

Revision of the ESG: briefing note on process and structures

October 2024

Mandate for the ESG revision

The Tirana Ministerial Communiqué¹ of May 2024 includes a mandate for the authors of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) to revise the document. The Communiqué states:

The application of the ESG promotes trust and transparency within and between higher education systems and facilitates accountability and enhancement. To keep them in line with ongoing developments, challenges and expectations, we invite the authors of the ESG to propose a revised version by 2026 to the BFUG, to be adopted by us at our 2027 Ministerial conference, as well as an adjustment, where required, of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

The primary authors of the ESG are ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE (the E4 Group), in cooperation with Business Europe, EI and EQAR.

Structures for the ESG revision

The structures for the ESG revision are based on the approach used for the 2012-15 revision process, which was largely considered fit-for-purpose.

Meetings are hosted in Brussels by the E4 organisations on a rotating basis. Costs of hosting and participating are self-funded by each organisation individually. Arrangements for online/hybrid meetings will be made as needed.

Steering Committee

The revision is coordinated by a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is composed of one representative from each of the seven primary and cooperating authors. Members of the Steering Committee are authorised to act in the name of their nominating organisation and have appropriate experience of quality assurance in the EHEA.

Meetings will be chaired by members of the Committee on a rotating basis. The ENQA Director will serve as Secretary to the Committee, with responsibility for organising meetings, taking minutes and coordinating follow-up as needed.

Organisation	Name	Position
ENQA	Cristina Ghitulica	ENQA Vice-President / ARACIS Director
EUA	Amanda Crowfoot	EUA Secretary General
EURASHE	John Edwards	EURASHE Secretary General
ESU	Lana Par	ESU Vice-President
EQAR	Aleksandar Šušnjar	EQAR Director
Business Europe	Inga Lapina	Professor, Riga Technical University, Latvia
Education International	Petri Mantysaari	Professor, Hanken School of Economics, Vaasa, Finland

¹ Available at <https://ehea.info/Immagini/Tirana-Communique1.pdf>

The role of the Steering Committee is to:

- Coordinate the overall revision process, including determining timelines;
- Discuss and agree on the key issues for the revision, including scope, structure and topics for the standards;
- Agree on and ensure arrangements (timing, modalities, topics/versions) for consultation on drafts of the revised ESG with all necessary stakeholders, including the Bologna Process Follow-up group (BFUG);
- Discuss the feedback received and how to address it in subsequent drafts;
- Liaise (through a nominated member of the Committee) with the BFUG;
- Validate the final version to be tabled for approval by the BFUG.

The Committee will meet every 2-3 months, in line with a roadmap agreed in the first meeting, which took place on 30 September 2024.

Drafting Group

The preparation of drafts of the ESG is done by a smaller Drafting Group. The Drafting Group is composed of one expert nominated by each of the E4 organisations, and the Group answers directly to the Steering Committee. ENQA will provide secretarial support to the Drafting Group. The Group may appoint a Chair from among the members.

Organisation	Name	Position
ENQA	Doris Herrmann	ENQA Vice-President / AQAS Director
EUA	Maria Kelo	EUA Director of Institutional Development Unit
EURASHE	Jakub Grodecki	EURASHE Policy and Project Manager
ESU	Irina Duma	Former ESU QA Pool Steering Committee member

The role of the Drafting Group is to:

- Prepare each draft of the ESG, following the directions given by the Steering Committee and addressing feedback received during consultations, including from the BFUG;
- Propose points for further discussion by the Steering Committee.

The Drafting Group will meet at least once between each Steering Committee meeting and more often if required. Members of the Drafting Group will attend meetings of the Steering Committee in order to ensure two-way communication and accurate follow-up.

Timeline

A first meeting of the Steering Committee took place on 30 September 2024 at which a roadmap for the process was agreed and a first discussion on the purposes, principles and structure of the ESG was held. The discussion drew on the outcomes of the QA-FIT project,² which has been collecting an evidence base for the ESG revision. An open, public consultation on a first draft of the ESG 2027 is expected in late 2025.

It is expected that the final text of the ESG should be approved by the BFUG at the meeting in autumn 2026, with no further changes to be made before adoption by EHEA Ministers at the Ministerial Conference in Romania/Moldova in spring 2027.

² See further <https://www.enqa.eu/projects/quality-assurance-fit-for-the-future-qa-fit/>

European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

As stated in the Tirana Communiqué, the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA) should be revised in parallel to the ESG. This is intended to be a limited adjustment to ensure that the two documents are aligned, as the EA is based explicitly on the ESG.

The revision of the EA will be conducted by the same structures as for the revision of the ESG and will similarly involve consultation with appropriate stakeholders and experts. The revision should start in the second half of the period for drafting the new ESG, so that the main lines of the ESG revision are already clear and can be reflected in the EA.