

External review of the Agency for Quality Assurance  
in Higher Education and Research of Andalusia (AAC-DEVA)  
by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

**Annex I: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## **1. Background and context**

The Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Research of Andalusia is an administrative autonomous organism from the Regional Ministry of Finance, Innovation and Science (Government of Andalusia).

The National Organic University Law 6/2001, December 21st (Title V) and the Regional Andalusian University Law established the legislative and legal framework for the activities that AAC-DEVA may carry out. The objective of AAC-DEVA as being the assessment, accreditation and certification of quality within the terms of reference of the universities and higher education institutions in Andalusia. In doing so, the Agency promotes and guarantees the quality of the Andalusian Knowledge System bearing in mind its adequacy to the social demands and to the European Higher Education Area.

Since its foundation in 2005, the Agency has become the main instrument for the promotion and the evaluation of quality in the Andalusian Higher Education and Research System. AAC-DEVA evaluates requests of teaching staff accreditation; it has also assessed the teaching, research and management activities of teaching staff members of Public Universities -permanent and/or under long-term contracts- to assign additional salary supplements based on productivity; and has evaluated proposals for research grants with the participation of panel experts from outside Andalusia.

AAC-DEVA has been Full member of ENQA since 2000 and underwent a first review in 2008. AAC-DEVA is applying for reconfirmation of its Full membership in ENQA.

## **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 AAC-DEVA fulfills the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Consequently, the review will also provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether Full membership should be reconfirmed. The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards confirming AAC-DEVA Full membership in ENQA.

## **3. The review process**

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

The evaluation procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of the contract and Terms of Reference for the review;

- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-evaluation by AAC-DEVA including the preparation of a self-evaluation report;
- A site visit by the review panel to AAC-DEVA;
- 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 consists of five members: Four external reviewers (one or two quality assurance experts, representative(s) of higher education institutions, student member) and a review secretary. Three of the reviewers (including the review secretary) are nominated by the ENQA Board on the basis of proposals submitted to ENQA by member agencies. The fourth external reviewer is drawn from a nomination provided by the European University Association (EUA). The nomination of the student member is asked from the European Students' Union (ESU). One of the panel members serves as the chair of the review.

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

ENQA will provide AAC-DEVA with the list of suggested experts with their respective curriculum 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 AAC-DEVA review.

### **3.2 Self-evaluation by AAC-DEVA, including the preparation of a self-evaluation report**

AAC-DEVA 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 SWOT analysis.
- The report is well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which AAC-DEVA fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus the ESG. The report is submitted to the review panel a minimum of eight weeks prior to the site visit.

### **3.3 Site visit by the review panel**

AAC-DEVA will draw up a draft proposal of schedule of the site visit to be submitted to the review panel at least three months before the planned dates of the visit. The schedule includes an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises to be undertaken by the review panel during the site visit, the duration of which is 2 days. The approved schedule shall be given to AAC-DEVA at least two months before the dates of the visit, in order to properly organise the requested interviews.

The review panel will be assisted by AAC-DEVA in arriving to Córdoba.

The site visit will close with an oral presentation and discussion of the major issues of the evaluation between the review panel and AAC-DEVA.

### **3.4 Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report**

The main outcome of the review process is the report. On the basis of the self-evaluation report, site-visit and review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report, in collaboration with the chair and the rest of the panel members.

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 AAC-DEVA within two months of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If AAC-DEVA 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 AAC-DEVA, finalise the document and submit it to AAC-DEVA and ENQA.

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

### **4. Follow-up process and publication of the report**

AAC-DEVA 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 AAC-DEVA website.

The final review report will be published on the ENQA website, regardless of the review outcome and decision by the Board.

### **5. Use of the report**

ENQA shall retain ownership of the report. The intellectual property of all works created by the expert panel in connection with the review contract, including specifically any written reports, shall be vested in ENQA.

The review report is to be used by the Board of ENQA for the purpose of reaching a conclusion on whether AAC-DEVA has or has not met the membership criteria/ESG.

Once the report is submitted to AAC-DEVA and ENQA and until the decision by the Board is made, the report may not be used or relied upon by AAC, the panel and any third party and may not be disclosed without the prior written consent of ENQA.

### **6. Budget**

AAC-DEVA shall pay the following review related fees:

Fee of the Chair	4,750 EUR
Fee of the Secretary	4,750 EUR
Fee of the 3 other panel members	8,250 EUR (2,750 EUR each)

Administrative overhead for ENQA Secretariat	5,000 EUR
Experts Training fund	1,250 EUR
Travel and subsistence expenses (approximate)	6,000 EUR

This gives a total indicative cost of 30,000 EUR for a review team of 5 members. In the case that the allowance for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, AAC-DEVA 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 the difference to AAC-DEVA if the travel and subsistence expenses go under budget.

In the event of a second site visit required by the Board and aiming at completing the assessment of compliance, and should the agency accept a second visit, an additional fee of 500 EUR per expert, as well as travel and subsistence costs are recoverable from the agency.

## **7. Duration of the review and indicative schedule**

Agreement on terms of reference and protocol for review	June 2013
Appointment of review panel members	June 2013
AAC-DEVA self-evaluation completed	December 2013
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	Dec 2013-January 2014
Briefing of review panel members	January 2014
Review panel site visit	February 2014
Draft of evaluation report to AAC-DEVA	April 2014
Statement of AAC-DEVA to review panel if necessary	April 2014
Submission of final report to AAC-DEVA and ENQA	May 2014
Consideration of the report by ENQA and response of AAC-DEVA	June 2014
Publication of report and implementation plan	July 2014