

External Review of the Agency for the Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Research of Andalusia (AGAE) by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

**Annex 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

09 September 2008

**1. Background and Context**

AGAE was set up as an administrative autonomous agency of the Government of Andalusia in 2005, with full legal personality and capacity, and its own assets with which it carries out its functions. AGAE is headed by a Board of Directors and an executive director. The Agency is officially funded with an annual budget issued by the Regional Ministry of Economy. Its directive bodies are:

- the Board of Directors chaired by the Regional Minister of Innovation, Science and Enterprise which appoints the Executive Director of AGAE; and
- the Executive Director of AGAE whose main functions are to supervise the attainment of the agency's goals, to represent AGAE at the institutional level, and to brief the Government on the Agency's activity.

The Executive Director acts independently from the Board of Directors.

AGAE currently employs 14 full-time employees. The Board of Directors and the evaluation teams are members of the academic staff of Spanish universities.

The mission of the agency is to coordinate quality assurance policies in universities and to contribute to the quality improvement of the higher education system through the assessment, certification and accreditation of university degrees, programmes, teaching staff and institutions, and research evaluation.



## 2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

This is a type B review, as defined in the Guidelines for national reviews of ENQA member agencies. It will evaluate the way in which and to what extent AGAE 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 AGAE Full Membership in ENQA should be reconfirmed. The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards the reconfirmation of AGAE's Full Membership in ENQA.

In addition to the European context, the review also aims at providing feedback on AGAE's role and tasks in the context of the Andalusian Knowledge System. As indicated earlier, AGAE is the main instrument for quality promotion and assurance, to be carried out through assessment, process certification and the accreditation of learning and research processes in the Andalusian Knowledge System. Thus, AGAE's teaching staff assessment programme and research grants evaluation procedures are distinctive programmes, and feedback from the review panel about these programmes is useful to AGAE to determine their effectiveness and whether they meet the set aims.

## 3. The Review Process

The process will be designed in the light of the ENQA policy on "ENQA-organised external reviews of member agencies".

The evaluation procedure will consist of the following steps:

- Nomination and appointment of the review team members;
- Self-evaluation by AGAE including the preparation of a self-evaluation report;
- A site visit by the panel of reviewers to AGAE;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report.

### 3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review team members

The review panel will consist of five members: four external reviewers (two quality assurance experts, representative of higher education institutions and 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 staff of



ENQA member agencies. The review secretary will be nominated by the ENQA Board. The fourth external reviewer will be drawn from nominations provided by the European University Association (EUA). The nomination of the student member will be asked of the European Students' Union (ESU). Current members of the ENQA Board will not be eligible to serve as reviewers.

ENQA will provide to AGAE the list of suggested experts with their respective curricula vitae. The experts will have to sign a non-conflict of interest statement as regards the AGAE review.

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

AGAE 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 AGAE fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus the *European Standards and Guidelines*. 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. AGAE 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 team during the site visit, the duration of which will be 2 days.

### 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 expert 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. A draft will be submitted for comment to AGAE within four weeks of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If AGAE chooses to provide a statement in reference to the draft report it will be submitted to the chairperson of the review panel within two weeks after the receipt of the draft report. Thereafter the expert panel will take into account the statement by AGAE, finalise the document and submit it to AGAE 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**

AGAE 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 AGAE website.

#### **5. Budget**

5.1 AGAE 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

5.2 Of the above-mentioned AGAE review related fees "Unidad para la Calidad de las Universidades Andaluzas (UCUA)" will cover the following:

- Other panel members (3) 3.000 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 are exceeded, UCUA will cover any additional costs after the completion of the review.



## 6. Indicative Schedule of the Review

The duration of the evaluation is scheduled to take about 10 months, from July 2008 to May 2009:

AGAE self-evaluation completed	July 2008
Agreement on terms of reference and protocol for review	September 2008
Appointment of review team members by ENQA	September 2008
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	September 2008
Briefing of review team members	October 2008
Expert panel site visit	November 2008
Draft of evaluation report to AGAE	December 2008
Statement of AGAE to review team if necessary	January 2009
Submission of final report to AGAE and ENQA	February 2009
Consideration of report by AGAE	March 2009
Consideration of the report and response of AGAE by ENQA	April 2009
Publication of report and implementation plan	May 2009

