

**Report of the Panel of the external partial review of HAC
Hungarian Accreditation Committee**

January 2015

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the report of the panel who undertook an external partial review of HAC in January 2015 on the documentation submitted by HAC and on the site visit undertaken for the purpose of determining whether the agency meets the criteria for Full membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). This review was a follow-up on the full external review undertaken in May 2013 and specifically focused on two of the criteria for full membership of ENQA.

1.1 Background and outline of the ENQA review process

The Statutes of ENQA require all member agencies to undergo an external cyclical review, at least once every five years, in order to verify that they fulfill the membership provisions.

In November 2004, the General Assembly of ENQA agreed that the third part of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) should be incorporated into the membership provisions of its (then) regulations (now statutes). Substantial compliance with the ESG thus became the principal criterion for membership of ENQA. The ESG were subsequently adopted at the Bergen ministerial meeting of the Bologna Process in 2005.

The third part of the ESG covers the cyclical external review of quality assurance and accreditation agencies.

HAC underwent a full external review in May 2013, conducted in line with the process described in *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area*¹ and in accordance with the timeline set out in the *Terms of Reference*². The outcome of that review found the HAC to be fully compliant with three of the criteria, substantially compliant with two of the criteria and partially compliant with two of the criteria. The report also concluded that the level of compliance of HAC with several important ESG had clearly decreased since the previous external Review conducted in 2008. The outcome is summarized in the table below.

Table 1.

Final conclusions of the Panel on HAC compliance with ENQA criteria, May 2013

ENQA Criterion / ESG Reference	Conclusions of the Panel 2013:
ENQA Criterion 1/ ESG 3.1: Part 2, ESG 3.3: Activities	FC
ENQA Criterion 2/ ESG 3.2: Official status	SC
ENQA Criterion 3/ ESG 3.4: Resources	PC
ENQA Criterion 4/ ESG 3.5: Mission statement	FC

¹ENQA: Guideline for external reviews, (www.enqa.eu/files/Guidelines%20for%20external%20reviews%20of%20quality%20assurance%20agencies%20in%20the%20EHEA.pdf)

² ToR, External review of the HAC by ENQA, TERMS OF REFERENCE (December 2012)

ENQA Criterion 5/ ESG 3.6: Independence	PC
ENQA Criterion 6/ ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies	SC
ENQA Criterion 7/ ESG 3.8: Accountability procedures	FC
ENQA Criterion 8: Consistency of judgments, appeals system and contributions to aims of ENQA	FC

FC (fully compliant), SC (substantially compliant), PC (partially compliant), NC (non-compliant)

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the review panel for the external partial review of HAC was asked to focus on the way in which, and to what extent, HAC fulfills the ENQA criterion 3 – (ESG 3.4: Resources) and the ENQA criterion 5 (ESG 3.6: Independence). It was also asked to consider any relevant changes that have taken place since the full review was completed in 2013. The duration of the site visit was one day. The review team was reduced and composed of three members of the 2013 panel, including one being a EUA nominee, and one a student:

Table 2.
Panel Members

Name	Background of activities
Thierry Malan	Higher Education Consultant; Former General Inspector for Administration of National Education and Research, France. Chair
Norma Ryan	Higher Education Consultant; Former Director of the Quality Promotion Unit, University College Cork – National University of Ireland Cork, Ireland. – <i>EUA nomination</i> Secretary
Éva Réka Fazekas	MA Student at the University of Szeged, Hungary; member of the Quality Assurance Experts' Pool (ESU), Hungary – <i>ESU nomination</i>

This review was carried out to assess the eligibility of HAC for the renewal of full membership of ENQA. Should the partial review be successful, HAC's membership of ENQA will expire five years after the completion of the full review (i.e. at the end of 2018). The review focussed on the two ENQA criteria

where the HAC had been found to be partially compliant in May 2013, i.e. Criterion 3 (Resources) and Criterion 5 (Independence).

HAC produced a self-evaluation report which provided a substantial portion of the evidence that the panel used to form its conclusions. The panel conducted a site-visit to validate fully the self-evaluation and clarify any points at issue. Finally, the review panel produced the present final report on the basis of the self-evaluation report, site-visit and its findings. In doing so, it provided an opportunity for HAC to comment on the factual accuracy of the draft report. The review panel confirms that it was given access to all documents and people it wished to consult throughout the review.

1.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE REVIEW PANEL CONCERNING THE HAC COMPLIANCE WITH THE ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA/ESG

After the site visit the panel secretary prepared a draft report, which was circulated to the other panel members for further discussions and clarifications.

The report produced was based on the SER, the additional documents submitted prior and during the site visit, previous External review ENQA report (2008) and HAC progress report, the HAC annual reports, recommendations of HAC International Advisory Board and other documents, and on the findings of site-visit meetings.

HAC had an opportunity to comment on the report for factual accuracy and the final report was then finalized in full consultation with the entire external review panel, and forwarded to HAC and the ENQA secretariat.

The external review panel draws the following conclusions:

Table 3.
Conclusions of the Panel

ENQA Criterion / ESG Reference	Conclusions of the Panel:
ENQA Criterion 3/ ESG 3.4: Resources	FC
ENQA Criterion 5/ ESG 3.6: Independence	SC

FC (fully compliant), SC (substantially compliant), PC (partially compliant), NC (non-compliant)

As specified in the *Terms of Reference* and according with the *Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation (Annex 6.1)* “... the review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgments as regards the reconfirmation of Full Membership”.

2. GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Table 4.
Glossary of Acronyms

Abbreviation	
CRE	Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences
EA	Educational Authority
ECA	European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EQA	European Quality Assurance (compliance with ENQA/ESG Criteria)
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESG	Standards & Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
HAC	Hungarian Accreditation Committee
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HE	Higher Education
HRC	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
MHR	Ministry of Human Resources
NDC	National Doctoral Council
NUS	National Union of Students, (HÖÖK - Hungarian Language)
QA	Quality Assurance
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
ToR	Terms of Reference
UDS	Union of Doctoral Students (DOSZ - Hungarian Language)

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 Purposes of the review

HAC was founded in 1993, by the first Higher Education Law in Hungary. Its first external evaluation by an international review team coordinated by CRE (now EUA) took place in 1999/2000. HAC achieved ENQA Full Membership in 2002.

In September 2008, the second external evaluation reconfirmed ENQA membership of HAC, being a type B review. In October 2010, HAC published the Progress Report on Follow-up measures on the 2008 External Evaluation of the HAC.

The third external evaluation and the second undertaken by ENQA, being a type A review, which followed five years after the previous review, was aimed at providing information to the ENQA Board on whether HAC should be reconfirmed as a Full Member of ENQA, in line with the European Standards and Guidelines and the criteria for ENQA membership. The outcome of that review found that the HAC was not fully or substantially compliant with the ESG/ENQA criteria in two areas specifically: Resources and Independence. ENQA decided to award the HAC the status of ‘full member under review’.

The ENQA statutes state that an agency “under review” has to undergo a further review which would focus on the deficiencies mentioned in the report of the first review after a period of two years or sooner if the agency requests so.

HAC expressed its willingness to undergo the additional partial review before the adoption of the revised ESG in May 2015. Due to the changes in the national framework in 2014, the agency considered itself now ready for this partial review.

This report should be read in conjunction with the report on the review of the HAC and its compliance with ENQA Criteria / ESG published after the review in 2013. This report does not re-iterate the current status of higher education in Hungary, the range of activities undertaken by the HAC nor the types of accreditation conducted by the HAC. From the written evidence submitted, an interrogation of the web site of the Agency and oral evidence supplied during the site visit, none of these elements has altered in any significant way since the 2013 review. Likewise the organisational structure of the HAC has not changed since 2013 nor has the range of external quality assurance undertaken by HAC. Documentation concerning these aspects was not provided by the Agency. This report focusses on developments concerning ESG 3.4 and 3.6 since 2013 and does not cover again the other ENQA criteria. However improvements on these two ESG are likely to have a positive impact on the fulfilment of HAC activities.

3.2 Engagement of the Agency with the ENQA membership provisions (criteria 3 and 5) /ESG

The HAC prepared a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) focussing on the criteria 3 (resources) and 5 (independence) and in the report focussed specifically on the changes of relevance to the two criteria that have taken place since the 2013 review.

The HAC assigned a staff member to lead the preparation of the SER. All members of the agency engaged in consultation on the preparation. The self-evaluation process consisted of:

- A SWOT analysis by
 - HAC members, including the National Union of Students and the Union of Doctoral Students and
 - members of the staff.

(The summary SWOT analysis was included in the SER as Appendix 4.)

- The subsequent draft of the SER, incorporating the results of the SWOT, was circulated among the permanently invited participants to the HAC plenary meetings, namely:
 - o HAC members
 - o HAC Board of Appeals
 - o HAC Financial Supervisory Board
 - o the Ministry of Human Resources
 - o the Educational Authority
 - o the Hungarian Rectors' Conference
 - o the Higher Education Planning Council
 - o the Hungarian Doctoral Council.

Feedback received from these groups was taken into account in drafting the SER and this was confirmed in meetings that the review panel had with staff and other stakeholders. The final draft was discussed at the HAC plenary meeting on 12 December 2014 and the outcomes of the discussion were fed back into the final report. The recommendations made by the 4-person drafting committee, established at the same meeting were included in the text, and the amended document was accepted by the HAC plenary.

Evidence was also provided in the SER and during meetings held as part of the site visit that the HAC had engaged with the Ministry of Human Resources, whose scope of authority includes higher education, and submitted several proposals for amendments to the legislation governing the HAC. Several legislative amendments were passed in the past year, although not all that the HAC proposed were adopted. A chronology of the actions that took place in this respect is listed in Annex 6.3 to this report.

During meetings with the representatives of the Ministry of Human Resources and other higher education stakeholders it was manifest that all were very concerned about the status of the recognition of the HAC in the international – and consequently national – higher education community that ENQA membership signifies. It was accepted that the recognition of Hungarian graduates is affected by the HAC's certified compliance with the ESG. At the ENQA general assembly in Zagreb on 16 October 2014 the Secretary of State for Higher Education within the Ministry of Human Resources, his deputy, and a member of the Hungarian Rectors' Conference met with the ENQA President and Director and consulted on this issue. The HAC President also took part in the discussion.

3.3. How the review was carried out

Prior to travelling to Budapest to conduct the site visit the members of the review panel communicated via email and discussed issues, additional documentation to be requested and the agenda for the site visit. The schedule of the site visit was discussed and finalized together with HAC. The panel established a timetable for a working schedule in order to fulfill the purposes and to support the review process.

The review panel had a preparatory meeting on 19 January 2015, in Budapest, the day before the site visit at HAC to outline the overall tasks and the issues for discussion. The preparatory meeting was helpful, through discussions, to confirm the views of the Panel members concerning issues to be considered further during the site visit.

The external review panel considers that the one-day site-visit provided relevant information for the purpose of the external partial review. During the site visit the panel met with the established discussion groups of stakeholders from the HAC, the Ministry and Educational Authority, the national unions of doctoral students and students, and other representatives relevant for the functions of the Agency (*Annex 6.2 - Programme of the Site Visit*).

The panel took the following procedural steps as relevant for the fulfillment of the review:

1. Establishing the external review panel working schedule;
2. Analyzing the SER prepared by HAC and establishing a range of additional submitted and provided documents. These additional documents were submitted prior to or during the site-visit upon joint request of the Panel (*Annex 6.3 Documents for Evidence*);
3. Understanding and considering the professional and political contexts which influence and determine the overall activity of HAC;
4. Harmonizing the lines of inquiry resulted after SER analysis, of all the panel members;
5. Establishing an agenda of issues to be attained for each discussion group;
6. Establishing the final form of the main questions for identified issues for discussions with the invited groups, on the evening of 19 January 2015, according to the time-schedule for the site-visit in Budapest;
7. The site-visit to HAC on 20 January 2015, in Budapest, and meeting the representatives of stakeholders covering the relevant issues for establishing compliance, or otherwise, with the two ENQA criteria which were the specific focus of the site visit;
8. Drafting and finalizing the panel's report on the basis of common agreement by all members.

During the site visit, the panel members discussed the evidence and arguments for the compliance of HAC with the two relevant ENQA membership criteria (3 and 5). A broad consensus on each criterion was reached.

4. FINDINGS - COMPLIANCE WITH ENQA CRITERIA 3 and 5/EUROPEAN STANDARD AND GUIDELINES

4.1 ENQA criterion 3 / ESG 3.4: Resources

ESG Reference: 3.4 Resources
ENQA Criterion 3
Standard: Agencies should have adequate and proportionate resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organize and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures <i>and staff (Addition by ENQA for ENQA criterion)</i>
Guideline(s):

(a) Evidence

At the time of the visit in May 2013 the HAC provided evidence that almost all its reserves had been used and sufficient finances were available to allow the agency to survive for a few months more. The budget for 2013 was as yet unclear halfway through the year.

Following the 2013 review, the negative comments of the review panel and the reservations of ENQA, the HAC had made further representations to the Ministry for Human Resources, the Educational Authority and the government highlighting the need to ensure the financial stability and sustainability of the HAC. This is necessary to enable timely planning and conduct of activities that the HAC is responsible for carrying out.

The legislative framework was amended in 2014. A clause was added to the amended Higher Education Act³,

“The HAC’s financial support, which will ensure that lawful and adequate-level support, also under consideration for the expert body’s other annual incomes, shall be allocated as an appropriation in the ministry budget”.

A similar regulation was previously at the level of a government decree regulating higher education quality (and noted as such in the SER 2013). The Government Decree (19/2012. (II. 22), amended as effective from 1 September 2014, in § 4 (2) retained the declaration that the HAC President has full discretion over the budget.

Thus the legal change in 2014 consisted of raising the regulatory level governing state budget allocation of the HAC from a government decree to the level of a law.

Following on the ENQA review and the subsequent discussions with the Secretary of State for Higher Education, the funding for HAC was raised substantially in 2013 and retained at the 2013 level at 155 million HUF (~500 thousand EUR) in 2014. It is on a par with the 2010 allocation (in HUF) and more than double the amount allotted for 2012. Both in the SER and in meetings with the President and executive of HAC during the site visit in January 2015 it was confirmed that the HAC considers this level of funding sufficient to enable the HAC to plan and carry out its activities in a sustainable manner.

The HAC has other income other than the amount allocated by the Ministry, including fees paid for services offered by HAC. Moreover, the level of procedural fees that the HAC may charge for services was

³ Act 2011. CCIV on National Higher Education, proclaimed 30 December 2011.

raised by 60% in April 2013, and, since September 2014, a government decree allows HAC to request fees for evaluating applications for university professor positions. This had been the practice since autumn 2011 but now it is reinforced by legislation and can be regarded as a sustainable income source.

In meetings with the representatives of the Ministry for Human Resources and the Educational Authority conveyed a commitment of the Ministry to ensuring that HAC has adequate funding, approved in good time, to conduct its activities and to plan for the future.

In the 2013 review uncertainty was evident re the accommodation for the HAC. This has since been clarified to the satisfaction of all concerned. Changes in storage areas were made and all are now satisfied with the accommodation and the medium term sustainability of the HAC occupation of them.

(b) Analysis

The lack of certainty with respect to the level of income and the intentions of the Ministry that was evident in 2013 has now been replaced with a confidence in the ability of the HAC to perform its activities, through funding from government and income derived from other sources, including fees,. All interviewed expressed the realisation of and understanding of the strategic importance of the activities of the HAC for the HE sector in Hungary and that the level of funding required to run the agency is low compared with the overall national investment in HE. The panel were assured by all concerned that sufficient funding is now established on a secure footing and that the Agency could be reasonably certain as to the continuation of that funding.

The fact that the funding level has been restored to 2011 levels with a commitment from the Ministry to review annually and increase if necessary to a level to allow the agency to conduct its business and full schedule of evaluations and other activities was re-assuring to the panel. Further, the panel received confirmation of the financial independence of the agency, including the funding to enable the agency to invite international reviewers to participate in evaluations, from both the agency itself and the ministerial representatives.

On the foot of the increased level of funding and a new confidence in the security of the sustainability of the funding for the foreseeable future the agency has engaged two new members of staff – programme officers. Both are now in place in the agency.

In addition, the HAC is now sufficiently well-funded to allow a surplus to be accrued in 2013 and probably in 2014. This allows the agency to plan strategically for the future and not just for immediate actions.

(c) Conclusion

Fully compliant.

(d) Recommendation

None.

4.2 ENQA criterion 5 / ESG 3.6: Independence

ESG Reference: 3.6 Independence
ENQA Criterion 5
Standard: Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders
Guideline(s): An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts)• the definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence• while relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

(a) Evidence

In the report of the review conducted in 2013 concern was expressed about the fact that the *“Educational Authority might overturn a decision of HAC and grant programmes or institutions a licence to operate without HAC accreditation are a cause of concern for the Board”*. This had happened in a particular instance concerning VET programmes immediately prior to the 2013 review.

The New Higher Education Act had not specifically referenced the independence of the HAC, although a government decree (19/2012, §4(1)) did specify that *“HAC is an independent organisation”*.

Also in 2013 there was a serious concern around the financial situation of the HAC whereby its funding had been drastically cut in 2012 from the amount allocated in previous years and this was perceived as a threat to the ability of the HAC to carry out its tasks, thus threatening its independence further.

These factors and others concerning changes in the legislation led the review panel to find that the HAC was only partially compliant with the ENQA criterion 5. The panel recommended that the *“HAC persist in the present discussions with the Educational Authority about amendments and a clarification of the links and distribution of competences between Ministry of Human Resources – Educational Authority and HAC. It is important to ensure the independent status of HAC and to increase its stability and sustainability.”*

There has been a significant legal change in the circumstances affecting the independence of HAC since 2013. The HAC engaged in discussions with the EA and the Ministry of Human Resources and in September 2014 amendments to the legislation were passed regulating the independence of the HAC. The amendment to the Higher Education Act, effective as of 1 September 2014, now explicitly declares the HAC's independence:

§70 (1)

“The HAC is an independent national body of experts for the external evaluation of the quality of higher education, scientific research and artistic activity and the internal quality assurance

systems at higher education institutions, and it contributes its expertise in procedures relating to higher education institutions as defined in this Act.”

In addition there has been a change in the composition of the HAC: 2 members, not delegated by the Minister, were added to the HAC. One of these members is drawn from the Hungarian Chamber of Trade and Industry and the second is nominated by the Hungarian Union of Students. Effectively this change also increased the number of students guaranteed membership of HAC.

Another important amendment was to ensure that a delegating body (of a member to the HAC) must provide an explanation if it wishes to recall a member.

In meetings with both the HAC and the representatives of the Ministry and the Educational Authority it was very evident to the panel that all are committed to ensuring the independence of the HAC and furthermore that the decisions/recommendations of the HAC will be respected by the Minister and the Authority. It was emphasised strongly that the circumstances where the decisions of the HAC on accreditation of the new VET programmes in 2012/2013 were overturned and the programmes funded and allowed to be put in place were highly unusual and that it was not intended that this would be the norm for the future. All parties clearly indicated that a good working relationship was in place between the three (HAC, Ministry, Educational Authority) and that all are committed to ensuring this continues to be the case.

The distinction between licensing and accreditation continues to be undefined. No change was made in the legislation about the right of the Educational Authority or the Minister to disregard the HAC's expert opinion or that of its Board of Appeals. The Minister, as determined in the Higher Education Act, still has the right to grant license for a programme or institution even against a negative decision on its quality by the HAC. However in meetings the panel had with representatives of the Ministry assurances were given that the Ministry wished to work in cooperation with the Educational Authority and the HAC and did not wish to grant licences for programmes where the HAC had made a negative decision on quality.

The HAC stressed that its quality decisions are made public on its website, and are therefore distinct from licensing decisions by the Educational Authority or Minister. In order to make the distinction evident to the public, the Secretary of State committed at a meeting with ENQA representatives to adding the HAC seal to accredited programmes listed in the Higher Education Admissions Guide. (The 2014/15 Guide was already near its publication date, therefore the HAC logo may only be included in the next issue out in December 2015.)

In all it was evident to the Panel that significant changes, especially with respect to improved cooperation and communication, have been made since the 2013 review and that more continue to be planned for the future. Some of the improvements, such as putting the HAC logo on the Ministry web site where programmes are advertised to potential students are agreed but are yet to be implemented. The small decrease in proportion of members of the HAC nominated and appointed by the Minister is an improvement but the HAC would like to decrease the proportion further without increasing the total number of members. In the current situation the independence of the HAC is substantially more evident in legislation and in comments and assurances by the Ministry. However the Panel felt that more could be achieved to ensure and sustain complete independence.

(c) Conclusion

Substantially compliant.

(d) Recommendation

The Panel recommends HAC to persist in the present discussions with the Ministry of Human Resources and the Educational Authority about amendments and a clarification of the links and distribution of competences between MHR-EA and HAC in order to increase its stability and sustainability. Improved clarity in definitions needs to be agreed and published.

5. CONCLUSION

In the light of the documentary evidence submitted, which was supported and endorsed by the oral evidence presented during the site visit, the Panel concludes the following:

- HAC is a well-established and professional organisation. Since the last review in 2013 there have been significant improvements in the areas of most concern in 2013. In 2011/12 there had been a number of legislative and contextual changes which gave rise to considerable concerns about the level of financial resourcing (leading to issues with human resource resourcing) and the reduced independence of the agency. Since then there has been real changes for the better. The HAC is now in a position to operate with more certainty as to the budget allocation and income sources and thus able to plan for the medium- and long-term again.
- The time-plan for budget allocation is in quarterly instalments, with an annual contract signed after the Ministry's acceptance of the HAC financial report of the preceding year. In the past year, the allocation was transferred regularly (although the first quarter arrived together with the second quarter in June 2014 only, as it was the practice in previous years).
- The HAC has been able to increase the level of staffing with the addition of 2 programme officers in recent months, due to the increased certainty of the income.
- The degree of independence of the HAC has increased and the level of cooperation and communication with the Ministry for Human Resources and the Educational Authority has improved and all parties show commitment to ensuring this very commendable state of play continues and is sustained in the future.
- The Agency has continued to adhere to its commitment to its involvement in supporting and building the EHEA. It continues to be a major player in the improvement of quality in Hungarian HE system and is recognised as such both within and external to the country.
- The Panel commended the maintenance of the principle of anonymity of reviewers with respect to professorial recommendations in particular.

Table 5.

Final conclusions of the Panel on HAC compliance with ENQA criteria 3 and 5

ENQA Criterion / ESG Reference	Conclusions of the Panel for:
ENQA Criterion 3/ ESG 3.4: Resources	FC
ENQA Criterion 5/ ESG 3.6: Independence	SC

FC (fully compliant), SC (substantially compliant), PC (partially compliant), NC (non-compliant)

The Panel is satisfied that the level of compliance of the HAC with respect to ENQA criteria 3 and 5 has significantly improved since the review in 2013, thus raising the level of overall compliance. As mentioned before, and following an interrogation of the web site of the Agency and oral evidence provided during the site visit, the Panel were satisfied that the situation with respect to the other ENQA criteria is very much now as it was in 2013. There were no changes related to other ENQA Criteria/ESG to such an extent that it should modify the assessment previously made in the 2013 report. The Panel commends all those who engaged in the process of improvement since then.

6. ANNEXES

ANNEX 6.1

Additional partial review of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

November 2014

1. Background and Context

The Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) was established by the Hungarian first higher education law in 1993. It is, according to the 2011 National Higher Education Act, a national body of experts facilitating the control, assurance and evaluation of the scientific quality of education, scientific research and artistic activity at higher education institutions.

HAC conducts ex ante and ex post evaluation of both programmes and institutions. Ex ante evaluation of programmes comprises giving opinion on the national-level educational and outcome requirements (which are framework requirements for all degree programmes in Hungary and appear in a ministerial decree), and new programmes to be launched at institutions. Ex post evaluation is conducted in five-year cycles. There are separate procedures for institutional and programme evaluation. The latter is conducted for entire disciplines, with all programmes taught in Hungary in that discipline undergoing a single procedure with external evaluators from a common pool.

In 2005, bachelor and master programmes replaced the traditional, single stream college or university programmes. The majority of new bachelor programmes began in 2006 and master programmes in 2009. All of them have undergone the evaluation process.

The new National Higher Education Act was passed by Parliament on 23 December 2011.

HAC has been a Full Member of ENQA since 2002.

Following its last external review, HAC was awarded the status “full member under review” in November 2013. The ENQA statutes state that an agency “under review” has to undergo a further review which would focus on the deficiencies mentioned in the report of the first review after a period of two years or sooner if the agency requests so.

HAC has expressed its willingness to undergo the additional partial review before the adoption of the revised ESG in May 2015. Due to the changes in the national framework in the past year, the agency considers itself now ready for this partial review.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

This is a partial review, following the completion of the full review of 2013 that led to the assignment of the agency as “full member under review”. The partial review will evaluate the way in which and to what extent HAC fulfils the criteria 3 (resources) and 5 (independence) for the ENQA

membership. The review will also consider any relevant changes that have taken place since the full review was completed in 2013. Consequently, the review will also provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether HAC Full membership should be reconfirmed.

The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards granting Full Membership.

Should the partial review be successful, HAC's membership will expire five years after the completion of the full review, i.e. at the end of 2018.

3. The Review Process

The process is designed in the light of the *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area*.

The evaluation procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of the Terms of Reference and protocol for the review;
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-evaluation by HAC including the preparation of a partial self-evaluation report;
- A site visit by a reduced review panel to HAC;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final evaluation report by a Review Committee of the ENQA Board;
- Analysis of the scrutiny by the ENQA Board and their decision regarding ENQA membership;
- Follow-up of the panel's and/or ENQA Board's recommendations by the agency.

3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review team members

According to the ENQA rules for partial reviews, the Board may carry out the review itself, or nominate external reviewers to complete the task. The Board proposed to carry out this review by employing three external reviewers. In order to ensure consistency, sufficient background knowledge on the agency, and the external trust in the outcomes the Board has decided to ask three of the five members of the panel of the full review of HAC in 2013. One of the members will be an EUA nominee and one will be a student.

ENQA will provide HAC with the list of suggested experts with their respective curriculum vitae to establish that there are no known conflicts of interest. The experts will have to sign a non-conflict of interest statement as regards the HAC review.

3.2 Self-evaluation by HAC, including the preparation of a partial Self-Evaluation Report

HAC is responsible for the execution and organisation of its own self-evaluation process and shall take into account the following guidance:

- Self-evaluation is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders.
- The agency is expected to produce a partial self-evaluation report on the two criteria indicating in particular the changes that have taken place since the last full review (in 2013). In addition, the agency will indicate any eventual changes and developments beyond those listed under criteria 3 and 5 that will be of relevance for the process. Supporting documents

and evidence shall be provided to support the analysis in the self-evaluation reports. The self-evaluation report will be provided in English.

- The partial self-evaluation report is broken down by the topics of the evaluation and is expected to contain, among others: a background description of the current situation of the Agency.
- An analysis and appraisal of the current situation; proposals for improvement and measures already planned; a SWOT analysis.
- The report is well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which HAC fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus the ESG.
- The report is submitted to the review panel at least one month prior to the site visit.

3.3 A Site Visit by the Review Panel

HAC will draw up a draft proposal of the schedule for the site visit to be submitted to the review panel one month before the planned dates of the visit. The schedule includes an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises to be undertaken by the review panel during the site visit, the duration of which is one day. The approved schedule shall be given to HAC before the site visit, in order to properly organise the requested interviews.

The review panel will be assisted by HAC in arriving in Budapest, Hungary.

The site visit will close with an oral presentation and discussion of the major issues of the evaluation between the review panel and HAC.

3.4 Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report

On the basis of the review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report in consultation with the review panel. The report will take into account the purpose and scope of the evaluation as defined under article 2 and assess how the compliance has evolved since the last full review (in 2013). It will also assess any eventual changes that have been brought to the attention of the panel in the self-evaluation report. A draft will be submitted for comment to HAC within one month of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If HAC chooses to provide a statement in reference to the draft report it will be submitted to the chair of the review panel within one week after the receipt of the draft report. Thereafter the review panel will take into account the statement by HAC, finalise the document and submit it to HAC and ENQA.

The panel will provide an assessment of compliance on the two criteria (3 and 5) and will also be invited (though not required to) express its overall assessment of compliance of the agency in light of the outcomes of the full review in 2013 combined with the additional partial review.

The report is to be finalised by March 2015.

4. Follow-up Process and Publication of the Report

HAC will consider the expert panel's report and will publish it on its website once the ENQA Board has made its decision. The report will also be published on the ENQA website, regardless of the review outcome and decision by the ENQA Board. HAC commits to preparing a follow-up plan in which it addresses the recommendations of the review panel and to submitting, if requested, a follow-up report to the ENQA Board. In this case, the follow-up report will be published on the ENQA website, in addition to the full review report and the Board's decision.

5. Use of the report

ENQA shall retain ownership of the report. The intellectual property of all works created by the expert panel in connection with the review contract, including specifically any written reports, shall be vested in ENQA.

The review report is to be used by the Board of ENQA for the purpose of reaching a conclusion on whether HAC has met the membership criteria/ESG.

The review report is to be considered final only after being approved by the ENQA Board. Once submitted to HAC and ENQA and until the decision by the Board is made, the report may not be used or relied upon by HAC, the panel and any third party and may not be disclosed without the prior written consent of ENQA. HAC may use the report at its discretion only after the Board decision has been made.

Should the review report be used for applying to the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), the Chair of the panel shall remain available to respond to questions of clarification or further information from the EQAR Register Committee provided that the ENQA Secretariat is copied in all such requests.

Indicative Schedule of the Review

Agreement on terms of reference and protocol for review	November 2014
Appointment of review panel members	November 2014
Self-evaluation completed	19 December 2014
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	December 2014
Briefing of review panel members	January 2015
Review panel site visit	January 2015
Draft of evaluation report to HAC	February 2015
Statement of HAC to review panel if necessary	February 2015
Submission of final report to ENQA	15 March 2015
Consideration of the report by ENQA and response of HAC	April 2015
Publication of report	April 2015

ANNEX 6.2

Site-visit Programme – ENQA external partial review of HAC

19-20 January 2015

Monday 19 January 2015

Time	Activity	Participants	Location
17.00 – 19.00	Initial preparation meeting for Review Team	Review Team	Mercure Hotel lobby
20.30	Dinner	Review Team	

Tuesday 20 January 2015

Time	Activity	Participants	Location
8.10	Meet in lobby of hotel to go to HAC offices	Review panel	Meeting and going to HAC
8.15 - 8.30	Introduction and Welcome	Review panel & HAC President, Staff representatives	HAC Office
8.30 - 9.30	<u>Session 1:</u> Interview with key HAC personnel (Process and Management of the preparation for External Partial Review)	Ervin Balazs, HAC President Tibor Szanto, Secretary General	HAC office
9.30 – 9.45	Short Break		
9.45 – 10.45	<u>Session 2:</u> Interview HAC staff	HAC staff	HAC - Office
10.45 – 11.00	Short Break	Review panel	HAC - Office

Time	Activity	Participants	Location
11.00 – 12.00	<u>Session 3:</u> Interview with students involved in HAC procedures	<i>National Union of Students, HÖOK:</i> David Kiss Adam Konyari Peter Vamosi <i>National Union of PhD and DLA Students, DOSZ:</i> Peter Miklos Komives Vice-Presid. Marcell Gaspar	HAC - Office
12.00 - 13.15	Working Lunch Break (including preparation for upcoming sessions)	Review panel	HAC - Office
13.15 – 14.15	<u>Session 4:</u> Interview with Educational Authority (EA) and Ministry of Human Resources (MHR)	<i>Ministry of Human Resources:</i> Laszlo Palkovics, State Secr. for HE Zoltan Maruzsa, Deputy State Secretary. <i>Educational Authority:</i> Csilla Steger Head of HE Dept. Zsolt Fekete Deputy Head of HE Dept.	HAC - Office
14.15 – 14.30	Short break		HAC - Office
14.30 – 16.00	Review panel meeting preparation for the final feedback and debriefing meeting	Review panel in private	HAC - Office
16.00 - 17.00	<u>Session 5:</u> Final feedback session	Ervin Balazs HAC President Akos Jobbagy, HAC Vice president Ferenc Gazdag HAC Member	HAC - Office
17.00 - 17.15	Closure of the Meeting	Review panel	

Departure of panel members: Wednesday 21 January 2015

ANNEX 6.3

Chronology of actions by HAC and others and events between 2013 and 2015

1. Meeting with the Deputy Secretary of State in the Ministry, discussion on the HAC external review and ESG/ENQA compliance (January 18, 2013)
2. Letter to the Deputy Secretary of State, proposal for amendments of the HEA (February 1, 2013)
3. Letter to the Secretary of State, asking for additional financing for involving foreign experts in disciplinary programme accreditation (June 7, 2013). [*The requested 3 million HUF was offered by the Ministry, 1.7 million was used, since only two experts took part in the evaluation procedure, one expert did not come.*]
4. *Amendment of the HEA (HAC is “independent”, in force from July 6, 2013)*
5. Meeting with the Secretary of State in the Ministry, discussion on the HAC ESG/ENQA compliance, proposal for HEA amendments (October 21, 2013)
6. Letter of HAC Hungarian Advisory Board to the Secretary of State, proposal for amendments of the HEA (October 31, 2013)
7. Recommendations (2013) of HAC International Advisory Board sent to the Secretary of State and his Deputy (November 20, 2013)
(www.mab.hu/web/images/doc/hac/news/RECOMMENDATIONS_2014_NTT.pdf)
8. Letter to the Minister asking for explanation on his decisions concerning professorial appointments against HAC negative evaluations (July 16, 2014) and reply by Secretary of State (29.09.2014)
9. *Amendment of the HEA, HAC has 20 members (in force from July 24, 2014)*
10. Meeting with the new Secretary of State and his Deputy in the Ministry, discussion on the HAC ESG/ENQA compliance, actual standing (July 24, 2014)
11. *Amendment of Government Decree 19/2012. (VII.22.) on diverse issues on HE quality assurance and development (The recall of members has to be provided with an explanation, in force from September 1, 2014)*
12. Meeting with the Secretary of State and his Deputy in the Ministry, discussion on the HAC ESG/ENQA compliance, actual standing (September 10, 2014)
13. Meeting with the ENQA President and Director in Zagreb (Secretary of State and his Deputy, HRC representative, HAC President, October 16, 2014)
14. Recommendations (2014) of HAC International Advisory Board sent to the Secretary of State and his Deputy (November 13, 2014)
(www.mab.hu/web/images/doc/hac/news/RECOMMENDATIONS_2014_NTT.pdf)
15. Meeting with the Secretary of State and his Deputy in the Ministry, discussion on the HAC ESG/ENQA compliance, actual standing (December 2, 2014)

ANNEX 6.4

Additional documents supplied in addition to the SER

- Update on financial situation to the time of the review site visit
- Update on reviews and accreditations carried out by HAC since the 2013 review
- HAC Budget Plan April 2014

7. References

- *Education Act*, (http://www.mab.hu/joomla/images/doc/hac/regulations/Ftv2012_Eng.pdf)
- *ENQA: Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the EHEA*, (www.enqa.eu/files/Guidelines%20for%20external%20reviews%20of%20quality%20assurance%20agencies%20in%20the%20EHEA.pdf)
- *ENQA: Code of Conduct for review experts*, (www.enqa.eu/files/Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf)
- *ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 3rd Edition, 2009 (ESG)*, (http://enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20%282%29.pdf)
- *International Business School, Institutional Action Plan In Response to the Decision No. MAB 2011/7/V/7. December 21, 2011*, [IBSactionplan111221.pdf](http://www.ibsactionplan111221.pdf)
- *"National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation 2009-2012, Hungary"*, <http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/National%20reports/Hungary%20Annex.pdf>
- *SER of HAC, June 2008*
- *SER of HAC, March 2013*
- *TERMS OF REFERENCE, SER, Annex I (December 2012)*
- *"The System of Education in Hungary"*, Ministry of National Resources, Budapest, 2011. 40 p. ISBN 978-963-89179-3-5, [11_System of Education in Hungary.pdf](http://www.mnr.gov.hu/11_System_of_Education_in_Hungary.pdf), annex to SER

8. Tables

8.1. List of Tables

Table 1. Final conclusions of the Panel on HAC compliance with ENQA criteria, May 2013

Table 2. Panel Members

Table 3. Conclusions of the Panel

Table 4. Glossary of Terms

Table 5. Final conclusions of the Panel