



European Association for  
Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Ms. Sholpan Kalanova  
President  
The Independent Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (IQAA)  
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Gloucester, 2 May 2022

**Subject: Reconfirmation of IQAA membership in ENQA**

Dear Ms. Sholpan Kalanova,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting on 27 April 2022, the ENQA Board agreed to reconfirm IQAA's membership in ENQA for five years from that date. The Board concluded that IQAA is in compliance with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)* and thus fulfils the membership criteria according to article 6, paragraph 1 of ENQA's Rules of Procedure.

The Board would like to use this opportunity to provide an explanation regarding standard 3.4 Thematic analysis, where its judgement differs from that of the panel. In the view of the Board, the listed recommendations by the panel are not significant shortcomings, but rather minor challenges to be addressed by the agency on thematic analysis. Following this, in the opinion of the Board, the standard can be considered as substantially compliant with the ESG.

The Board would like to receive a follow-up report within two years of its decision, i.e., by April 2024.

The Board also encourages IQAA to take advantage of the voluntary progress visit – an enhancement-led feature in the review process. The visit would take place in about two to three years' time from this decision. The ENQA Secretariat will be in touch with you in about a year's time to discuss this possibility. The cost of this visit has already been included as part of the review fee and are non-refundable except for the travel costs of the experts. More information about the progress visit can be found in the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the ENQA Secretariat.

Please accept my congratulations for the re-confirmation of IQAA's membership in ENQA. I look forward to our continued cooperation.



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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas Blackstock', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Douglas Blackstock  
President

Annex: Areas for development

## **Annex: Areas for development**

As outlined by the review panel, IQAA 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 develop a more guiding “Strategic development of IQAA” with goals and objectives defined in more detail, and supplemented by qualitative and quantitative indicators, which can be reflected in the annual work plans and translated into the daily work of the agency and be subject to periodical monitoring and assessment.

The agency is recommended that the annual follow-up of the “Strategic development of IQAA” and the annual work plans should be formally documented in internal reports with clear learning points.

### **ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis**

The agency is recommended to develop a strategic approach to identifying potential thematic subjects for analyses and establish a calendar in the future in order to publish thematic reports with regular intervals.

The agency is recommended to distinguish more clearly between thematic analyses and other types of analyses that have to be considered as a part of the internal quality assurance of the agency.

### **ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct**

The agency is recommended to develop the internal quality system. It is necessary that the agency ensures that the cycle of continuous improvement is complete. For example, with the incorporation of indicators that measure the processes, by introducing measurable objectives of the strategic development and annual plans, and by managing a plan of improvement actions.

### **ESG 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose**

The agency is recommended to formally establish the internal processes to develop, review and update standards and criteria, including defining the internal and external stakeholders involved in the processes.

The agency is recommended to include the date of the approval to central documents and the date from which the document applies.

The agency is recommended to define and approve separate standards and criteria for initial accreditation.

### **ESG 2.3 Implementing processes**

The agency is recommended to improve the regulations on post-accreditation monitoring, in order to provide more clarity and information about the process, the annual reports, the site visit after two years, the role of the Accreditation Council, and consequences if the actions defined by the higher educational institutions are not well implemented.

### **ESG 2.5**

The panel considers that the documents 'Regulations on Decision-Making of the IQAA Accreditation Council' and 'Recommendations for External Evaluation (Audit) Experts' should be made public so that they are known by higher educational institutions that have or are planning to undergo an accreditation process.

### **ESG 2.6 Reporting**

The agency is recommended to publish reports from initial accreditations and post accreditation monitoring.

The agency is recommended to publish full reports for the research institutions' accreditations.

### **ESG 2.7**

The Appeals Regulations should include the possibility to appeal all elements in the decisions of the Accreditation Council.