

**ENQA AGENCY REVIEWS' SEMINAR  
FOR AGENCIES PLANNING TO  
UNDERGO A REVIEW IN 2022-2023**

# **MAIN STAGES OF THE REVIEW PROCESS**

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**AQAS**

AGENTUR FÜR  
QUALITÄTSSICHERUNG DURCH  
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**enqa.**

# PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

## ENQA membership

- An external review against the ESG is a prerequisite to become a member of ENQA / for renewal of membership (every 5 years).
- To be eligible, the agency should have been operational in quality assurance for at least 2 years and should have completed at least 5 review reports.

## EQAR registration

- An external review against the ESG is also a requirement for agencies wishing to apply to the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)
- ENQA Agency Reviews also comply with EQAR's requirements for external reviews

ENQA may also coordinate **ESG compliance reviews** of agencies which do not wish to or cannot apply for ENQA membership, such as **QA agencies outside the EHEA**.

## PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

- To assess an agency's **compliance with the ESG** and to support it in its efforts to **constantly review and enhance** its processes and activities.



## REMIT OF THE REVIEW

- **The first ESG review** pays specific attention to the policies, procedures, and criteria in place.
  - Full evidence of concrete results in all areas may not be required at this stage, e.g. completed reports of thematic analyses.
  - However, the agency must be able to document (as in action plans with timetables) how they are able to achieve results according to all standards by the next review.
- **The second and subsequent full reviews** require clear evidence of results in all areas.
  - Further reviews will need to acknowledge progress from the previous review - mandatory element in both the SAR and the panel report.
- **Targeted reviews** require clear evidence of results in focus areas and should reflect progress from the last full review.

## REMIT OF THE REVIEW

- All reviews – whether first, second, or subsequent (full or targeted) – must always have a **developmental approach** and aim at **constant enhancement** of the agencies.



# MAIN STAGES OF THE REVIEW PROCESS



## INITIAL STAGE

- **Request:** review is initiated by a request from an agency that wants to be granted or to renew ENQA membership.
  - Free format letter including the following:
    - period (month) when the agency wishes the site visit to take place and when the process should be concluded;
    - whether the agency is also (re)applying for registration on EQAR;
    - Request for a targeted review should be specified.
  - Request addressed to the ENQA Board but **sent to the Secretariat.**
  - **New applications particularly:** 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).

# INITIAL STAGE



Coordinator: 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.

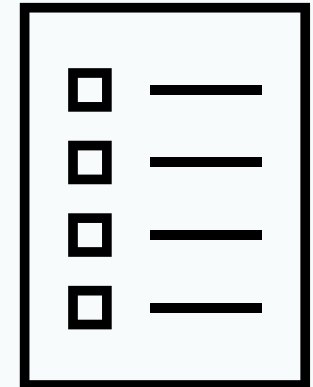
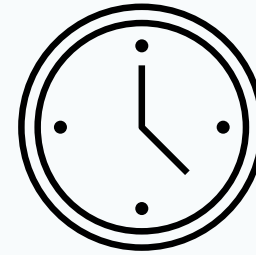


Agency should also assign its contact person for the review.



## INITIAL STAGE

- **Terms of reference (ToR):** ENQA and the agency agree on the Terms of Reference of the review, including the activities to be subjected to the review as well as the overall timeline.
- **Tripartite ToR with EQAR (if applicable):** 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.



## STAGE I: BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

- **Review panel:** coordinator composes the review panel which is approved by the Agency Review Committee (ARC) in accordance with ENQA policy.
  - **Full reviews:** at least 4 external reviewers, including:
    - one or two quality assurance professionals (at least one should be currently employed by a QA agency and both having been engaged in quality assurance within the past 5 years)
    - academic at a higher education institution
    - student
    - if requested: labour market representative (in addition or instead of second QA professional)
  - **Targeted reviews:** 3 external reviewers, including:
    - quality assurance professional currently employed by a QA agency
    - academic at a higher education institution
    - student
- I panel member acts as the **chair** and I as the **secretary**

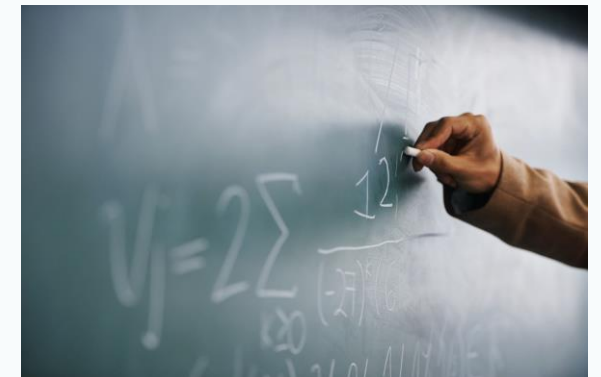
## REVIEW PANEL – SELECTION CRITERIA 1/2

- All necessary **nominating entities** are followed (ENQA, EUA/EURASHE, ESU)
- All panel members must have been **trained by ENQA**
- The **academic** needs to be actively involved in teaching/research in HEI when appointed
- The **student** needs to be enrolled in higher education when appointed
- At least 3 panel members come **from outside the national system** of the agency under review (at least 2 in targeted reviews)
- The **review chair and the review secretary may not come from the same country**
- 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 has **good knowledge and understanding of the HE and QA 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.



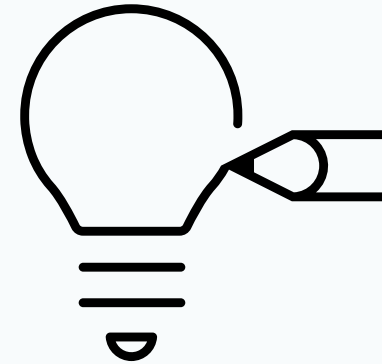
## REVIEW PANEL – SELECTION CRITERIA 2/2

- No current or recent (at least 5 years) former **staff of the agency** in the panel
- None of the panel members has served as an **expert in the agency** under review in the last 5 years
- 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.
- No current members of **ENQA Board** in the panel
- **Gender balance** (not only male or female members)
- None of the experts participated in the agency's last **ENQA progress visit**
- Criteria for a review panel as defined in **EQAR's Guide for Applicants and Registered Agencies**



## STAGE I: BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

- **Self assessment report (SAR):** agency submits its SAR + any other documentation of relevance (annexes).
  - The review coordinator carries out a **screening of the SAR** to ensure it meets the requirements;
  - Agency is given **2 weeks** to provide the Secretariat with a revised SAR;
  - Agency **publishes** the completed SAR on its website.
- **Additional documents:** further documents may be requested from the agency prior to the site visit by the panel.



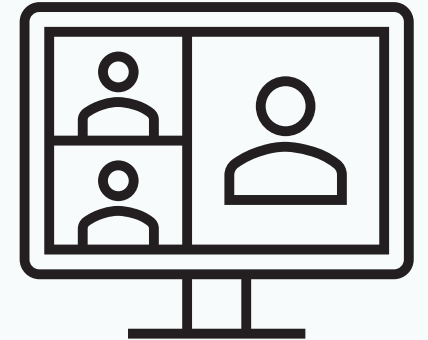
## STAGE I: BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

- **Practical arrangements:**
  - the review secretary will liaise with the agency's contact person to set up the **schedule** of the site visit;
  - the agency invites its **stakeholders** to the meetings with the panel (up to 6-7 people per meeting);
  - **Interpreters** (as needed) – external to the agency's operations;
  - the review coordinator will be in touch with the agency's contact person to discuss other **practical arrangements** (hotels, transportation, meals etc.)



## STAGE I: BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

- **Online meeting with the agency resource person:** to clarify elements related to the overall system and context, so that time during the interview sessions may be used as much as possible for verification of the agency's ESG compliance and enhancement.
  - 1-1,5 hours ideally at least 2 weeks before the site visit
  - “agency resource person” = typically a senior member of staff with sufficient knowledge on the history and present situation of the agency and the strategic discussions within it



## STAGE II: THE SITE VISIT

- **Site visit (usually 2.5 days; conducted in English):** to reflect on and fully validate the information in the SAR for each ESG and activity within the scope of the review, as well as to clarify any points at issue.
  - Interviews with the agency's personnel and stakeholders
  - Final de-briefing meeting - immediate feedback/overall impressions
- **Important:** no information can be provided after the site visit!





## STAGE III: WRITING THE FINAL REPORT

- **Draft:** review secretary is in charge of providing the first post-visit draft of the report. All panel members carefully read and comment on the draft.
- **Screening by coordinator:** finalised draft is sent to the coordinator to verify its compliance with the guidelines.
- **Factual accuracy:** report (with the judgements on compliance) is submitted to the agency for comments on factual accuracy – errors of fact/grave misunderstandings only
  - 2 weeks for comments
  - Template table by ENQA to improve transparency
- **Final report:** final version is then submitted by the review chair to the review coordinator for the attention of the Agency Review Committee (ARC). It is also sent to the agency, however, the report is to be considered final only after being validated by the ARC.



## STAGE IV: VALIDATION OF THE REPORT



- **Agency Review Committee (ARC)** scrutinises the review report to verify that it meets ENQA's quality standards, contains the necessary evidence to decide on ESG compliance and is consistent with other reports produced through the ENQA Agency Reviews.
- Following the scrutiny, the ARC decides on **validation of the report**, which is a condition for the publication of the report and its further use for agency's ENQA membership and EQAR registration applications.
  - For the validation the ARC produces a statement which is published by ENQA as an annex to the review report.
  - The ARC does not take a decision on overall compliance of the agency with the ESG.
- Prior to final validation of the report, the ARC has the option to request **additional (documentary) evidence or clarification** from the review panel, review coordinator or the agency if needed.

## STAGE V: DECISION-MAKING

- **ENQA+EQAR application:**
  1. Following the validation of the report, the agency submits the report to EQAR for EQAR Register Committee's consideration and decision
  2. The ENQA Board will take the membership decision on the basis of the confirmation of the listing in EQAR and the agency's application letter
- **Only ENQA application or unsuccessful EQAR application:** The ENQA Board will take the membership decision on the basis of the external review report, including the statement annexed by the ARC, and the agency's application letter.

## STAGE V: DECISION-MAKING

- Possible outcomes of the Board's decision:
  - The agency is considered to be in compliance with the ESG and is admitted/reconfirmed as a member of ENQA.
  - The agency is considered as not compliant with the ESG.
- Agencies not compliant with the ESG:
  - **New applicants**: the minimum period before a next review after an unsuccessful one is 2 years. Recommendations and areas to be addressed before a new review.
  - **Current members**: a “member under review” status. Maximum 2 years to make the necessary changes to reach a sufficient level of compliance and undergo an additional partial review to verify progress.

## STAGE VI: FOLLOW-UP



- **Full reviews**
  - **Follow-up report:** agency is requested to submit a follow-up report within 2 years of the validation of the final report.
  - **Progress visit:** additional service, non-investigative nature. Voluntary progress visit is aimed to generate a stronger enhancement-oriented dialogue. In about 2-3 years after the validation of the review report, by 2 reviewers from the original review panel (when possible).
- **Targeted reviews**
  - **online follow-up seminar** where the topics of enhancement, as self-selected by the reviewed agencies, are shared, and further discussed among the participants
  - To be organised every 2 years
  - Online to ensure participation (low cost): agencies' resource person, lead author of the SAR, or leadership representative(s)



THANK  
YOU

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