



European Association for
Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Presentation of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

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Quality Assurance System

ENQA is part of the quality assurance framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). As co-authors of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG) and the primary provider of external reviews of quality assurance agencies, ENQA plays an important role in supporting and safeguarding the development of external quality assurance in line with the principles of the Bologna Process.

Quality assurance in line with the ESG is one of the three key commitments of the Bologna Process. This means that countries that are members of the EHEA are expected to have external quality assurance agencies that operate in compliance with the ESG. ENQA's Agency Reviews assess that compliance through an external peer review process. The reviews help to enhance trust and transparency in quality assurance across the EHEA (and beyond) by demonstrating that higher education is being quality assured according to a common set of standards. The resulting report can be used to apply for ENQA membership and listing on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

Responsibilities and structure of ENQA

About ENQA

ENQA was first established in 2000 as the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education to promote European cooperation in the field of quality assurance in higher education. In 2004, it became the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education with the aim to contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education, and to act as a major driving force for the development of quality assurance across all the Bologna Process signatory countries.

ENQA is an independent, non-profit, membership organisation, currently consisting of

- 56 members: Members are quality assurance agencies in the EHEA, which have demonstrated their compliance with the ESG through an external review
- 56 affiliates: Affiliates are quality assurance agencies that are not compliant with the ESG, agencies outside the EHEA, and other organisations with an interest in quality assurance of higher education.

ENQA's mission and goals

As the designated stakeholder organisation of quality assurance agencies in the EHEA, ENQA represents their interests internationally, supports them nationally and provides them with comprehensive services and networking opportunities. Under ENQA's umbrella, the

community of agencies drive innovation in quality assurance and refines quality assurance processes.

ENQA has three main goals:

- Representing interests of quality assurance agencies
- Providing services to members and other stakeholders
- Driving the development of external quality assurance

ENQA's activities

ENQA's goals are served by a range of activities conducted by the Association. These activities are interlinked. Information gathered from members provides evidence for input to policy-making. Policy developments are then relayed back to members and they are supported in enhancing their own practices and developing innovative approaches to quality assurance.

Agency Reviews

ENQA's agency reviews are specifically designed to

- provide evidence of an agency's compliance with the ESG, for use in applying for ENQA membership and EQAR listing;
- provide recommendations in areas where compliance has not been achieved;
- support an agency's ongoing development by providing additional suggestions for improvement and offering a progress visit.

To date ENQA has conducted 106 full reviews and 6 partial reviews of quality assurance agencies and is the main provider of such reviews in the EHEA. Agencies outside the EHEA are also welcome to request a review, although they are not eligible for ENQA membership (but they may use the review report to apply for EQAR listing).

Each review consists of a self-assessment by the agency, a site visit by a team of reviewers representing different stakeholders, a written report, and a follow-up process including a progress visit.

Representation and policy-making

ENQA works hard to ensure that the voice of quality assurance agencies is represented in the relevant policy discussions and in cooperation with other stakeholders:

- ENQA is a consultative member of the Bologna Process and contributes specifically to matters on quality assurance. Most notably, this has included development of the ESG in 2005 and the revision of the ESG in 2015; the development of the European Approach to the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in 2015; the establishment of EQAR in 2008.
- As a founding member of EQAR, ENQA is represented in EQAR's Executive Board and General Assembly, and nominates two members of the Register Committee.
- ENQA is part of the E4 Group together with EUA, EURASHE and ESU. These four organisations cooperate regularly including on the development of the ESG, founding of EQAR, joint projects, and the organisation of the annual European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF).

Projects and working groups

ENQA is involved in a range of projects to support the development of quality assurance. These include capacity building projects to support the development of national quality assurance frameworks: projects dedicated to specific topics, such as micro-credentials, stakeholder engagement, and quality assurance of European University Initiatives; and projects that enhance global development of quality assurance, including in Asia and Africa.

ENQA also runs working groups for its members and affiliates, that explore specific aspects of quality assurance and help to drive innovation in the sector. Forthcoming working groups will look at micro-credentials and academic integrity.

Information and sharing of practice

ENQA is reliable source of information and expertise on external quality assurance topics. This is shared with members and affiliates through regular publications, events and webinars. Many of ENQA's activities also serve as an important opportunity for members and affiliates to network, share practice and ensure professional development.

ENQA's organisational structure

ENQA is structured as follows:

- **General Assembly:** The General Assembly is the main policy and decision-making body of ENQA. The General Assembly is composed of the Member organisations of the Association and has ENQA Affiliates, European ministerial representatives, and ENQA partner organisations as observers. The General Assembly meets twice a year to discuss and approve matters of strategic importance to the Association, such as the strategic plan, annual work plans and budgets. The General Assembly also elects the Board, President and Vice-Presidents and endorses the decisions taken by the ENQA Board.
- **Board:** The Board is the executive body of the Association. It is responsible for planning, implementation and monitoring of ENQA's activities, taking decisions on membership and affiliation applications, and for the overall management of the Association. It is typically comprised of nine members, including the President, two Vice-Presidents and the Treasurer. Board members are elected by the General Assembly following nominations by ENQA members, and serve terms of three years, renewable once.
- **Secretariat:** ENQA's daily administration and management are conducted by the Secretariat, led by the Director. The Secretariat is based in Brussels and currently consists of 6 staff members.
- **Agency Review Committee:** The Agency Review Committee is responsible for validating external review reports by assessing the integrity of the review process and checking the quality and consistency of the reports.
- **Appeals and Complaints Committee:** The Appeals and Complaints Committee deal with appeals and complaints made in relation to membership decisions taken by the Board and the conduct of procedures in respect to membership matters and ENQA Agency Reviews.