

External Review of FINHEEC by
The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

Annex 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

22 March 2010

1. Background and Context

The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) was founded in 1996 by a decree to assist Finnish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the Ministry of Education in matters related to evaluation. The logic was to separate evaluation of higher education from the Ministry to ensure independent evaluation. In the beginning FINHEEC conducted institutional evaluations of operations on university sector and evaluations of quality assurance mechanisms on the university of applied sciences -sector until 2004. FINHEEC also conducted institutional accreditations of universities of applied sciences, although the ultimate decisions were made by the Ministry. Since 2005, the majority of evaluations conducted have been audits of quality assurance systems in HEIs. From 1999 to 2007 a subcommittee of the Council, the Accreditation Board of Professional Courses was responsible for accreditation and keeping a register. FINHEEC has also conducted a series of Centres of Excellence in education, thematic and educational field-specific evaluations during past fourteen years.

A new Decree on FINHEEC (558/2009) came in effect on 1.1.2010. It enables FINHEEC to conduct evaluations commissioned by foreign organisations such as universities. According to the Decree, FINHEEC must take part regularly in international external review and can form an International Advisory Board. The legislative basis of higher education evaluation was further strengthened by the new University Act, which compels universities to take part in regular external evaluation.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

This is a type A review, as defined in the *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area*. It will evaluate the way in which and to what extent FINHEEC fulfils the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. Consequently, the review will also provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether



FINHEEC's Full Membership in ENQA should be reconfirmed. The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards granting to FINHEEC Full Membership in ENQA.

In addition to analysing FINHEEC compliance with the ENQA membership criteria, and thus with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, the review aims to give background information on the context of FINHEEC's operation, role and tasks.

3. The Review Process

The process will be designed in the light of the *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area*.

The evaluation procedure will consist of the following steps:

- Formulation of the Terms of Reference and protocol for the review;
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-evaluation by FINHEEC including the preparation of a self-evaluation report;
- A site visit by the review panel to FINHEEC;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final evaluation report by the Review Committee of the ENQA Board;
- Analysis of the scrutiny by the ENQA Board and their decision regarding ENQA membership;
- Follow-up of the panel's and/or ENQA Board's recommendations by the agency.

3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review team members

The review panel will consist of five members: four external reviewers (one or two quality assurance experts, representative(s) of higher education institutions, student member) and a review secretary. Two of the reviewers will be nominated by the ENQA Board on the basis of proposals submitted to ENQA by the national agencies, and will normally be drawn from senior serving members of Board/Council or staff of ENQA member agencies. The review secretary will be nominated by the ENQA Board. The fourth external reviewer will be drawn from a nomination provided by the European University Association (EUA). The



nomination of the student member will be asked from the European Students' Union (ESU). One of the panel members will serve as the chair of the review.

Current members of the ENQA Board will not be eligible to serve as reviewers.

ENQA will provide to FINHEEC the list of suggested experts with their respective curricula vitae to establish that there are no known conflicts of interest. The experts will have to sign a non-conflict of interest statement as regards the FINHEEC review.

3.2 Self-evaluation by FINHEEC, including the preparation of a self-evaluation report

FINHEEC is responsible for the execution and organisation of its own self-evaluation process and shall take into account the following guidance:

- Self-evaluation is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- The self-evaluation report is broken down by the topics of the evaluation: background description of the current situation of the Agency; analysis and appraisal of the current situation; proposals for improvement and measures already planned; a summary of perceived strengths and weaknesses;
- The report is well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which FINHEEC fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. The report will be submitted to the review panel a minimum of four weeks prior to the site visit.

3.3 A Site Visit by the Review Panel

The review panel will draw up and publish a schedule of the site visit. FINHEEC shall be given at least one month's notice of the site visit schedule in order to properly organise the requested interviews. The schedule will include an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises to be undertaken by the review panel during the site visit, the duration of which will usually be 2 days.

The review panel will be assisted by FINHEEC in arriving in Helsinki, Finland.



Where appropriate, the site visit will close with an oral presentation and discussion of the major issues of the evaluation between the review panel and FINHEEC.

3.4 Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report

On the basis of the review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report in consultation with the review panel. The report will take into account the purpose and scope of the evaluation as defined under article 2. It will also provide a clear rationale for its findings with regards to each ENQA membership criteria. A draft will be submitted for comment to FINHEEC within four weeks of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If FINHEEC chooses to provide a statement in reference to the draft report it will be submitted to the chair of the review panel within two weeks after the receipt of the draft report. Thereafter the review panel will take into account the statement by FINHEEC, finalise the document and submit it to FINHEEC and ENQA.

The report is to be finalised within two months of the site visit and will not exceed 40 pages in length.

4. Follow-up Process and Publication of the Report

FINHEEC will consider the expert panel's report and inform ENQA of its plans to implement any recommendations contained in the report. Subsequent to the discussion of the evaluation results and any planned implementation measures with ENQA, the review report and the follow-up plans agreed upon will be published on FINHEEC website.

5. Budget

5.1 The Finnish Ministry of Education shall pay the following review related fees:

- Chair 5.000 EUR
- Review secretary 5.000 EUR
- Other panel members (3) 3.000 EUR
- Administrative overhead for ENQA Secretariat 5.000 EUR
- Travel and subsistence expenses (approximate) 6.000 EUR

This gives a total indicative cost of 30.000 EUR for the review. In the case that the allowance for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, the Finnish Ministry of Education will cover any additional costs after the completion of the



review, although not exceeding 20.000 €. However, the ENQA Secretariat will endeavour to keep the travel and subsistence expenses in the limits of the planned budget, and will refund to the Finnish Ministry of Education the difference if the travel and subsistence expenses go under budget.

6. Indicative Schedule of the Review

The duration of the evaluation is scheduled to take about 9 months, from January 2010 to September 2010:

Agreement on terms of reference and protocol for review	January 2010
Appointment of review panel members by ENQA	January 2010
FINHEEC starts self-evaluation	January 2010
FINHEEC self-evaluation completed	End of Jan 2010
Briefing of review panel members	8 March 2010
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	March 2010
Review panel site visit	3-4 May 2010
Draft of evaluation report to FINHEEC	End of May 2010
Statement of FINHEEC to review panel if necessary	Early June 2010
Submission of final report to FINHEEC and ENQA	July 2010
Consideration of report by FINHEEC	July 2010
Consideration of the report and response of FINHEEC by ENQA	2 September 2010
Publication of report and implementation plan	September 2010

