

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

Annex 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

19 October, 2010

1. Background and Context

QANU, established in 2004, is a quality assurance agency which primarily aims at assessing degree and research programmes offered by universities in the Netherlands. QANU contributes to the national system of external quality assurance by providing insight in the quality of education and research, thus enabling universities to account for their activities in these areas, and by improving that quality by means of assessments, advice and recommendations. QANU's assessment committees mainly consist of independent experts who are authoritative in their discipline or specialization.

QANU originates from the department of quality assurance of the Dutch association of universities. Since 2004 QANU is an independent organization and does not receive any structural financial support from government. QANU is fully dependent on the revenues from assessments and other externally funded projects.

QANU is part of the three tier academic quality assurance system in the Netherlands in which the NVAO (the Dutch Flemish Accreditation Organization) and the universities are the other stakeholders.

In order to meet the requirements of the ENQA and EQAR membership, the board of QANU decided to start an external review with a preference for ENQA coordination. By letter of 24 December 2009 to ENQA QANU formally applied for this. In fact QANU had to establish a review in 2009 to maintain its membership, but several reasons urged the QANU board to ask for postponement. Because of this postponement QANU is by decision of the ENQA board as of 19 September 2010 officially candidate member.

The second purpose of the review is to conduct a critical evaluation of QANU's role in the quality assurance and accreditation system in the Netherlands.

In the course of 2010, the Dutch Parliament has approved a proposal for an amendment of the Act on Higher Education and Scientific Research, which will become effective on 1 January 2011. One of the changes resulting from this amendment is that institutions of higher education will no longer be obliged to involve quality assurance agencies like QANU in the assessment of degree



programmes. It is not yet clear what the consequences of this amendment will be for QANU's future and viability.

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

In addition to analysing QANU 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 QANU'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 QANU including the preparation of a self-evaluation report;
- A site visit by the review panel to QANU;
- 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 QANU 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 QANU review.

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

QANU 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 QANU 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. QANU 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 QANU in arriving in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

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 QANU.

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 QANU within four weeks of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If QANU 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 QANU, finalise the document and submit it to QANU 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

QANU 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 QANU 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 budget for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, QANU will cover any additional costs after the completion of the review. 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 QANU 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 6 months, from August 2010 to February 2010:

Agreement on terms of reference and protocol for review	August 2010
Appointment of review panel members by ENQA	August 2010
QANU self-evaluation completed	August 2010
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	September 2010
Briefing of review panel members	11 October 2010
Review panel site visit	19-21 Oct 2010
Draft of evaluation report to QANU	November 2010
Statement of QANU to review panel if necessary	December 2010



Submission of final report to QANU and ENQA	December 2010
Consideration of the report and response of QANU by ENQA	January 2010
Publication of report and implementation plan	February 2010

