

External review of the European Council for Business Education (ECBE) by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

**Annex I: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

January 2020

**1. Background and context**

The European Council for Business Education (ECBE) is an international not-for-profit organisation, with a long tradition. It is committed to supporting quality improvements of academic and professional learning institutions in economics, business, management and related fields. ECBE is the legal successor of The European Council for Business Education asbl, founded in Brussels on November 6th, 2004, and dissolved by a decision of the General Assembly on May 24th, 2013; namely, in Barcelona, on May 2012, the Founding Assembly of the ECBE has formed the accreditation agency and has agreed upon the Statutes of ECBE. All members of the old association became automatically members of ECBE. The Agency falls under the provisions of Title III (Des associations internationales sans but lucratif) of the Belgian law of June 27, 1921, concerning the non-profit associations, the international non-profit associations and the foundations, modified by the Law of May 22, 2002 and all later changes. ECBE's mission is to support higher and further education institutions and professional training organisations to develop outstanding, innovative programmes in the field of economics, business, management and related fields, which will help students to develop the skills, knowledge and experience to succeed in today's dynamic global economy. All types of academic and professional programmes are supported within the framework of a commitment to lifelong learning throughout Europe and in non-European countries.

The main activities of ECBE are:

- a) Evaluation and accreditation of study programmes in the field of Economics, Business, Management and related fields.
- b) Performing follow-up procedures to foster the continuous quality improvement of study programmes.
- c) Performing analyses, carrying out research and participation in projects, events and activities, that are related to the quality assurance in higher education.
- d) Public Communication: the Public Communication includes publishing information at the ECBE website about the evaluation processes, events, publications etc.
- e) Providing the necessary information and support: the necessary information and support for institutions and other stakeholders, that particularly includes organising seminars and conferences for ECBE members and other stakeholders.
- f) Participation in the international networks and projects.

There are two main external quality assurance activities of ECBE:

- a) Evaluation and accreditation of study programmes in the field of Economics, Business, Management and related fields.
- b) Performing follow-up procedures to foster the continuous quality improvement of study programmes.

The scope and purposes of these activities are to support higher and all further educational institutions in their endeavours of quality improvements in development and implementation of the higher educational study programmes in the field of economics, business, management and related fields.

The ECBE specific objectives within external quality assurance activities are:

- to promote the improvement of the internal quality assurance systems within institutions and their study programmes, in cooperation with all relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- to conduct the external quality assessments, to contribute to the quality improvements within institutions;
- to ensure that the external quality assurance of the study programmes of ECBE's members are in compliance with the ESG and ECBE standards;
- to foster the quality culture within the organisation.

ECBE has been ENQA affiliate since June 2011 and is now applying for ENQA membership. The review will also be used for the agency's application for registration on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

## **2. Purpose and scope of the evaluation**

This review will evaluate the way in which and to what extent ECBE fulfils the requirements of *the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Consequently, the review will provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether membership of ECBE should be confirmed and to EQAR to support ECBE application to the register.

The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards granting membership.

### **2.1 Activities of ECBE within the scope of the ESG**

In order for ECBE to apply for ENQA membership and for registration in EQAR, this review will analyse all ECBE activities that are within the scope of the ESG, i.e. reviews, audits, evaluations or accreditation of higher education institutions or programmes that relate to teaching and learning (and their relevant links to research and innovation). This is regardless of whether these activities are carried out within or outside the EHEA, and whether they are obligatory or voluntary.

The following activity of ECBE has to be addressed in the external review:

- 1. Evaluation and accreditation of study programmes in the field of Economics, Business, Management and related fields, including the follow-up procedures carried out for programmes that have been accredited.*

This activity includes:

- Development of the external quality assessment methodologies and procedures applied by institutions, that comply with the ESG and ECBE standards, together with all relevant internal and external stakeholders, especially students and employers;
- Appointment of the review teams and the senior reviewers, chairing the review teams.
- Organising the work of review teams for conducting the external review of study programmes, that includes the site visits of review teams to institutions and their branches, acquisition of information needed for conducting, preparing the review reports.
- Development of selection criteria for Reviewers and Commissioners.
- Appointment of reviewers, training of reviewers prior the external review visits and regularly yearly.
- Ensuring and archiving all documentation of the evaluation processes.
- Preparing the guidelines for members of external review teams and guidelines for institutions.
- Implementing the follow-up procedures and monitoring the implementation of ECBE's recommendations and proposals.

### **3. The review process**

The process is designed in line with the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and the requirements of the *EQAR Procedures for Applications*.

The evaluation procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of the Terms of Reference for the review;
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-assessment by ECBE including the preparation and publication of a self-assessment report;
- A site visit by the review panel to ECBE;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final evaluation report by the ENQA Review Committee;
- 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, including a voluntary progress visit.

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

The review panel consists of four members: one or two quality assurance experts (at least one of which is currently employed by an ENQA member agency), an academic employed by a higher education institution, a student member, and eventually a labour market representative (if requested). One of the members will serve as the Chair of the review panel, and another member as a review Secretary. For ENQA Agency Reviews at least one of the reviewers is an ENQA nominee (most often the QA professional[s]). At least one of the reviewers is appointed from the nominees of either the European University Association (EUA) or the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), and the student member is always selected from among the ESU-nominated reviewers. If requested, the labour market representative may come from the Business Europe nominees or from ENQA. An additional panel member may be included in the panel at the request of the agency under review. In this case an additional fee to cover the reviewer's fee and travel expenses is applied.

In addition to the four members, the panel will be supported by the ENQA Secretariat review coordinator who will monitor the integrity of the process and ensure that ENQA's requirements are met throughout the process. The ENQA staff member will not be the Secretary of the review and will not participate in the discussions during the site visit interviews.

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

ENQA will provide ECBE 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 ECBE review.

#### **3.2 Self-assessment by ECBE, including the preparation of a self-assessment report**

ECBE is responsible for the execution and organisation of its own self-assessment process and shall take into account the following guidance:

- Self-assessment is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- The self-assessment report is broken down by the topics of the evaluation and is expected to contain, among others: a brief description of the national HE and QA system; background description of the current situation of the Agency; an analysis and appraisal of the current situation; proposals for improvement and measures already planned; a SWOT analysis; each criterion (ESG part II and III) addressed individually. All agency's QA activities (whether within

their national jurisdiction or outside of it, and whether obligatory or voluntary) will be described and their compliance with the ESG analysed.

- The report is well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which ECBE fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the ESG and thus the requirements of ENQA membership.
- The self-assessment report is submitted to the ENQA Secretariat who has 4 weeks to pre-scrutinise it before forwarding the report to the panel of experts. The purpose of the pre-scrutiny is to ensure that the self-assessment report is satisfactory for the consideration of the panel. The Secretariat will not judge the content of information itself but whether the necessary information, as stated in the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews, is present. For the second and subsequent reviews, the agency is expected to enlist the recommendations provided in the previous review and to outline actions taken to meet these recommendations. In case the self-assessment report does not contain the necessary information and fails to respect the requested form and content, the ENQA Secretariat reserves the right to reject the report and ask for a revised version within two weeks. In such cases, an additional fee of 1000 EUR will be charged to the agency.
- The report is submitted to the review panel a minimum of six weeks prior to the site visit.

### **3.3 A site visit by the review panel**

The review panel will draw up a draft proposal of the schedule for the site visit to be submitted to the agency at least two 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 usually 2,5 days. The approved schedule shall be given to ECBE at least one month before the site visit, in order to properly organise the requested interviews.

The review panel will be assisted by ECBE in arriving in Brussels, Belgium.

The site visit will close with a final de-briefing meeting outlining the panel's overall impressions but not its judgement on the ESG compliance of the agency, or the granting or reconfirmation of ENQA membership.

### **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 articles 2 and 2.1. It will also provide a clear rationale for its findings with regards to each ESG. A draft will be first submitted to the ENQA review coordinator who will check the report for consistency, clarity and language and it will be then submitted to ECBE within 10 weeks of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If ECBE 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 ECBE, will finalise the document and submit it to ENQA.

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

When preparing the report, the review panel should also bear in mind the *EQAR Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG*, so as to ensure that the report will contain sufficient information for the Register Committee for application to EQAR.

For the purpose of applying for ENQA membership, ECBE is also requested to provide a letter addressed to the ENQA Board outlining its motivation to apply for membership and the ways in which

ECBE expects to contribute to the work and objectives of ENQA during its membership. This letter will be taken into consideration by the ENQA Board, together with the final evaluation report, when deciding on the agency's membership.

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

ECBE will consider the expert panel's report and will publish it on its website once the ENQA Board has made its decision. The report will also be published on the ENQA website, regardless of the review outcome and decision by the ENQA Board. ECBE commits to preparing a follow-up plan in which it addresses the recommendations of the review panel and to submitting a follow-up report to the ENQA Board within the timeframe indicated in the Board's decision on membership. The follow-up report will be published on the ENQA website, in addition to the full review report and the Board's decision.

The follow-up report will be complemented by a small-scale progress visit to the agency performed by two members of the original panel (whenever possible). This visit will be used to discuss issues, based on the ESG, considered as of particular importance or challenge to ECBE. Its purpose is entirely developmental and has no impact on the judgement of membership and/or judgement of compliance of the agency with the ESG. Should the agency not wish to take advantage of this opportunity, it may opt out by informing the ENQA Review Coordinator about this.

#### **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 used by the Board of ENQA for the purpose of reaching a conclusion on whether ECBE is in compliance with the ESG and can be thus admitted/reconfirmed as a member of ENQA. The report will also be used for registration on EQAR and is designed to serve these two purposes. However, the review report is to be considered final only after being approved by the ENQA Board. Once submitted to ECBE and ENQA and until it is approved by the Board the report may not be used or relied upon by ECBE, the panel, or any third party and may not be disclosed without the prior written consent of ENQA. ECBE may use the report at its discretion only after the Board has approved of the report. The approval of the report is independent of the decision on membership.

The Chair of the panel shall remain available to respond to questions of clarification or further information from the EQAR Register Committee provided that the ENQA Secretariat is copied in all such requests.

#### **6. Budget**

ECBE shall pay the following review related fees:

Fee of the Chair	4,500 EUR
Fee of the Secretary	4,500 EUR
Fee of the 2 other panel members	4,000 EUR (2,000 EUR each)
Fee of 2 panel members for progress visit	1,000 EUR (500 EUR each)
Administrative overhead for ENQA Secretariat	7,000 EUR
Experts Training fund	1,400 EUR
Approximate travel and subsistence expenses	6,000 EUR
Travel and subsistence expenses progress visit	1,600 EUR

This gives a total indicative cost of 30,000.00 EUR VAT excl. for a review team of 4 members. In the case that the allowance for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, ECBE 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 ECBE if the travel and subsistence expenses go under budget.

It is understood that the fee of the progress visit is included in the overall cost of the review and will not be reimbursed in case the agency does not wish to benefit from it.

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. Indicative schedule of the review

Agreement on terms of reference	June 2019
Appointment of review panel members	January 2020
Self-assessment completed	29 February 2020
Pre-screening of SAR by ENQA coordinator	Mid-March 2020
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	April 2020
Briefing of review panel members	May 2020
Review panel site visit	Late-June 2020
Draft of evaluation report and submitting it to ENQA coordinator for pre-screening	End-August 2020
Draft of evaluation report to ECBE	September 2020
Statement of ECBE to review panel (if necessary)	October 2020
Submission of final report to ENQA	November 2020
Consideration of the report by ENQA Board	December 2020 or January 2021
Publication of the report	January 2021