



European Association for
Quality Assurance in Higher Education

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Brussels, 8 October 2024

Subject: Statement on validation of the external review report of ACCUA

Dear Antonio José Cubero Atienza,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting on 26 September 2024, the ENQA Agency Review Committee validated the external review report of ACCUA. The committee concluded that the report has been produced in accordance with the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews and can thus be used to apply for ENQA membership and EQAR registration, as well as for any other purposes. This is in line with article 26, paragraph 2 of ENQA's Rules of Procedure, which states that the review report can be further used only once this statement of validation has been issued. The purpose of the statement is to set out the committee's views on the quality of the final report and consistency of the panel's evaluation on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The committee examined the provided review report and asked the panel for minor revisions on the following standards: ESG 3.1, 3.3, 2.3, and 2.4.

On ESG 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance, the committee asked if the panel can further elaborate on the urgency aspect mentioned in the second recommendation. Secondly, in the view of the committee, based on the analysis section, the first suggestion seems to refer to compliance-related aspects instead of going beyond the requirements of the standard. In this regard, the committee asked if it is possible to elaborate on the analysis why the panel considers this as a suggestion.

Regarding ESG 3.3 Independence, in the committee view, the current suggestion focuses on compliance-related issues rather than exceeding the standard's requirements. In this regard, the committee asked to elaborate better in the analysis section why the panel considers it as a suggestion. Overall, the committee noted that there is a clear risk assessment provided by the panel that well justifies the listed recommendation under this standard.



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On ESG 2.3 Implementing processes, regarding the absence of a site visit for program verification and university recognition reviews, the committee asked the panel to elaborate on the reasons behind the lack of a site visit and how this aligns with the standard. In this regard, the committee asked whether the current suggestion addresses aspects beyond compliance with the standard or not. Secondly, the committee also asked to the panel if it is possible to further strengthen the link between the evidence and analysis section.

Finally, regarding ESG 2.4 Peer-review experts, the committee asked whether it is possible to further elaborate on the regularity and content of the training of peer-review experts conducted by ACCUA. In addition, the committee asked if it is possible to revise the section concerning this standard to ensure that all references about the training of experts are presented together.

In addition, the committee asked the panel to address one typing error in the document.

The committee received the final review report that addressed the additional requirements. The final review report can thus be further used to apply for ENQA membership and EQAR registration, as well as for any other purposes, as stipulated above.

This statement will be published on ENQA's website as an annex to the review report.

Thank you for your trust placed in ENQA to conduct this review. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the ENQA Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alastair Delaney', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mr. Alastair Delaney
Chair of ENQA Agency Review Committee

Annex: Areas for development

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As outlined by the review panel and further discussed by the committee (where relevant), ACCUA is recommended to take appropriate action, in so far as it is empowered to do so, on the following issues:

ESG 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

The agency is recommended to swiftly proceed to the implementation of activities designed to support the universities in the move from programme accreditation to institutional accreditation.

As a matter of urgency, ACCUA should adopt more detailed and practical arrangements for the Governing Council to oversee the implementation of strategic plans.

ACCUA should hold regular meetings with students and continue building links with a wider range of social partners, outside its bodies and regular activities, as a way of promoting student involvement in quality assurance and as part of its ongoing efforts to further expand its engagement with stakeholders.

ESG 3.3 Independence

ACCUA should include in its internal regulations' clear provisions for possible dismissal of members of its Governing Council before the end of their term of office.

To provide further safeguards for impartiality, ACCUA could propose to the Regional Minister that experts with high prestige are selected for the Governing Council through a public call or in consultation with the stakeholders.

ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis

ACCUA should devise clear annual plans for thematic studies, consult stakeholders outside its bodies to define their topics, and use its evaluation reports to produce thematic studies.

ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

ACCUA should put in place formal performance appraisal procedures for staff, area coordinators and external evaluators.

ACCUA should establish a practice of documenting and tracking internal feedback.



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ESG 2.3 Implementing processes

ACCUA should include a site visit in programme verification and review of universities for recognition.

2.4 Peer-review experts

ACCUA should provide more in-depth training to student experts to ensure that even those with more limited experience are and feel fully competent to perform their tasks.

2.6 Reporting

ACCUA should agree with the regional authorities' arrangements for the publication of reports on reviews of universities for recognition.