOARD RECURRING ISSUES OF NOTE

- Ad 3.4 Thematic analysis:
 - Standard focuses on analysis of agency's QA work and QA in the system the agency works in (not annual reports!)
 - Regularity of the analyses is interpreted differently by panels
 - Not defined in Standard, but implies more frequency than „now and then” + planned regularity
 - Should be set down in internal regulations
 - Even if a supra agency is responsible for thematic studies on the system, each agency is responsible for conducting analyses (possibly using information from the other study) of the impact of its work (quality in the system)
 - Agency may commission e.g. a research institute to do the data-gathering and analysis, but based on agency terms of reference and input and oversight
 - The results of analyses should feed back to society: dissemination!
 - Thematic analyses enhance the agency's internal QA

ENQA BOARD RECURRING ISSUES OF NOTE

- Ad 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct:
 - Need to show how the agency manages its internal quality assurance and how it involves its internal and external stakeholders in the evaluation and quality improvement activities
 - Need to establish formal feedback mechanisms to assess the quality of the work of each individual expert and internal staff
 - Need to formalise the processes and to assure that the external feedback is collected systematically

ENQA BOARD RECURRING ISSUES OF NOTE

- Ad 2.1 Consideration of internal QA:
 - Diverse discussions, no recurring theme
 - A generally valid remark: The Board agrees with the panel's call to the agency to start a broad discussion with all stakeholders on how to reorient the whole external quality assurance system towards the development of the quality culture that will presuppose institutional responsibility for implementing Part I of the ESG.

ENQA BOARD RECURRING ISSUES OF NOTE

- Ad 2.3 Implementing processes – esp. Follow-up:
 - Formalise follow-up processes
 - Consistent follow-up processes
 - There has been no monitoring of follow-up [at HEI] of earlier reviews. Monitoring has been limited to formal requirements only, that is: limited to control rather than to quality enhancement

ENQA BOARD RECURRING ISSUES OF NOTE

- Ad 2.4 Peer-review experts :
 - Give more attention to a wider inclusion of international experts and employers/professional practitioners in its procedures - to be fully in line with the spirit of the ESG
 - Include students in all activities, external evaluations, decision-making
 - Appropriate selection criteria for experts
 - Appropriate training of all experts

ENQA BOARD RECURRING ISSUES OF NOTE

- Ad 2.6 Reporting (I):
 - Discrepancy between final report being a summary report and the review panel report being more extensive: peer review should produce peer report that is published. If the extensive reports are too long/very technical, agency should instruct its experts accordingly
 - Discrepancy between standing committee reports, which are published, and peer review reports that form the basis for the standing committee decisions: the peer review (panel) report should be published (Mentioned 4 times)

ENQA BOARD RECURRING ISSUES OF NOTE

- Ad 2.6 Reporting (2):
 - Provide a more substantial contribution from external experts, including academic experts, students and labour market representatives, in its reports
 - Make sure that the rationale for the final decision is always be clearly reflected in each report
 - All reports should be published, including those with a negative outcome
 - Maintain website and access to reports

ENQA BOARD RECURRING ISSUES OF NOTE

- Ad 2.7 Complaints and appeals:
 - There should be provision for both appeals AND complaints (ESG 2015)
 - If there are legal constraints to appealing Council decisions, emphasis should be given by the agency to allow for complaints on procedure – opportunity for recourse!
 - E.g.:The agency is encouraged to compensate for legal constraints by implementing additional procedures within the agency
 - Importance to separate appeals board members and decision-making body members
 - The Board agrees with the review panel that Commission for the Consideration of Appeals and Complaints should not include members from the decision making body ...An implicit understanding is that this is not a real appeal if it is dealt by the people who also took the decision.

THANK YOU!