

ENQA Working Group on QA of research Call for expressions of interest

ENQA is pleased to announce the launch of a working group on the quality assurance of research. Several members have recently expressed interest in exploring the topic in more detail, while it is also of relevance in the current European policy agenda due to recent developments in the area of research assessment as well as discussions about the revision of the ESG.

The ENQA Board therefore approved a proposal by Hcéres (France) and UKÄ (Sweden) to co-chair a working group on this theme, with support from ENQA. The group will explore the state of the art of the assessment of research-based learning, institutions' research policy and quality assurance processes of research.

Background and purpose of the working group

Higher education and research are part of the missions common to all higher education institutions, even though they are accomplished in different ways from one institution to another. The synergies between research and higher education are key to training enlightened students who are able to face the challenges of the 21st century. With the European student-centred approach, recognised benefits of research-based learning may include: developing cross-disciplinary and scientific skills, acquiring critical thinking skills to counter the rise of fake news, acquiring up-to-date knowledge, understanding the changing needs of society etc.

Standard I.1 of the ESG refers to the higher education and research synergy: “quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching”. However, the EHEA has been mainly focused on only one of these two pillars, namely teaching and learning.

In addition, only a sub-set of quality assurance agencies perform institutional quality assurance processes for research. Hence there is limited knowledge on how reviews that target quality assurance processes for research can help to ensure and improve research quality. The proposed working group could thus make up for the knowledge gap between agencies' quality assurance procedures for higher education and research, respectively.

The working group will be co-chaired by Hcéres and UKÄ, agencies which both have experience in research assessment and quality assurance processes for research and have already shared good practices together. They will use this knowledge to drive the working group towards the achievement of several deliverables, including:

- Stocktaking exercise/benchmark of assessment procedures of HEIs' research policy and quality assurance processes for research as well as of research-based learning at the member agencies. In addition, the working group could foster reflections on the challenges that agencies meet in developing or performing assessment of quality assurance processes.
- Synthesis report including case examples and recommendations.

The final workplan, including working methods, timeline and outputs, will be agreed by all members of the working group in the first meeting.

Participating agencies will have the opportunity to share their experience, learn from other agencies and contexts, and further explore the contribution that external quality assurance can make to the quality assurance of research and the links between research and learning and teaching. In addition, group members will produce concrete outputs that may inform, inspire and support as resource for the whole ENQA membership. The working group will also have the opportunity to share and collect feedback on the findings by presenting at ENQA events or webinars, and is encouraged to seek other opportunities for dissemination, such as at EQAF or other relevant events.

Organisation of the groups

The working group is open to representatives of ENQA members and affiliates, with maximum one participant per agency. In order to allow the group to work efficiently, the size of each group will be limited to 12-15 people. The estimated lifetime of the groups is from September 2023 to the end of 2024.

The groups are free to make structural arrangements for their work as they see fit (such as appointing a meeting secretary, or rotating note taking, dividing the group to sub-working-groups, etc.).

Meetings will take place primarily online, but two or three physical meetings may be held as appropriate during the working period (e.g. to launch the work and when significant discussions on the content of the outcomes are needed). For physical meetings, one of the member agencies or ENQA Secretariat may host the meeting (please see financial arrangements below).

The group will be supported by a staff member from the ENQA Secretariat.

Financial arrangements

Participation in the working groups is on pro bono basis, i.e. there is no financial compensation for the staff time spent on the activities of the group and travel and hotel costs for physical meetings are covered by each participating agency. In case physical meetings take place, they may be hosted by one of the group's members or by the ENQA Secretariat. The costs of the venue (if any) should be covered by the host, whereas catering will be covered by ENQA.

Call for expressions of interest

All members and affiliates who are motivated and willing to fully commit to active participation are invited to put forward expressions of interest.

In order to become a member of a working group, the agency and its representative are expected to have a good grasp of the topic of the working group, and some experience in or knowledge of relevant initiatives, processes, policies etc.

As far as possible an agency should be represented by the same person throughout the working period.

Expressions of interest to join the working group should be submitted by filling in the form [here](#) by **26 June 2023**.

The ENQA Secretariat will evaluate the expressions of interest and decide on the membership of the group based on experience, expertise, and diversity of members and countries represented. It reserves the right not to include all candidates in order to maintain a reasonable group size.