



GUIDELINES FOR ENQA AGENCY REVIEWS

enqa.

European Association for
Quality Assurance in Higher Education



With the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union

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ISBN 978-952-5539-96-7 (paperbound)

ISBN 978-952-5539-97-4 (electronic version)

ISSN 1458-1051

The present report can be downloaded from the ENQA website at: <https://www.enqa.eu/the-review-process/>

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ENQA AISBL, Rue de l'Industrie 10, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Edited by: Goran Dakovic and Maria Kelo

Graphic design by: Two of a Kind, Belgium

Brussels, Belgium, 2021

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I. Introduction

An external review against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)¹ is a prerequisite for application to become a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). It is also a requirement for agencies wishing to apply to the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), as stated in the Bologna Process Communiqué of London, 2007:

applications for inclusion on the register should be evaluated on the basis of substantial compliance with the ESG, evidenced through an independent review process endorsed by national authorities, where this endorsement is required by those authorities².

ENQA is the primary provider of external reviews of agencies in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). These guidelines describe the review model and the main principles for ENQA Agency Reviews, and they serve as a practical handbook for agencies and external reviewers involved in the review process. With the presented guidelines, ENQA wishes to provide a service to QA agencies that are interested in an ESG review and offer a clear, structured, efficient and useful approach to external quality assurance.

ENQA Agency Reviews are designed to meet the expectations of both ENQA, for membership applications, and of EQAR, for the purpose of registration. In addition, ENQA Agency Reviews may be used for other purposes where an agency needs to formally demonstrate its compliance with the ESG, such as in different national contexts, or as an enhancement exercise for agencies, including those outside the EHEA, that wish to align themselves with European practice in quality assurance. ENQA Agency Reviews thus offer a process to stimulate trust in quality assurance and the quality of higher education internationally and to support and further legitimise the agency at the national level (where relevant).

The ESG form the basic framework for quality assurance in the EHEA and serve as the reference for ENQA Agency Reviews. The model and execution of ENQA Agency Reviews are themselves developed, as far as possible, on the standards in Part 2 of the ESG, i.e., the standards describing how an agency should organise its external quality assurance activities. External reviews may have serious consequences for agencies, not only in terms of granting access to membership with ENQA and inclusion on EQAR, but also in terms of indirect judgements on the credibility and quality of entire external review systems, or even the higher education system of a country or region. Thus, the ENQA Agency Reviews process aims at being consistent and trusted, with constant attention paid to the quality assurance and improvement of the method itself³.

¹ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). (2015). Brussels, Belgium. Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/>

² Bologna Process London Communiqué (2007). Towards the European Higher Education Area: Responding to Challenges in a Globalised World. Available at: https://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/2007_London_Communique_English_588697.pdf

³ To facilitate this improvement, the ENQA Agency Reviews underwent an external review in 2019. The revised review model was formally adopted in early 2021 and replaced the previous version of ENQA Agency Reviews, as presented in the guidelines of 2016.

2. Purpose and scope of the ENQA Agency Reviews

2.1 Purpose and eligibility

ENQA membership criteria laid out in ENQA's Statutes⁴ and Rules of Procedure⁵ require all member agencies to undergo an external review against the ESG at least once every five years. ENQA membership is open to QA agencies based in the EHEA that are able to demonstrate compliance with the ESG through the review process.

Consequently, the principal aim of ENQA Agency Reviews is to assess an agency's compliance with the ESG and to support it in its efforts to constantly review and enhance its work. The review outcomes are used as a basis to apply for membership in ENQA. At the same time, ENQA Agency Reviews are also used for other purposes, in particular for an application to register on EQAR. Therefore, ENQA Agency Reviews also comply with EQAR's requirements for external reviews.

ENQA also coordinates ESG reviews of agencies that do not wish to or cannot apply for ENQA membership, such as QA agencies outside the EHEA. This can be done for the purposes of the agency's own improvement or to evaluate their alignment with European practice in quality assurance. The Terms of Reference of such reviews are negotiated individually with the agency in question but will comply with these guidelines in terms of content and procedures.

To be eligible for a review following the ENQA Agency Reviews methodology, the agency should have been operational in quality assurance for at least two years and should have completed at least five review reports.

2.2 Principles

The review will be based on the following principles:

- The review is an evidence-based process carried out by independent experts.
- The information provided by the agency is assumed to be factually correct unless evidence points to the contrary.
- The review is a process of verification of information provided in the self-assessment report (SAR) and other documentation and the exploration of any matters which are omitted from that documentation.
- The process is transparent, and outputs are published.
- The level of conformity with the ESG required for ENQA membership is that of 'overall compliance', not rigid adherence (see section 7.2).

2.3 Scope

The reviews will cover all external quality assurance activities of the agency under review that fall under the scope of the ESG⁶, regardless of whether they are carried out in the agency's predominant country/region of operation, in countries within or outside the EHEA, or whether they are compulsory or voluntary in nature.

The first ESG review of an agency will pay specific attention to the policies, procedures, and criteria in place. Comprehensive evidence of concrete results may not be required in all areas at this stage; however, the agency must be able to document how they expect to achieve results relating to all

⁴ The ENQA Statutes are available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/ENQA-Statutes-2021.pdf>

⁵ The ENQA Rules of Procedure are available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/ENQA-Rules-of-Procedure-2021-1.pdf>

⁶ E.g., reviews, audits, evaluations or accreditations of higher education institutions or programmes that relate to teaching and learning (and their relevant links to research and innovation).

standards by the next review. For example, completed reports of thematic analysis may not be required if clear plans to complete such activities are demonstrated in the review.

The second and subsequent full reviews will require clear evidence of results in all areas. In addition, further reviews should reflect progress from the previous review. This is a mandatory element in both the self-assessment report and the external review report.

It should of course be noted that all reviews – whether first, second, or subsequent – must always have a developmental approach and support the continuous enhancement of the agencies.

The panel is expected to review the current status of an agency and not planned developments. Nevertheless, the review should be put into context of the agency's ongoing major developments (e.g., in accordance with the agency's strategic plan).

2.4 The main steps of the ENQA Agency Reviews process

In line with the requirements of the ESG, ENQA Agency Reviews are composed of four main elements: self-assessment, external evaluation, external review report, and follow-up. This section provides a short overview of these steps, while a more detailed description of each one can be found in later sections of these guidelines.

Getting started

The ENQA agency review is initiated by a request from an agency seeking to apply for or renew ENQA membership. ENQA may also accept requests for reviews against the ESG for purposes other than membership (including reviews of agencies outside the EHEA). The agency should contact the ENQA Secretariat to initiate the review process about 14 months prior to the expected completion of the review process (and about 10 months before the expected date of the site visit). Each review is assigned to an ENQA Secretariat staff member who will act as the review coordinator. This person serves as the main contact person for the agency and the review panel throughout the process and will support all those involved during the different stages of the process.

During the initial phase, ENQA and the agency agree on the terms of reference of the review, including the activities to be covered in the review as well as the overall timeline. Agencies wishing to apply to EQAR with the same review report will need to specify this intention when first requesting the review.

Self-Assessment

The first main stage of the review process is the production of the self-assessment report (SAR) by the agency. In order to be accepted and processed by ENQA, the SAR should follow the guide of content provided in these guidelines and cover all indicated elements. The SAR must be analytical in nature, and in the case of a second or subsequent review, the agency is also expected to make explicit reference to the recommendations from previous reviews, underlining the related developments. It must also highlight other substantial changes and developments at the agency since the last review.

External evaluation

The ENQA Agency Review Committee will commission a panel of independent reviewers to carry out the review process. The mandate for the review panel is to evaluate the agency's activities and provide their view on whether an agency is acting in compliance with the ESG. The panel will be able

to do so by thoroughly assessing the SAR, studying additional material (such as information available on the agency's website), and attending a site visit to the agency. The purpose of the site visit is to verify and expand on the information provided in the SAR. It is also an opportunity for the agency to engage with the review panel in an exchange regarding its activities and development.

Review report

Based on the information collected from documentation and the site visit, the review panel drafts the external review report (ERR) and sends it to the ENQA Secretariat. The ERR is written using the ENQA Agency Reviews template (available on ENQA's website and provided to panels by the review coordinator). The panel's judgement on compliance is provided for each standard with the following grading: compliant, partially compliant, and non-compliant. Before sending the report to the reviewed agency for factual corrections, the review coordinator checks the report for completeness, consistency, clarity, and language.

After the factual check by the agency, the review panel finalises the external review report, which is then submitted to the Agency Review Committee which will scrutinise the report to ensure it meets the requirements of the present guidelines, is a fair representation of the agency, and is consistent with other reports produced through the ENQA Agency Reviews. The Agency Review Committee then validates the report and issues its statement, which is attached as an annex to the report. At this point the report is considered final and is published on the ENQA website.

The agency can then use the report to apply for ENQA membership (see section 8) or EQAR listing.

Follow-up

A follow-up is an integral part of a review process and supports the agency in its continuous reflection and the development of its work. For ENQA Agency Reviews, all agencies that are in compliance with the ESG, are required to submit a follow-up report at the latest two years after the validation of the final external review report. The report should demonstrate how it has addressed the recommendations made in the review report and explain any further significant changes or developments in the agency.

ENQA also offers the option of a progress visit to the agency, usually conducted by two reviewers from the original review panel (whenever possible). This normally takes place two to three years after the validation of the final external review report. The progress visit aims to generate a stronger, enhancement-oriented dialogue with the agency on topics that the agency finds particularly relevant for its current context.

3. Terms of reference for the review

Immediately after the ENQA Secretariat has accepted the request to coordinate an agency review, ENQA and the agency draft and agree on the terms of reference (ToR) and the preliminary timetable for the review. Should the agency also wish to apply for EQAR registration using the same review report, a tripartite agreement on the ToR is made between ENQA, EQAR and the agency. Once the tripartite ToR are drafted, the agency uses the document for its online application for registration in EQAR. ENQA will publish the ToR on its website. The agency is encouraged to publish the ToR on its website as well.

The terms shall:

- Clearly identify that the primary purpose of the review is an assessment of compliance with the ESG for ENQA membership purposes, for registration in EQAR, and/or for other purposes.
- Precisely list the activities of the agency that will be the subject of the review. All external quality assurance activities of an agency that fall under the scope of the ESG should be included in the review, whether they are carried out in the agency's own jurisdiction or in other countries/systems and whether the activities are of obligatory or voluntary nature (each of the quality assurance activities that are included in the ENQA Agency Review need to be addressed clearly in the SAR and the ERR).
- Outline how the review will be carried out: the review process, number of reviewers, approximate timing, other administrative arrangements.
- Mention any relevant background information/preceding events (e.g., previous reviews or membership applications) concerning the review.

The terms of reference, including the timetable of the review, form the basic outline of the review process itself. For ENQA Agency Reviews they are an annex to the contract between ENQA and the agency. The contract also specifies the fee payable and procedures for payment.

4. Production of the self-assessment report

4.1 Form and content of the SAR

The preparation of a self-assessment report (SAR) is an essential component of the review process. It provides the agency with an opportunity to reflect on how it aligns with the ESG and to gather key documentation to support this. Additionally, the SAR is an opportunity to initiate the discussions on the agency's current challenges. As the SAR normally provides a substantial portion of the evidence for the review panel in forming its conclusions, it is important that the report provides clear and comprehensive information, sufficient reflections, critique, and analysis, and that its contents can be corroborated by documentary evidence about the ways in which the agency meets the ESG. This allows the review panel to achieve a good understanding of the agency in advance of the site visit and enable it to prepare lines of enquiry for the visit.

The contents of SARs may vary depending on each agency's range of activities, its geographical area of operation, its history and background of reviews, and so on. However, agencies must make sure to include a description and assessment of all the external quality assurance activities to be evaluated by the panel⁷, covering each of the standards in the ESG parts 2 and 3 individually and explicitly including each type of activity⁸. For each standard, the agency should explain how they interpret and comply with it, including evidence and analysis of the effectiveness of the agency's approach. The SAR is also expected to contain a brief description of the higher education system in which the agency predominantly operates as well as of the agency's quality assurance activities abroad (where relevant). The SAR should normally be around 40-60 pages in length (excluding annexes).

Where the review panel and/or the ENQA Board has previously identified areas for development, these are expected to be followed up on and included in the SAR, with explanation of how the agency has acted on the recommendations.

ENQA expects that the SAR not only states what has been achieved, but also provides a reflection on the practices which could contribute to enhancing the agency's activities in the future. In other words, the SAR should be both backward and forward facing and should provide an accurate picture of the current situation.

In order to make the contents of the SARs consistent across the agency reviews in terms of level of detail, thoroughness, and evaluative character, agencies are expected to follow the guide of content provided by the ENQA Secretariat⁹. The SAR should contain the following elements:

- A description of the self-assessment process and the production of the SAR;
- A brief description of the higher education system and quality assurance of higher education in the context of the agency;
- The profile and a brief history of the agency, including the agency's engagement in international activities;
- A list of external quality assurance activities undertaken by the agency (including its cross-border external quality assurance activities), and all other activities of the agency;
- Sections that address each of the ESG separately;
- Opinions of stakeholders, e.g., recent analysis and critical reflection on stakeholders' opinions of the agency's key EQA activities;

⁷ ESG (2015): The term "quality assurance" is used in this document to describe all activities within the continuous improvement cycle (i.e., assurance and enhancement activities).

⁸ Should the approach to any of the standards be equal for all QA activities of the agency, the agency still needs to explicitly state this in the SAR (e.g., "this approach is valid for all QA activities of the agency").

⁹ Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Guide-of-Content-SAR.docx>

- Main findings and recommendations of previous review(s) and actions taken (for second and subsequent reviews only);
- A SWOT analysis; and
- Key challenges and areas for further development.

The agency may enclose the most crucial documentation it believes may help the panel in its analysis of the report as annexes to the report, or links in footnotes. Further documents may be prepared, within reason and in consideration of time available during the site visit, by the agency for the site visit purposes or may be requested by the review panel before or during the site visit. The SAR, annexes, and additional documents for the site visit should be in English and made easily available to the panel.

The SAR should be self-standing and self-explanatory. The main purpose of the annexes is to provide further background to the issues described but should not be necessary for the basic understanding of the evidence provided.

4.2 Screening of the SAR

The review coordinator checks the SAR prior to sending it to the review panel to ensure that it conforms to these guidelines and includes all elements listed in the guide of content. Should this not be the case, the agency is asked to revise the report. The agency will be given two weeks to provide the Secretariat with a revised report. The screening of the report by the review coordinator is a technical exercise and will not include any assessment on the compliance of the agency with the ESG nor any other substantial comment on the report's content.

The agency publishes the completed SAR on its website and submits it to the review coordinator after any additional changes have been made at the panel's request.

The review panel should receive the SAR prepared by the agency, and checked by the ENQA Secretariat, as soon as possible. It is important to leave at least six weeks between the date of receipt of the final, approved SAR and the date of the site visit (see section 12 for timeline).

5. Appointment and tasks of the review panel

A review panel can perform its independent function most successfully when it comprises members who among themselves have a wide range of professional experience in higher education and quality assurance. Each panel for an ENQA Agency Review includes at least four external reviewers, including:

- One or two quality assurance professionals, of which at least one should be currently employed by a QA agency and both having been engaged in quality assurance within the past five years;
- (an) Academic(s) from a higher education institution; and
- Student member(s).

When requested by the agency under review or when considered particularly pertinent, other stakeholders (for example, a representative of the labour market) may be included instead of the second quality assurance professional or in addition to the four panel members.

One of these reviewers will be appointed as the panel's chair and one as its secretary.

5.1 Nomination of reviewers

ENQA receives nominations of reviewers from its member agencies, as well as from European stakeholder organisations, namely the European University Association (EUA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), and Business Europe. In each case the nominee should be personally known to the nominating organisation. Nominations are submitted to the ENQA Secretariat together with a curriculum vitae¹⁰ of the nominated person(s). ENQA sends regular requests for nominations to its members and stakeholder organisations, although non-solicited nominations may also be considered.

ENQA needs reviewers with different backgrounds and profiles. The ENQA member-nominated reviewers are usually quality assurance professionals, such as former or current senior QA agency staff, or serving or recent members of the Boards/Councils of QA agencies. ENQA member-nominated reviewers may, however, also be administrative staff of higher education institutions (such as quality assurance officers), academics with sound experience in quality assurance, or representatives of the labour market.

EUA- and EURASHE-nominated experts may be administrative or academic staff members at higher education institutions or other experts able to represent the interests of higher education institutions. ESU-nominated experts are current students in higher education, and Business Europe nominees are representatives of the labour market.

The reviewers are expected to be fluent in English (both written and spoken), as it is the main working language of the review.

5.2 Training of reviewers

According to the needs of the expert pool and at its own discretion, ENQA invites nominated experts to ENQA reviewer training sessions. In order to ensure that the agency reviews are rigorous, fair, transparent, and consistent, such training is obligatory for all potential ENQA reviewers, independent of the organisation that has nominated them. Based on the lessons learned, feedback, and materials from completed reviews, the training sessions provide reviewers with the necessary knowledge and guidance on the use of the ESG, on the ENQA Agency Reviews process, and on the aims and objectives

¹⁰ Nominees are requested to use the CV template available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/CV-template.doc>

of the external review, as well as on how an external review can contribute to the agency's further enhancement. In addition, the reviewers are briefed on the expectations of EQAR for the reviews (in case relevant).

Only reviewers who have attended an ENQA reviewer training session are included in the ENQA pool of reviewers and may be appointed to panels of ENQA Agency Reviews. Submitting a nomination to ENQA does not guarantee an invitation to a training, as this is done according to the needs of the reviewer pool (profile, nationality, language competences, gender, and expertise). While most of the trained reviewers are invited to become members of a review panel within 1-2 years of the training, attendance at a training does not automatically guarantee an invitation to take part in an ENQA agency review.

5.3 Appointment of reviewers

The selection and appointment of reviewers for an ENQA agency review is always carried out by the review coordinator and the Agency Review Committee respectively (and not by the agency being reviewed) to avoid conflicts of interest and to preserve the integrity of the process.

When appointing reviewers, the key requirement is that the members of the panel should be totally independent of the agency under review and have a sufficient level of knowledge, experience, and expertise to conduct the review to a high standard. Invited reviewers are required to notify the review coordinator in writing of any connection or interest which could result in a conflict, potential conflict, or a perceived conflict related to the review. Furthermore, appointed reviewers are required to notify the review coordinator as soon as possible of any changes in, or additions to, the interests already disclosed that occur during the review process. If experts are unsure as to whether an interest should be disclosed, they should discuss the matter with the review coordinator.

For ENQA Agency Reviews, at least one of the reviewers is an ENQA nominee (most often the quality assurance professional[s]), at least one of the reviewers is appointed from the nominees of either EUA or EURASHE (representing higher education institutions), and the student¹¹ member is always selected from among the ESU-nominated reviewers. If requested, the labour market representative may come from among the Business Europe nominees or from ENQA. An additional panel member may be added at the request of the agency under review. In this case an additional fee to cover the reviewer's fee and travel expenses applies.

In addition, when appointing a panel, the following criteria are applied:

- All panel members must have been trained by ENQA (see section 5.2).
- At least three panel members come from outside the national system of the agency under review (if relevant);
- The review chair and the review secretary may not come from the same country, and the review chair should not come from the country of the agency under review (in the case of nationally or sub-nationally based agencies).
- At least one member of the panel has good knowledge and understanding of the higher education and quality assurance system in which the agency (predominantly) operates.
- At least one panel member has fluent knowledge of the main working language of the agency and/or the language of the country in which the agency (predominantly) operates.
- Gender balance is taken into consideration to the greatest extent possible. A panel never has only male or only female members.
- No current nor recent former members of staff of the agency under review can take part in the review panel (this restriction applies only to those whose employment has ended within the last five years).

¹¹ Students should be enrolled in higher education at the time of their appointment to the review panel.

- A person engaged as an expert by the agency under review in the last two years cannot serve as a review panel member.
- None of the experts from the agency's last ENQA progress visit are included in the current review panel.
- The review chair will have previous experience taking part in an ENQA agency review.
- The review secretary will normally have previous experience taking part in an ENQA agency review.
- Whenever possible, at least one panel member will not have previously participated in an ENQA agency review.
- The academic panel member needs to be an active academic¹² at the time of their appointment to the review panel.
- Current members of the ENQA Board are not eligible to serve as reviewers in ENQA Agency Reviews.
- Criteria for a review panel as defined in EQAR's Guide for Applicants and Registered Agencies¹³.

Review panels must be approved by the Agency Review Committee. The Agency Review Committee should be provided with the CVs of all panel members as well as a brief explanation about how the panel meets the requirements for ENQA Agency Reviews in terms of composition, profiles, experience, and skills as described above.

The agency under review is given the opportunity to signal any possible conflicts of interest or biases in relation to the selected panel members prior to their appointment. Should the agency be applying for the registration in EQAR as well, the proposed panel composition is sent afterwards to the EQAR Secretariat for check on conformity with EQAR's Guide for Applicants and Registered Agencies (the check-up is performed within one week).

All appointed reviewers sign a contract with ENQA and commit to the ENQA Code of Conduct for Reviewers.

After the panel has been established, the review coordinator introduces the panel members to each other and facilitates contact between the review chair, review secretary and the agency's contact person for the review process.

5.4 Review panel members' roles and responsibilities

The review panel is composed of at least four members, of which two are assigned the specific duties of the review chair and the review secretary.

Each member of the panel forms a fundamentally important part of the process by providing their specific viewpoint and expertise, and they are therefore expected to actively contribute to the work of the team. For this reason, reviewers are advised to carefully consider their workload before accepting the assignment. Failure to actively contribute to the panel and its duties, for whatever reason, is deemed a breach of the ENQA Code of Conduct for Reviewers¹⁴ and may lead to a reduction of the expert fee proportionate to the work not completed/contribution yet to be provided. The Agency Review Committee will assess the need for intervention on a case-by-case basis and will take the feedback from the review coordinator and/or the review chair into account.

¹² Academics should have an active employment contract on teaching and/or research with a higher education institution.

¹³ Available at: https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2018/04/EQAR_GuideForApplicants.pdf

¹⁴ Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/ENQA-Code-of-Conduct-for-reviewers.pdf>

5.4.1 Review chair

The review chair has overall responsibility for the review, the assessment of the agency against the ESG, and the production and quality of the report. The chair is also in charge of ensuring that the terms of reference of the review are respected. More specifically, the review chair shall:

Before the site visit:

- Liaise with the review secretary and the agency to establish the timetable of activities for the site visit.
- Review the documentation, including the SAR and any other information available prior to the site visit, to ensure it is complete and adequate for the needs of the panel.
- Define the lines of enquiry to be pursued during the site visit, with contributions from the rest of the panel.
- Work with the review secretary to produce a preliminary report.

During the site visit:

- Chair all meetings and discussions or assign other members of the panel to chair specific meetings.
- Ensure that all lines of enquiry are satisfactorily covered.
- Ensure that all panel members participate in the visit actively and in a balanced way, following the agreed sharing of tasks.
- Foster a friendly but professional atmosphere during the meetings so that all interviewees feel comfortable during meetings with the members of the review panel.

After the site visit:

- Comment on the draft report produced by the review secretary.
- Review any changes suggested by the review coordinator in order to respect the requirements of these guidelines.
- Review any changes suggested by the agency after it has commented on the draft report and produce a table (in cooperation with the review secretary) reporting all proposed changes and the action of the panel in the revised report. The table should be sent for information to the agency and the Agency Review Committee.
- Submit the final report, after reaching an agreement with the panel members, to the review coordinator.
- Provide – in cooperation with the review secretary – an informal feedback letter to the Agency Review Committee on the review process, including feedback upon the overall operation of the review, usefulness of preparation activities, frankness and completeness of the documentation provided by the agency, the quality of the dialogue experienced during the site visit, and the report-drafting process, at the latest when submitting the final review report.
- Remain available for clarification questions from the Agency Review Committee, EQAR's Register Committee, or the ENQA Board during the report approval and membership decision-making process.

At all times:

- Identify possible misunderstandings of concepts within the review panel.
- Inform the review coordinator about any eventual breach of contract by the agency or any of the reviewers and alert the coordinator to any concerns regarding the integrity of the review process.
- Ensure that these guidelines are respected throughout the review process.

5.4.2 Review secretary

The review secretary is a full member of the panel of equal status to the other members, but with specific and different duties. The work of the review secretary requires an experienced person (having a good knowledge of international quality assurance in higher education and of the ESG, as well as excellent communication and English writing skills), with adequate time available to carry out the tasks both before and after the site visit.

It is the specific responsibility of the secretary of the review panel to:

Before the site visit:

- Prepare the first draft of the site visit programme and liaise with the chair and the agency to set up the schedule for the site visit.
- Ensure that the timing of the site visit is feasible and that the facilities provided by the agency are appropriate for an independent review process (such as separated, closed room for the interview sessions).
- Review the initial review documentation, including the SAR, as received from the agency/review coordinator.
- Request additional documentation from the agency, in agreement with the other panel members, prior to the site visit where necessary.
- Work with the review chair to produce a preliminary report using the ENQA Agency Reviews Report Template¹⁵.
- Fill in the mapping grid on the ESG¹⁶.
- Produce the lines of enquiry for the site visit as agreed between the panellists.

During the site visit:

- Take notes during the meetings and during the panel's private discussions.
- Keep a record of matters which require further clarification and bring these to the attention of the panel.
- Support the review chair in ensuring that the agreed timetable (including possible sections with interpretation) is respected.

After the site visit:

- Produce a draft of the review report based on the documentation provided and the notes taken during the site visit, as well as – if agreed – the written contribution from the other panel members.
- Circulate the draft report to the other panel members for comments, observations, and further contributions.
- After incorporating any additional suggestions, supply the draft report to the review coordinator to check that it aligns with these guidelines.
- After incorporating any suggested changes from the review coordinator, supply the draft report to the agency to check its factual accuracy.
- Include the agency's amendments (if any and if accepted by the review panel) in the draft report.
- Produce a final version of the report and ask the review chair to submit it to the review panel and the review coordinator.
- If requested, draft (together with the review chair) an informal feedback letter to the Agency Review Committee on the overall review process.

¹⁵ Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/ERR-template.docx>

¹⁶ Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Mapping-Grid.docx>

- Amend the report at the request of the Agency Review Committee, should this be needed to better follow these guidelines and thus for the overall consistency of ENQA Agency Reviews.

At all times:

- Act as chief liaison for the panel with the review coordinator and the agency.
- Keep the review coordinator informed of progress throughout the review.

5.4.3 Panel members

It is the responsibility of all members of the review panel to:

Before the site visit:

- Review the documentation, including the SAR and any other information available prior to the site visit.
- Indicate to the review secretary if any essential documentation should be requested from the agency in addition to that which was provided with the SAR prior to the site visit.
- Respond swiftly to emails from the review coordinator, the review secretary, and the review chair regarding the review process in question.
- Make appropriate travel arrangements, ensuring that the most economic and feasible option is used and inform the review coordinator of the planned arrival and departure times.
- Contribute to developing the lines of enquiry to be pursued during the site visit.
- Take part in an online briefing organised by the review coordinator.

During the site visit:

- Actively participate in all meetings and discussions and contribute to pursuing the agreed lines of enquiry.
- Take occasional notes during the meeting in order to be able to constructively contribute to the report and the panel's judgement on the agency's ESG compliance.
- Alert the review coordinator to any significant problems encountered during the site visit, so that remedial steps may be taken as soon as possible.

After the site visit:

- Contribute to the drafting of the report as agreed by the review panel and under the coordination of the review secretary.
- Carefully read and comment on the initial draft report produced by the review secretary and provide any comments or amendments before the set deadline.
- Contribute to the amendment of the review report if requested by the review coordinator or the Agency Review Committee to ensure its alignment with these guidelines.
- Remain available for questions of clarifications from the Agency Review Committee, EQAR's Register Committee, or the ENQA Board during the report approval and membership decision-making process.

5.4.4 Review coordinator

ENQA assigns a trained and experienced staff member of the ENQA Secretariat as a review coordinator for each of the reviews coordinated by ENQA. The main tasks of the review coordinator are to:

- Coordinate the preparation of the terms of reference with the agency (and, if relevant, with EQAR), and draft and agree on the contract with the agency.
- Select and employ the review panel (including preparing of the reviewers' contracts) following the ENQA Agency Review Committee's appointment of the panel members.
- Serve as an initial liaison between the review panel and the agency under review.

- Distribute the agency's self-assessment report and annexes to the review panel.
- Discuss the process and its practical arrangements with the agency to ensure they comply with these guidelines.
- Screen the SAR and provide feedback to the agency.
- Attend the site visit to monitor the integrity of the review process and its consistency, and to ensure that ENQA's overall expectations of the review are considered and met. For these purposes, the review coordinator provides the review panel with information on the Agency Review Committee's discussions (including the notes from the ENQA Book of Precedents), and on the ENQA Board's discussions on previous review reports and the ESG in general when necessary.
- Act as the panel's chief liaison with the agency during the site visit (i.e., supports the panel in the practical, logistical, and technical arrangements, manages any last-minute change in the site visit programme, arranges any additional documentation as requested by the panel, and manages the e-room in case of online site visits).
- Check that the draft final report meets the requirements of these guidelines.
- Receive the final review report and forward it to the Agency Review Committee.
- After approval of the report by the Agency Review Committee, file and publish the review report, and send it in its final form to the agency.
- Pay reviewers' fees and reimburse travel and accommodation expenses.
- Receive and analyse feedback on the review process.
- Inform the review panel on the outcomes of the Agency Review Committee's meeting on the alignment of the review with these guidelines, of EQAR's decision on the registry (if relevant) and of the ENQA Board's decision on membership.

The review coordinator is not a member of the panel. He/she will thus not participate actively in the interviews during the site visit, will not contribute to the actual drafting of the report, and will not carry out any other tasks assigned to the review secretary or other panel members.

6. The site visit

6.1 Objectives

The site visit has a number of key objectives:

- To enable the review panel to share the impressions gained from the SAR;
- To explore the agency's compliance with the ESG during meetings and interviews with the key bodies and individuals at the agency;
- To engage in a developmental dialogue with the agency on its operations, strategy, challenges, and good practice in relation to the ESG;
- To explore the agency's compliance with the ESG through additional documentation;
- To formulate the panel's preliminary findings regarding compliance with the ESG and communicate these to the agency; and
- To produce material for the draft report as a solid basis for further development after the site visit.

To enable the site visit to reach these objectives, it is essential that the visit is well prepared and that the process and the panel's time are managed efficiently and effectively. It is imperative that the panel conduct their interviews and internal meetings in a room that ensures confidentiality (i.e., it must be separate and sufficiently soundproofed), and it is expected that the panel may enjoy its breaks, including all meals, privately. It is the responsibility of the agency to ensure that this is made possible.

In cases of force majeure, an online site visit can be organised in accordance with the 'ENQA Protocol for Online Site Visits due to Force Majeure'¹⁷.

The length of the visit should be determined at the beginning of the review process when the terms of reference are completed and agreed. In most cases, it is likely that a visit duration of at least 2.5 days is necessary for a review panel to reflect on and fully validate the information contained in the SAR, as well as to clarify any additional points. The planning schedule for the site visits that can be found on ENQA's website¹⁸ may be helpful in setting up the programme. However, it should be noted that the time required will depend on the country and agency in question and may thus vary between reviews.

Prior to the physical site visit, the panel attends an online meeting with the agency's resource person to better understand the agency's context, its organisational structure and other basic elements (e.g., panel composition) and procedural steps of the external quality assurance activities included in the terms of reference (see section 6.2.4). This meeting is thus used to clarify factual matters related to the agency and its operation.

In some cases, and with the consent of both the agency under review and the chair of the review panel, an external observer may attend the site visit. The conditions regarding the participation of observers are specified in the 'Protocol for External Observers on ENQA-Coordinated Reviews'¹⁹.

¹⁷ Available at: <https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ENQA-protocol-for-online-site-visits.pdf>

¹⁸ Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Suggested-Schedule-for-Visits.docx>

¹⁹ Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/ENQA-protocol-for-external-observers.pdf>

6.2 Before the site visit

6.2.1 Preparation and review of available information

Well ahead of the site visit, the agency under review submits its SAR and related annexes to the review coordinator for distribution to the panel. In addition to the SAR, the agency should also submit to the review coordinator any past review reports and/or follow-up reports (unless coordinated by ENQA).

The panel should carefully study all material available before the site visit and use it to determine the main lines of enquiry for the site visit and to draft a preliminary review report. The agency should facilitate access to any further information requested by the panel before the site visit.

The documentation to be considered by the panel includes (but may not be limited to):

- The agency's SAR, including annexes;
- Any previous external reviews (submitted by the agency unless coordinated by ENQA) and related follow-up reports;
- EQAR's registry-related documents, such as Substantive Change Reports (if relevant);
- Selected reports on feedback from stakeholders as produced by the agency;
- Other reports on the agency resulting from research or studies, if any; and
- Publicly available information, such as the agency's website.

Panels should review the feedback reports prepared by the agency on their different processes and consider the complaints that the agency may have received so that potential issues may be addressed during the site visit.

It is recommended that the review chair and review secretary, with input from the other panel members, request additional documentation when deemed necessary in advance of the visit. Other additional documents for which the need arises in the meeting, or which may not be available electronically, may be requested and should be provided on the spot during the site visit. The main source of information during the site visit should be the interviews with the leadership, staff, and stakeholders.

6.2.2 Panel's preparatory briefing

A preparatory online briefing will be organised between the review panel and the review coordinator to discuss the entire review process, and more specifically the:

- Purpose of the review;
- Roles and responsibilities of panel members;
- Use and understanding of the ESG and judgement on compliance;
- Link between evidence and information, analysis, and conclusions in the review report;
- Timeline and management of the site visit;
- Drafting of the report; and
- Submission of the final review report and the decision-making process.

The preparatory briefing also presents an important opportunity for the panel members to be introduced to each other, create a list of initial documentation to be requested from the agency under review, and prepare for the site visit (e.g., discuss sharing of tasks and practicalities related to the site visit). Additionally, should the site visit be conducted online, the preparatory briefing is used to get acquainted with the specificities of an online site visit.

The preparatory briefing is compulsory and usually takes place three to four weeks before the site visit. The meeting lasts about 60-90 minutes and is organised and chaired by the review coordinator.

In addition to the preparatory briefing, the review panel is expected to be in regular contact with each other and with the review coordinator as the need arises. Separate preparatory online meetings or calls usually take place between the review secretary and the review coordinator soon after the appointment of the panel for the purpose of a smooth overall organisation of the review process and to discuss its practical aspects. Furthermore, it is recommended that the review chair and review secretary meet or hold an online meeting after having both independently reviewed the SAR. This is useful to tease out specific issues and to prepare a list of matters on which clarification is needed.

6.2.3 Preparation of material and setting the programme of the site visit

To develop well-structured lines of enquiry and the schedule for the site visit, it is strongly advised that the panel members draft a mapping grid, based on the ESG²⁰. The site visit programme will be prepared by the review chair and the review secretary, in cooperation with the agency under review and based on advice from the review coordinator. The first draft of the site visit programme is always prepared by the review secretary. While the precise structure of the site visit – and the number and types of people to be interviewed – will depend on the context of the agency, on the quality of the SAR, and the number and types of issues that need special attention during the site visit, the suggested outline may provide support in designing the site visit programme²¹. For the typical profiles of interviewees, see section 6.3.2.

It is strongly advised that the review secretary draft a preliminary version of the panel's report prior to the site visit. This will save time during and after the visit and will make it easier to identify areas that will require further examination or clarification and to ensure that no gaps remain after the site visit.

6.2.4 Online meeting with the agency's resource person

In order to ensure that the panel reaches a sufficient understanding of the specific national/legal context in which an agency operates, of the specific quality assurance system to which it belongs and acquires solid understanding of the key characteristics of the agency's external QA activities, the panel should make use of an 'agency resource person' prior to the site visit itself. This person would typically be a senior member of staff (or even several staff members of the agency) with sufficient knowledge on the history and present situation of the agency and the quality assurance and higher education system in question.

The panel should organise an online meeting with the agency resource person well before the start of the on-site visit (ideally at least two weeks before the visit). Such a meeting will namely help the panel to achieve a good understanding of factual matters ahead of the actual site-visit, enabling them to use the full time during the interview sessions of the site visit for the key purposes of the review process (see section 6.1).

The online meeting with the agency's resource person is organised by the review coordinator in coordination with the review panel and the agency. The exact date of the meeting should be defined before the site visit schedule is finalised.

The agency resource person may additionally be invited to provide further clarification on the evening before the site visit, in between interview sessions of the site visit, or at the end of the first and/or second day of the site visit.

²⁰ Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Mapping-Grid.docx>

²¹ Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Suggested-Schedule-for-Visits.docx>

6.3 During the site visit

6.3.1 Panel kick-off meeting

The whole panel meets on the day/morning before the site visit (before, after, or in conjunction with the pre-visit meeting with the agency resource person as suggested in the proposed schedule for face-to-face site visits). The panel members discuss the schedule of the visit (including panel meetings, meetings for interviews, and time to study documentation), the specific roles of each reviewer during the site visit, their impressions gained from the pre-visit information, and any highlighted lines of enquiry on which the panel wishes to focus, i.e., the areas of the ESG on which the site visit may need to particularly focus. Although the review needs to address all the standards contained within the ESG, by developing “lines of enquiry” the panel is able to target its efforts where there is greatest concern about the level of compliance, or where information provided in the SAR and other documentation provides less comprehensive evidence. At this point, the panel might also identify any additional documentation to which it would like to have access during the site visit. In contrast, it may be evident from the information available before the site visit that the agency clearly fulfils some of the criteria, and these areas may warrant only a briefer exploration and verification during the site visit.

During the kick-off meeting, the panel decides on the agenda for the first meetings or interviews and formulates tentative outlines for the remainder. The basic structure of the meetings, i.e., who will ask the questions and in what order, should be decided at the latest by this time.

The kick-off meeting is also an opportunity for the review coordinator to remind the panel about the requirements of these guidelines and to highlight some elements that may require specific attention during the site visit. Likewise, the panel is encouraged to clarify any remaining questions with the review coordinator at this point.

6.3.2 Meetings or interviews with key agency personnel and stakeholders

The site visit is conducted in English. If the agency wishes to use interpreters during the interviews, it should let the review secretary and the review coordinator know before the completion of the visit schedule. The timing of the meetings with an interpreter should be adjusted accordingly. All other interviews, i.e., those for which the use of an interpreter has not been specifically requested and agreed, should be carried out in English. The interpreters must be external to the agency’s operations and need to be approved by the review coordinator ahead of the site visit. The agency bears the cost of interpretation.

During the site visit, it is strongly advised that the review panel should meet, among others:

- Staff members who have contributed to writing the SAR;
- The management and leadership of the agency;
- Staff members involved in quality assurance activities;
- Reviewers engaged by the agency; and
- A range of stakeholders (such as reviewed institutions and/or programmes [e.g., heads of reviewed institutions, QA officers], academics, students, labour market representatives, relevant higher education authorities such as ministry representatives, etc.).

When building the programme, care should be taken to ensure that each group and/or person may feel as free as possible to express their views and opinions on the agency’s work. For example, staff members should be interviewed separately from the leadership, reviewers separately from review coordinators, students separately from academics, etc. The size of the groups for any meeting/interview session should be kept limited. Experience has proven that group sessions with more than seven people are less helpful, especially if the time available is short. One person would not normally participate in several meetings with the panel except for cases agreed in advance with the review secretary and the review coordinator.

Online interviews might be conducted during the physical site visit when the direct participation of some interviewees is not possible or practical. If any online interviews are needed, the agency should inform the review secretary and the review coordinator before the site visit schedule is finalised. Those interviews should be clearly indicated in the schedule, and the timing should be adjusted accordingly.

It is often helpful for the panel to reserve the last interview slot for the leadership of the agency to clarify any remaining issues after the other interviews.

At the beginning of each meeting, the review chair should:

- Introduce the panel members and ask for introductions from those present;
- Outline the areas to be covered during the interview and in what order;
- Agree on the finishing time of the meeting.

After each meeting or interview, the panel discusses briefly where the meeting has taken the review – what is presently known and what still needs to be investigated. This should assist the review secretary in drawing up a list of, or completing a mapping grid on, the key outcomes of the meeting for later reference. The panel should then refine the list of themes or questions for the subsequent meetings, if necessary. In practice this means that the panel should have at least 15 minutes in between interviews for a private conversation. Typically, a panel would, in addition, hold a longer private meeting at the end of the first and second days of the site visit to map areas still to be covered and, if needed, adjust the interview questions for the following day(s).

Other additional documents for which the need arises in the meeting, or which may not be available electronically, may be requested and should be provided on the spot during the site visit; however, the main source of information during the site visit should be the interviews with the leadership, staff, and stakeholders.

6.3.3 Final panel meeting

Just before the end of the site visit, the panel meets to draw together its conclusions based on the information presented. At this point it is useful to take time to work through each aspect of the ESG and confirm the panel's key findings and any areas of concern.

6.3.4 Final meeting with the agency

The site visit concludes with a final debriefing meeting involving the panel members, staff, and Council/Board members of the agency, as decided by the agency. The review chair should outline the panel's impressions on the agency's overall compliance with the ESG, as well as highlighting key good practice and key areas for further development. The review chair or the review coordinator can also explain the next steps in the review process. The purpose of the final meeting is to provide some immediate feedback to the agency without pre-empting the formulation of compliance on each of the standards in the final report or the ENQA Board's decision on membership in ENQA.

6.4 After the site visit

All relevant information should be provided to the review panel either before or during the site visit. After the site visit, only factual comments on the draft review report are possible. The agency should also refrain from contacting the panel members or the review coordinator on matters related to the content of the review report prior to its completion.

The agency cannot submit new information to the panel after the site visit.

7. Production and publication of the external review report

The main outcome of the review process is the external review report (ERR) by the expert panel. The ERR is drafted by the review secretary, in collaboration with the review chair and the rest of the panel members, on the basis of the SAR, the site visit, and the review panel's findings.

The purpose of the ERR is to:

- Provide sufficient information on the ESG compliance of the agency under review to enable the EQAR Register Committee (or the ENQA Board if the agency chooses not to apply for EQAR listing) to take a decision on compliance with the ESG.
- Fairly represent the agency and its operation, and be perceived by the agency as doing so, as well as provide it with recommendations and suggestions to support its further development.
- Serve as a source of reliable and transparent information for interested stakeholders.

The template for the ERR is available in Word-format on the ENQA website²². The template gives more detailed guidance on what should be included in each of the sections. For all ENQA Agency Reviews, the ERR must be submitted using the provided template.

Even when the sole purpose of the review is to assess the agency's compliance with the ESG for purposes of an ENQA membership application, the review panel may include in its report any additional reflections or developmental advice that it may wish to offer. If these are extensive, they can be included in the optional additional section of the report, or if brief, as part of the conclusions. The agency is not required to implement or to follow up on these additional suggestions and advice.

7.1 Writing up findings

To enable the EQAR Register Committee or the ENQA Board to make an assessment on the ESG compliance of the reviewed agency and to reach a sound conclusion, it is important that the findings section is written in a way that reveals both the evidence for and the reasoning/analysis behind the panel's conclusions. Under each criterion the panel should carefully describe the relevant evidence available and provide an analysis of the evidence and an assessment of compliance. The reports must be written in clear and correct English, be well structured, and use correct terminology for compliance assessment.

The following main elements should be kept in mind:

- All ESG standards of parts 2 and 3 need to be fully covered.
- Each ESG standard should be discussed separately.
- Under each ESG standard, the report should include:
 - a) EVIDENCE: a short description of the evidence gathered – making reference to meetings or documentation explored and – where relevant – to changes implemented since the previous review;
 - b) ANALYSIS: a consideration of how far, based on the evidence available, the agency does (or does not) meet the ESG standard and eventual reasons or explanations for any lack of compliance;
 - c) CONCLUSION (judgement on compliance): explanation of how compliant the agency is, in the opinion of the panel (based on the evidence and analysis), with the ESG standard. For this purpose, the panel should refer to EQAR's general policy on use and interpretation of the ESG²³.

²² Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/ERR-template.docx>

²³ Available at:

https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2020/09/RC_12_1_UseAndInterpretationOfTheESG_v3_0.pdf

- d) **RECOMMENDATIONS** and **SUGGESTIONS** (if any) and **COMMENDATIONS** (if any). The recommendations logically follow the ESG standard and derive from the judgement on compliance, whereas the panel can additionally suggest areas or issues for further improvement of the agency in the form of suggestions. The agency has no obligation to follow up on suggestions (only on recommendations). The role of commendations, in addition to recommendations and suggestions, is important to highlight and promote good practice and excellence in external quality assurance, and the panel is thus asked not only to highlight areas that require further development but also areas in which the agency has excelled.

The link between evidence, analysis, and conclusions should be mutually supportive and provide a reader with clear information on how the panel reached its conclusion on compliance. In other words, the judgment must clearly follow from the evidence and analysis provided, and statements such as “the panel is convinced that the agency is fully compliant” or “it was clear from the interviews that the agency complies” are not sufficient, if not supported by evidence and analysis. Furthermore, the recommendations should logically follow from the judgement on compliance.

Progress in respect to any previous review should be clearly indicated through analysis on how the agency has addressed the provided recommendations (both by the panel and by the ENQA Board, where applicable).

ENQA uses the following scale for the judgement on compliance:

- **Compliant:** The agency is entirely or to a large extent in alignment with the ESG standard, which is implemented in an effective manner, and the principle/spirit of which is followed in practice.
- **Partially compliant:** Some aspects or parts of the ESG standard are met while others are not. The interpretation of the ESG standard is correct, but the manner of implementation is not effective enough.
- **Non-compliant:** The agency fails to comply with the ESG standard.

As the judgement on compliance with each ESG standard is either compliant, partially compliant or non-compliant, wordings such as “compliance has not been achieved” or “not yet compliant” should not be used.

7.2 Overall judgement on compliance

The panel is expected to comment on the overall compliance of the agency with the ESG. For an agency to become a member of ENQA, the agency needs to be overall compliant with Parts 2 and 3 of the ESG. Where an agency is found to be either partially compliant or non-compliant with a standard, the reasons for this should be explained. Indeed, in some cases compliance with the ESG may be impossible for some agencies due to restrictions placed on them by the very nature of their work and/or legislation in place in their (predominant) country(ies) of operation.

The overall judgement on compliance does not result from a mathematical calculation. However, a case of non-compliance for any individual standard would normally lead to a judgement that the agency is not compliant with the ESG overall.

7.3 Drafting process

For the sake of both efficiency and accuracy, it is important that the report is drafted throughout the review process rather than solely after the site visit. Several of the sections may be written in an outline form before the site visit takes place, based on the SAR and other information available to the panel. The review secretary is advised to add notes to the draft report during the site visit, building on the outcomes of the meetings and further scrutiny of documentary evidence.

The review secretary is in charge of providing the first post-visit draft of the report. However, the panel may decide that each member contributes with some written material from the early stages onwards. In any case, and as a minimum requirement, all panel members should carefully read and comment on the draft report.

After revision of the draft by the review secretary, and after agreement from the review chair, the report is submitted to ENQA. The review coordinator checks and confirms that the report is submitted using the provided template and that it is in line with the requirements of these guidelines. Should this not be the case, the report is sent back to the panel for revision. After this check, the review secretary will submit the report to the agency for comment on factual accuracy and grave misunderstandings only. The agency is given sufficient time to do this (usually two weeks). The agency should not submit any additional material or documentation at this stage.

Any further revisions to the report based on the agency's comments are agreed between the review chair and review secretary in consultation with the panel. Importantly, the panel is expected to provide a table reporting all proposed changes by the agency and the action the panel took, for all other than simple editorial corrections. The final version of the report is then submitted by the review chair (or the review coordinator if not ENQA) to the ENQA Secretariat, for the attention of the Agency Review Committee.

In addition, the review chair – in cooperation with the review secretary – should provide an informal feedback letter to the Agency Review Committee on the review process, including feedback on the overall operation of the review; usefulness of preparation activities; frankness and completeness of the documentation provided by the agency; the quality of the dialogue experienced during the site visit; coordination by ENQA; and the report-drafting process. This should be sent to the ENQA Secretariat together with the completed review report at the latest.

The final report should normally be around 40-50 pages in length (excluding essential annexes).

7.4 Internal quality assurance of ENQA Agency Reviews

7.4.1 The Agency Review Committee

The Agency Review Committee is a body that conducts the internal quality assurance of ENQA Agency Reviews. The Committee scrutinises the review report to verify that it meets ENQA's quality standards and contains the necessary evidence to decide on ESG compliance. The Agency Review Committee then produces a statement noting any deficiencies in the report and highlighting any areas in which they do not agree with the compliance judgements of individual standards given by the review panel. The statement by the Agency Review Committee is published by ENQA as an annex to the review report. Importantly, during this process, and prior to final validation of the report, the Agency Review Committee has the option to request additional (documentary) evidence or clarification from the review panel, review coordinator or the agency if needed. Such information can be exceptionally (i.e., in well justified cases) acquired during an additional online visit to the agency, carried out by the review chair and the review secretary if needed, to complete the assessment on compliance. The validation of the external review report by the Agency Review Committee is consequently postponed to its next meeting.

In case an agency applies for ENQA membership on the basis of an external review coordinated by another organisation and does not apply for EQAR listing, the Agency Review Committee will analyse the external review report and produce a letter for the ENQA Board stating whether the review has been conducted in accordance with these guidelines and whether the report contains sufficient, clear, and verified evidence to be used as the basis for a decision on ENQA membership. In such cases, the letter will not be published as an annex to the review report, as the report is not owned by ENQA.

The Agency Review Committee does not take a decision on overall compliance of the agency with the ESG.

The report is not final and thus may not be used by the agency until the Agency Review Committee has validated it. The decision on the validity of the report is independent from any eventual decision on ENQA membership (the Agency Review Committee also validates reports that are not used for ENQA membership if the review was coordinated by ENQA).

Following the validation and scrutiny of the external review report by the Agency Review Committee, the agency can use the report to apply for EQAR listing or for any other purposes it wishes.

7.4.2 Feedback surveys

After the completion of the report, the ENQA Secretariat gathers feedback on the review process from (i) panel members and (ii) the agency through a feedback questionnaire.

A detailed description of all processes and tools for planning, implementation, assessment, and improvement of ENQA Agency Reviews is available in ENQA's related policy document²⁴.

²⁴ Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Policy-on-the-IOA-of-ENQA-Agency-Reviews.pdf>

8. Application for ENQA membership

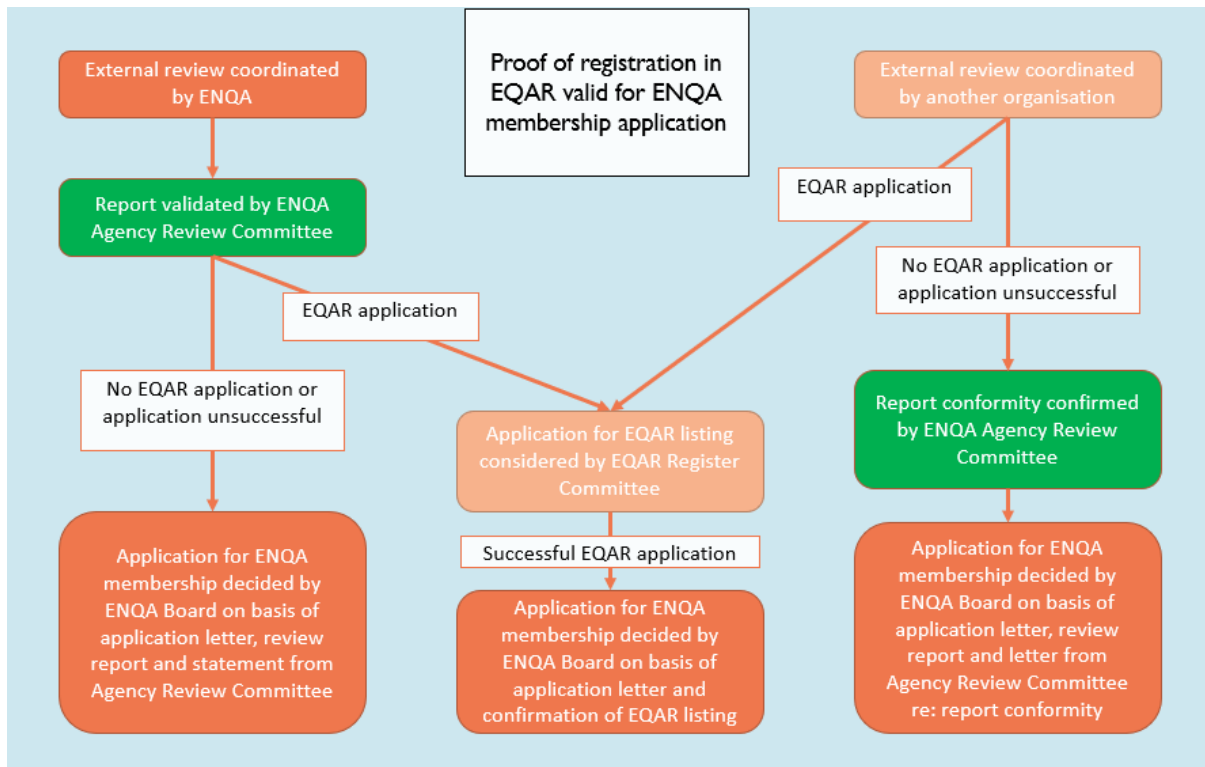
After completion of the ERR, the agency may apply for ENQA membership by submitting:

- A letter indicating the motivation for becoming a member and how it intends to contribute actively towards ENQA's objectives; and
- A letter confirming the agency's registration in EQAR or, for agencies not listed in EQAR, the external review report on the agency's compliance with the ESG.

There are three different pathways to apply for ENQA membership, depending on the review coordinator and the agency's registration status in EQAR:

- Organisations listed in EQAR and seeking membership in ENQA are requested to submit their application to the ENQA Secretariat for distribution to the members of the Board no less than 20 days prior to a scheduled meeting of the Board at which the application is to be considered. The Board will take the membership decision on the basis of the confirmation of the listing in EQAR and the agency's application letter.
- Organisations not listed in EQAR and using an ENQA-coordinated external review report for application²⁵ are asked to submit their application for distribution to the members of the ENQA Board no less than 40 days prior to a scheduled meeting of the Board at which the Board evaluates the agency's compliance with the ESG. The Board will take the membership decision on the basis of the external review report, including the statement annexed by the Agency Review Committee, and the agency's application letter.
- In case the review process is coordinated by another organisation and the agency is not registered in EQAR, the agency shall submit the review report and the application letter to the ENQA Secretariat no less than 40 days prior to a scheduled meeting of the Agency Review Committee. The Secretariat then distributes the review report to the Agency Review Committee, which will check that the review meets ENQA's requirements and that the report contains the required information. After that, the Board uses the report to evaluate the agency's compliance with the ESG. The Board will take the membership decision on the basis of the external review report, the application letter and the letter from the Agency Review Committee.

²⁵ This also refers to the case when an agency's application for EQAR listing is unsuccessful. However, it should be noted that the ENQA Board is only likely to reach a different conclusion from EQAR's if the judgement on ESG compliance is borderline or if the EQAR decision went against the findings of both the external review report and the Agency Review Committee.



Decisions on membership in ENQA are taken by the ENQA Board and endorsed by the General Assembly. In order to facilitate its decision making, the ENQA Board relies on the support of the Agency Review Committee for the initial scrutiny of the ERR (see section 7.4.1).

Applications should be submitted to the ENQA Secretariat according to the following deadlines.

Application method	Application deadline
Organisations already listed in EQAR	20 days before a scheduled meeting of the ENQA Board
Organisations not listed in EQAR but using an ENQA-coordinated external review report for their application	40 days prior to a scheduled meeting of the ENQA Board
Organisations not listed in EQAR and using an external review report coordinated by an organisation other than ENQA	40 days prior to a scheduled meeting of the ENQA Agency Review Committee

The possible outcomes of the Board’s decision on whether an agency can be admitted or reconfirmed as a member of ENQA are the following:

- The agency is considered to be in compliance with the ESG and is admitted or reconfirmed as a member of ENQA.
- The agency is considered as not in compliance with the ESG.
 - a) In the case of new applicants, the agency will be communicated the recommendations and areas to be addressed before a new review may be carried out. The minimum period before a new review after an unsuccessful one is two years. During this time, the agency may – and is encouraged to – become (or remain) an ENQA affiliate.
 - b) In the case of current members, the agency will be designated as a “member under review”. The agency continues to be an ENQA member (and maintain its membership rights) for a “grace period” of maximum two years, within which they need to make the necessary changes to reach overall compliance with the ESG and undergo an

additional partial review to verify progress. The details of the procedure for a partial review are described in the 'ENQA Policy for Partial Reviews'²⁶.

The Board communicates its decision on membership in the form of a letter addressed to the agency's legal representative.

If the agency is not listed on EQAR, the Board makes its decision in light of the gathered evidence and is not obliged to follow the recommendations of the review panel or findings of the Agency Review Committee. Should the Board deviate from the recommendations of the panel and/or the findings of the Agency Review Committee, the reasons shall be specified in the Board's letter to the agency. The Board will conclude with a negative decision when it considers that there is non-compliance with any standard. Other than that, the decision is based on a holistic assessment and is not the result of a mathematical equation.

The Board's powers with respect to membership matters, and the rules relating to appeals against a decision of the Board, are contained in the ENQA Statutes.

After the completion of review, the final report, the agency's SAR, and the Board's decision letter with the related recommendations and areas to be addressed (applicable only to agencies not listed in EQAR), is published on the ENQA website. The reviewed agency is expected to publish the ERR on its website as well.

8.1 Request for additional information or site visit

If the ERR's contents or the way in which the review was conducted do not, in the Board's opinion, allow it to come to a decision on membership, the Board may request additional information as needed. This possibility applies to the reviews when the agency is not registered in EQAR, regardless of what organisation coordinates the review.

The request for additional information may comprise further documentary evidence, additional information from the review panel (or the review coordinator) or the agency itself, or information to be acquired during an additional online visit to the agency, carried out by the review chair and the review secretary if needed, to complete the assessment on compliance. Such a visit is implemented only exceptionally and in well justified cases.

8.2 Reviews coordinated by other organisations

As of 1 July 2011, most reviews of agencies wishing to apply for or reconfirm their membership in ENQA are coordinated by ENQA in order to guarantee a higher level of consistency of the reviews. However, ENQA also accepts reviews coordinated by other entities for membership applications. Importantly, it is the responsibility of the agency under review to ensure that the requirements of the ENQA Agency Reviews Guidelines are met. At minimum, the agency should check at the start of the review that the terms of reference and the panel composition proposed by the coordinator are in line with these guidelines.

In case of a review coordinated by another entity, a report drafted in a language other than English should be translated under the supervision of the review chair before submission to ENQA.

In cases when the review process is coordinated by another organisation and the agency is not registered in EQAR, the ENQA Agency Review Committee shall, before the membership application is submitted to the ENQA Board, analyse the report and assess the integrity of the review process, the quality of the report and its conformity with the requirements for a membership application. For this purpose, the Committee will produce a letter to the ENQA Board stating whether the review

²⁶ Available at: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/ENQA-partial-reviews.pdf>

report has been conducted in line with the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews and provides sufficient, clear and verified evidence to be used as the basis for a decision on ENQA membership.

The key requirements for the review to be acceptable for ENQA membership application purposes include the following:

- The management of the review process must be completely independent of the agency itself.
- All parts of the review's management and process must be transparent and therefore easily open to examination by the Agency Review Committee and, if required, the ENQA Board.
- The report produced must be sufficiently detailed to provide satisfactory assurance of the review's robustness.
- The report must provide sufficient, verified information which clearly shows how the agency understands the requirements of the ESG and complies with them.

A reciprocal review process, where two agencies organise the review of each other, is not permissible, because this method is unlikely to meet the requirements of externality and independence and may give rise to conflicts of interest.

In case of reviews not coordinated by ENQA, the Secretariat will not provide personalised support to the agency under review and/or the review panel.

9. Follow-up

In order to consider actions taken by the agency on the provided recommendations, a follow-up report is obligatory for each agency review coordinated by ENQA. The follow-up report should be sent to the ENQA Secretariat two years after the publication of the final report and will be complemented by a voluntary, small-scale progress visit to the agency. While the main objective of the follow-up report is to check progress on ESG compliance, the progress visit is specifically centred around the agency's constant enhancement on ESG-related issues that are considered of particular relevance or a challenge to the agency.

9.1 Follow-up report

An agency that is considered in compliance with the ESG²⁷ by the review panel is requested to submit a follow-up report within two years after the validation of the final external review report. The purpose of the follow-up is to engage the agency in continuous reflection on and development of its work. The follow-up report is expected to address the recommendations from the review panel (and from the ENQA Board if applicable). The report will also highlight other substantial changes and developments of the agency's external quality assurance activities and processes since the last review, if applicable. In addition, the agency should briefly reflect on its key challenges at the end of the report. The key challenges section applies only to agencies that decide for a progress visit (see section 9.2). Finally, the report may also highlight other developments or changes in the agency that may be relevant in view of its ESG compliance.

The follow-up report should be sent to the ENQA Secretariat, who will forward it to the ENQA Board for their information. Upon receipt, the report will be published on the ENQA website on the same page as the review report.

The follow-up report must be in English and should be self-standing and self-explanatory without further documents annexed.

9.2 Progress visit

As part of the ENQA Agency Reviews process, every agency is offered the opportunity to have a progress visit (including agencies that are found to be not in compliance with the ESG). The visit, which normally takes place 2-3 years after the verification of the final external review report (and after submission of the follow-up report), aims to offer an enhancement-oriented and strategically driven dialogue that ordinarily might be difficult to truly integrate in the compliance-focused site visit. The progress visit thus does not have the objective of checking the agency's ESG compliance or how the agency has followed up on the recommendations. Rather, it provides an arena for strategic conversations that allow the agency to reflect on its key challenges, opportunities and priorities. The starting point of every progress visit is therefore a strategic meeting (or meetings) with the agency's leadership, where the following key questions/topics should be addressed:

- What are the agency's key priorities and challenges in pursuing its mission? (general dialogue on the agency's strategic direction)
- What opportunities has the agency identified in EQA and does it plan to engage in these opportunities? If so, how? If not, why not? (general reflection on the scope of EQA activities within the agency)
- What are the key challenges and opportunities related to the engagement of stakeholders in the agency's work? (general reflection on the dialogue within the higher education sector)

²⁷ Should an agency that was found to be not in compliance with the ESG, decide for a progress visit, it should still submit its follow-up report to the ENQA Secretariat.

- How could the agency strengthen its formation as a learning organisation? (general dialogue on IQA of the agency)
- What other challenges is the agency facing? (open question to support any other area of interest)

The rest of the progress visit focuses on topics proposed by the agency. The agency is given freedom to propose topics that derive from the ESG. The final selection of topics is decided in cooperation with the appointed experts. For instance, the agency might wish to explore areas in which it is struggling to meet the requirements of the ESG, or specific sub-sections of one or more ESG standards and the related guidelines.

The final session of the progress visit is dedicated to the experts' debriefing on what, in their opinion, are the agency's key strengths and challenges. The experts are thus not expected to provide answers or solutions, but rather identify strengths, challenges and possible directions of development to the agency.

The visit can take place only after the submission and approval of the follow-up report, since this report forms a basis for experts to learn about the agency's activities following the external review and about its key challenges. The ENQA Secretariat will contact the agency approximately six months before the expected date of the progress visit to initiate the preparations. The visit usually lasts one day in the agency's premises or online and can be held at the management level only or involve other staff/external stakeholders. Whenever possible, the agency is encouraged to organise a meeting on site to better support the strategic nature of conversations between the agency and the appointed experts.

The visit is implemented by two reviewers (experts) from the original review panel, whenever possible. ENQA will organise a briefing call with the experts and the agency to elaborate on the purpose and specific goals of a visit. One expert is assigned as a secretary to liaise with the agency about the programme of the visit. The first draft of the programme is provided by the agency. The agency and the secretary of the progress visit then jointly finalise the visit programme. The progress visit practicalities, such as the arrangement of accommodation, are organised by a review coordinator. However, the coordinator will usually not take part in the visit itself. No reporting is expected on the outcomes of the visit.

The costs of the progress visit are included in the review fee and are non-refundable to the agency except for travel costs, which are calculated on real incurred costs.

The two experts who attend the progress visit will not be engaged in the following full review of the agency to avoid possible conflicts of interest.

10. Appeals and complaints procedure

The appeals and complaints procedure allows an agency that has undergone an ENQA Agency Review and/or applied for membership in ENQA to state its dissatisfaction with the conduct of the process or those carrying it out (the complaints procedure) or to question the formal outcome, i.e., the decision on membership (an appeal).

In line with the ENQA Rules of Procedure, an appeal against a decision or a complaint concerning the review process must be submitted to the ENQA Secretariat within two calendar months from the date of receipt of the Board's decision related to that review. Upon receipt, an appeal or complaint is reviewed by the Secretariat to determine whether eligible grounds and supporting evidence have been presented. When this is not the case, either the appeal/complaint is rejected or a request for further information or evidence is made. The ENQA Secretariat then forwards the appeal/complaint to the Board for consideration, prior to submitting it to the Appeals and Complaints Committee. The Committee examines appeals as well as complaints and undertakes any further investigations that it considers necessary. This may involve obtaining documents from the appellant/complainant or speaking directly with representatives of the appellant/complainant.

The Committee may decide:

- To dismiss the appeal/complaint;
- In case of an appeal, to uphold the appeal and recommend the Board to reconsider its decision, taking into account the findings of the Appeals and Complaints Committee.
- In case of a complaint, to uphold it and recommend the Board to take appropriate action proportional to the issue(s) raised by the complainant and taking into account the findings of the Appeals and Complaints Committee.

The Committee is requested to submit a report within one month of the receipt of the appeal or complaint. The Board's decision on the appeal/complaint is taken in light of the Committee's report, and it is final and non-appealable. Appellants/complainants are notified in writing of the Board's decision within ten working days of the date of the decision. The Board reserves the right to discontinue an appeal/complaint if the appeal/complaint is pursued in an abusive, offensive, defamatory, aggressive, or intimidating manner.

The appeals and complaints procedure are described in the ENQA Rules of Procedure.

10.1 Complaints policy for third parties

Individuals or organisations that have substantiated concerns about an ENQA member agency's compliance with the ESG may address these to ENQA in line with the Complaints Policy for Third Parties.

ENQA will only consider complaints that are related to:

- A member agency's compliance with the ESG;
- The integrity of the external review and decision-making process on the basis of which the agency was admitted as a member in ENQA.

Full details of the principles, process and format for complaints can be found in the ENQA Complaints Policy²⁸.

²⁸ Available here: <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/ENQA-complaints-policy-1.pdf>

II. Financial issues

II.1 Review fee

ENQA charges the agency a fee to meet the full costs of the review. This includes the expert fees, travel and subsistence costs, a fee for the coordination of the review and a contribution to the Experts Training Fund. The fee also includes the costs of the voluntary progress visit to the agency two to three years after the completion of the review process.

The amount of the expert fee is stated in the review contract between ENQA and each panel member. The expert fees and ENQA administrative overhead are determined by the ENQA Board; travel and accommodation expenses are charged at cost. The approximate total of the whole review is payable by the agency to ENQA on signature of the contract. ENQA does not undertake any further preparations for the review until the review contract has been signed and the review fee paid.

The travel costs for the site visit will be paid as real costs. Should the travel costs remain under the provision, the agency will be reimbursed the difference. Should the travel costs be above the provision, the agency shall pay the difference to ENQA. If the progress visit does not take place, the travel costs reserved for this purpose will be reimbursed to the agency. The expert fee provision is, however, non-reimbursable.

Information about current fees for ENQA Agency Reviews is available on the ENQA website²⁹.

II.2 Financial guidelines for reviewers

II.2.1 Contact

The ENQA Secretariat is responsible for the financial management of ENQA Agency Reviews. The contact details of the Secretariat are as follows:

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

Rue de l'Industrie 10, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

E-mail: secretariat@enqa.eu

Webpage: www.enqa.eu

Phone: +32 2 735 56 59

Fax: +32 2 736 98 50

All claims for reimbursement of travel expenses related to the review should be submitted, together with receipts and boarding passes, to the ENQA Secretariat by e-mail (secretariat@enqa.eu).

II.2.2 Reimbursement of the travel and accommodation costs

The reviewers are expected to pre-finance their travel costs (flight/train), and they should inform the review coordinator concerning their arrival and departure times. When the pre-financing of the travel costs is not possible, the expert should contact the review coordinator to find an alternative solution well in advance of the site visit. The review coordinator organises the hotel accommodation with the help of the agency and directly pays the costs related to hotel, meals, and eventual local transportation during the site visit.

Should any additional costs occur, ENQA reimburses the reviewers only for the travel, accommodation, insurance, visa, and meal costs relating directly to the site visit upon receiving the relevant documentation. The ENQA Secretariat cannot reimburse any costs for which the receipts are missing. No per diems are provided, and therefore the expert should remember to retain all receipts. Travel and insurance costs are based on the actual costs incurred. Economy class fares must

²⁹ Available at: https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/ENQA-Agency-Reviews_Financial-Issues.pdf

be used when travelling by air, while business class is acceptable when travelling by train or for long-distances (i.e., trips outside the EHEA) and upon prior agreement with the ENQA Secretariat. All travel-related costs should be kept reasonable.

There are two ways in which to claim travel expenses:

1. Official invoice. An official invoice must be used in the case where the organisation of the reviewer has paid for his/her travel and accommodation expenses, and these expenses will be reimbursed to the account of the organisation, not to the reviewer. The official invoice from the organisation has to include specification of costs and copies of the travel documentation and of the receipts. The invoice can be sent to the ENQA Secretariat as an e-mail attachment or by post.
2. Travel claim form. Reviewers should use the travel claim form provided by the ENQA Secretariat when they have paid the travel and accommodation expenses themselves, and they will be reimbursed to their private account. In this case, the receipts and boarding passes must be scanned and attached to the travel claim form that has to be signed by the expert and sent to the ENQA Secretariat by e-mail (secretariat@enqa.eu). If any documentation is missing, the ENQA Secretariat, due to its accounting procedures, will not be able to make the reimbursement. All other currencies used must be converted into Euros by the expert themselves³⁰. The expert should state the appropriate currency rate on the travel claim form. The travel claim form is provided to the panel after the site visit.

Both the travel claim and the official invoice must include the following bank details:

- Name of the bank;
- Address of the bank;
- Name of the account holder;
- Bank account number; and
- SWIFT and IBAN codes.

11.2.3 Payment of the reviewer fees

The fee is paid by the ENQA Secretariat after the successful completion of the review, i.e. after the final decision of the ENQA Board. A form is provided by the ENQA Secretariat to claim the fee.

11.2.4 Deadline for claiming expenses

All direct expenses must be claimed from the ENQA Secretariat within 40 days of the site visit. The ENQA Secretariat cannot reimburse claims that arrive after this deadline.

³⁰ For this purpose, the exchange rate as provided by InforEuro (European Commission) is used, as available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_en

12. Timeline for ENQA Agency Reviews

The following timeline gives an indication of the schedule that a review might follow. A specific timetable is established for each review undertaken. It should be noted that the review process may take 12-14 months from the first request by the agency to the completion of the procedure (i.e., validation of the review report by the Agency Review Committee). This may be of particular relevance for agencies whose membership needs to be renewed or those agencies that intend to use the review for purposes other than ENQA membership, such as registration in EQAR or for national purposes.

The agency informs the ENQA Secretariat that it wishes to undergo an external review by sending a review request letter. A review coordinator is assigned to the review.	Month 0
The terms of reference – which includes clarification of the agency’s activities to be addressed in the external review and the overall timeline of activities – are drafted and agreed to by ENQA, the agency, and EQAR (if relevant). The agency is encouraged to publish the ToR on its website. ENQA and the agency sign a review contract. The agency starts to produce its SAR.	Month 1
The review coordinator composes the review panel and sends it for approval to the Agency Review Committee. The agency under review is given the opportunity to signal any possible conflicts of interest or biases in relation to the selected panel members prior to their appointment. In case the agency is applying for the registration in EQAR, the proposed panel composition is sent afterwards to the EQAR Secretariat for a check on conformity with EQAR’s Guide for Applicants and Registered Agencies. The review coordinator distributes the initial preparatory material (i.e., the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews, Code of Conduct, ESG 2015, various review templates, the ToR, and EQAR’s Use and Interpretation of the ESG for the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies) to the panel members.	Months 2-3
The agency submits its SAR, along with any other documentation of relevance, to the review coordinator.	Month 6
The review coordinator carries out a screening of the SAR to ensure the document meets the requirements of these Guidelines. If the SAR meets the requirements, it is sent – together with the additional documentation of relevance supplied by the agency – to the review panel. If the SAR does not meet the requirements, the agency is requested to make the necessary modifications and re-submit the SAR within two weeks from the request by the review coordinator. After that, the SAR – as well as the additional documentation of relevance supplied by the agency – is forwarded to the review panel. The SAR is published on the agency’s and ENQA’s websites.	Month 7
The panel reviews the documentation provided by the agency and makes an initial identification of lines of enquiry considering the terms of reference of the review and other information received from the agency.	Month 8
An online briefing of the review panel and the review coordinator takes place to discuss the overall review process, ensure a shared understanding of the tasks of the review panel and the objectives of the review, and to point out any specific issues related to the review. In consultation with the review panel, the review secretary may request that the agency provide any additional documentation considered relevant to the review. The review secretary drafts the site visit schedule and agrees on it with the review panel and the agency. The panel joins the online meeting with the agency’s resource person.	Month 9

<p>If the agency wishes to use the interpreters during the site visit, it must inform the review secretary and receive approval of the person engaged from the review coordinator before the site visit schedule is finalised.</p> <p>The review secretary drafts a preliminary report and a mapping grid in collaboration with the review panel.</p>	
<p>The review panel conducts the site visit according to the agreed schedule while also carrying out the following requisite meetings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before the site visit begins, the panel meets to make any final adjustments to the schedule and agree how the lines of enquiry will be pursued. 2. After the first (and second) day of the visit, the panel meets to assess the gaps to be covered in the remaining interview sessions and to identify any additional documents or interviews that may be required. 3. A panel meeting takes place as the penultimate session of the site visit. At this point the panel reviews the evidence presented, drawing together any preliminary findings and, if possible, organises these into a “skeleton” report. 4. The panel conducts a debriefing meeting with the representatives of the agency. During this meeting, the panel’s immediate feedback or overall impressions is communicated. 	Month 10
<p>The review secretary produces the initial draft review report and circulates it to the review chair and panel members.</p> <p>Within two weeks of receiving the draft report, the panel members review the report and provide their comments to the review secretary.</p>	Month 11
<p>The review secretary produces a revised draft which, after agreement from the panel, is submitted to the review coordinator to verify its compliance with the Guidelines.</p> <p>The review secretary produces a revised draft (if required) and, after agreement from the panel, submits it to the agency for comment on factual accuracy.</p>	Month 12
<p>Within two weeks of receiving the report, the agency submits any amendments (relating only to any factual inaccuracies) to the report to the review secretary for consideration, and the review secretary produces a final version of the report.</p> <p>The review secretary submits the final review report to the review chair, who in turn shares it with the review panel and submits it to the review coordinator.</p> <p>The review chair must submit an informal feedback letter about the review process to the review coordinator for the attention of the Agency Review Committee by this time at the latest.</p>	Month 13
<p>The review coordinator submits the report to the Agency Review Committee to scrutinise it for internal quality assurance purposes. The review report is considered to be final once validated by the Agency Review Committee, for which the Committee will issue a statement that is annexed to the report and published on ENQA’s website. Note that possible clarification requests may be made by the Committee prior to their meeting (to the agency, panel, or the review coordinator).</p> <p>The agency can at this point use the external review report for EQAR listing.</p> <p>The review coordinator asks the panel members and the agency to complete a feedback questionnaire on the review process – to be completed before the date of the Board’s expected decision on membership.</p>	Month 14
<p>EQAR Register Committee holds a meeting to decide on the registration in EQAR (if relevant). Note that possible clarification requests may be made by EQAR prior to the meeting of the Register Committee (to the agency, panel, or the review coordinator).</p>	EQAR Register Committee meeting
<p>The Board takes a decision on ENQA membership. Note that possible clarification requests may be made by the Board prior to the meeting (to the agency, panel, or the review coordinator).</p> <p>Should the agency be listed in EQAR, the agency’s application for ENQA membership comprises only of the confirmation of listing in EQAR and the agency’s application letter.</p> <p>In cases where the agency is not applying for EQAR listing, the agency submits a letter requesting membership/re-confirmation of membership no less than 40 days before the Board meeting at which the membership is expected to be discussed. This – together with the review report and statement from the Agency Review Committee – comprise the agency’s application for membership.</p> <p>In cases where ENQA is not the review coordinator and there is no EQAR application or the application has been unsuccessful, the agency submits the review report to the ENQA Secretariat, which in turn asks the Agency Review Committee for the report scrutiny. Following this, the application</p>	ENQA Board meeting

for ENQA membership is decided by ENQA Board on basis of the application letter, review report and letter from the Agency Review Committee.	
ENQA informs the agency of the Board's decision and publishes the letter containing the Board's membership decision on its website.	After ENQA Board meeting
The agency submits its follow-up report to ENQA.	Two years after the validation of the final external review report
The progress visit is conducted. If the agency does not wish to have a progress visit conducted, it should notify ENQA at least six months in advance of the approximate timing of the progress visit.	Two to three years after the validation of the final external review report

2021

THIS PUBLICATION contains a detailed description of the review process for ENQA-coordinated reviews against the ESG.

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European Association for
Quality Assurance in Higher Education