



European Association for
Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Mr. Robert Redhammer
Chairman of the Executive Board
Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (SAAHE)
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Brussels, 29 September 2023

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

Dear Mr. Robert Redhammer,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting on 20 September 2023, the ENQA Agency Review Committee validated the external review report of SAAHE. 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 this 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 3.3, ESG 3.4, and ESG 2.1.

On the ESG 3.3 Independence, the committee asked the panel to better substantiate its arguments for the agency's partial compliance with the standard (e.g., the responsibility of the Minister to appoint the Chair of the Executive Board). The second listed recommendation is namely stated in a rather vague manner, as it reads: "The panel recommends that the agency considers the need for any further safeguards to ensure its ability to function as a fully independent organisation". Rather, the recommendations should clearly emphasise what are the agency's challenges to be overcome and the agency to be compliant with the standard.

Regarding ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis, the committee asked the panel to better substantiate its decision on compliance with the standard, primarily by adding information on the regularity and the systematic approach of the agency to conduct future thematic analyses.

Finally, on ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance, the committee noted that the following activity has been listed in the Terms of Reference to be evaluated against the ESG: "State approval proceeding". On this note, the review report read: "With regard to the agency's remit for State approval for private higher education institutions, the same standards and procedures for internal systems and the standards for study programmes will be applied. To date, the agency has not been required to conduct any reviews of applicant institutions." (p. 27). The committee thus asked the panel to further clarify in the report whether the agency could immediately start implementing this activity, should it receive such a request, or is the activity still in the developmental phase and needs further refinement of the evaluation methodology and processes. Furthermore, the provided mapping grid should clearly state how Part 1 of the ESG would be/is covered for this activity.

Additionally, the paragraph on page 29 of the report appeared twice in the document and was thus deleted.

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,



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), SAAHE 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 consider how the internal quality assurance systems can help to address the issue of employability in the design or review of study programmes.

The agency is recommended to give further consideration to the ways in which it can engage students within its governance structure and secure their involvement in the development of its policies and procedures, taking into consideration the opinion and independence of the Student Council of Higher Education Institutions.

ESG 3.3 Independence

The agency is recommended to give consideration to promoting further engagement of female representatives within its governance structure.

The agency is recommended to consider the need for any further safeguards to ensure its ability to function as a fully independent organisation.

ESG 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

The agency is recommended to give further consideration to the application of its methodology to PhD programmes.

ESG 2.6 Reporting

The agency is recommended to give further consideration to providing clear and accessible information about the outcomes of its review activity in a readily accessible format on its website.