

## **Annex I: Terms of Reference for the external (partial) review of the Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS)**

This document is to agree on the Terms of Reference (ToR) that address the request of AHPGS for an external (partial) review, following the ENQA Board's decision not to renew AHPGS' membership in the Association on 28 November 2019.

### **Chapter 1: Background and the request of AHPGS for a partial review**

On 25 April 2019, the Board of ENQA considered the final review report of AHPGS for the purpose of the agency's membership renewal in ENQA. During this meeting, the Board felt there was some lack of clarity concerning the panel's interpretation on the ESG standards 3.4 Thematic analysis and 3.5 Resources. Therefore, before taking a decision on the approval of the report and the reconfirmation of membership, the Board decided to ask the panel to revise the report either by elaborating its analysis and clarifying the current judgement, or by reconsidering the judgement in itself.

Following the panel's response, the Board discussed the revised report, the panel chair's letter, and re-scrutiny of the revised report on 20 June 2019 and decided to put AHPGS under the status of "Member under review" (until 20 June 2021). The Board namely found a 'non-compliance' on ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis. To be in line with the requirements of the ESG, the agency should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of its own external quality assurance activities.

On 8 August 2019, AHPGS sent a complaint and appeal against the ENQA Board decision from 20 June 2019. The document addressed the following points:

- An appeal against the Board decision on the ESG 3.4 (judged as non-compliant)
- An appeal against the justification in the Board's decision that no work on thematic analysis has been undertaken since the previous review in 2015
- An appeal against the Board decision on the ESG 2.1 (judged as partially compliant)
- A complaint against the lack of transparency in the decision-making process
- A complaint about the non-consultation of AHPGS in the context of the postponement of decision on membership.

In line with article 24 of the ENQA Rules of Procedure, the Secretariat first reviewed the appeal and complaint and determined that eligible grounds and supporting evidence have been presented in the document of AHPGS. The ENQA Secretariat then forwarded the appeal and complaint for the consideration of the Board, who agreed on 19 September 2019 to distribute the appeal and complaint documentation to the Appeals and Complaints Committee (hereinafter the Committee). The report of the Committee was completed on 25 October 2019 and then submitted to the Board. The report recommended the Board to reject the appeal and complaint and stand by its initial decision on insufficient overall level of compliance of AHPGS with the ESG. More specifically, the Committee concluded that the agency remains non-compliant with the ESG 3.4, whereas the agency was found to be substantially compliant on ESG 2.1. Regarding the complaints that were raised, the Committee found that the ENQA Board followed due process in accordance with its Rules of Procedure in carrying out the review of AHPGS, therefore the main substance of the complaint was not upheld.

Following this, the Board took a decision at its meeting on 28 November 2019, in which it followed the statement of the Committee, i.e. the Board rejected AHPGS' appeal and complaint and stood by its initial

decision not to renew AHPGS membership in ENQA and to designate the agency as “Member under review” for a period of two years from 20 June 2019.

In the Board letter dated 3 December 2019, the Agency was explained that it will need to undergo a new partial review process at the end of this period, or sooner, if it wishes. The partial review should focus in particular on ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis. The ENQA Rules of Procedure namely state the following regarding the status of “Member under review” (see article 7, paragraph 2):

“A further, partial review shall be carried out by reviewers nominated by the ENQA Board, at the latest at the end of the two-year period and shall focus on the deficiencies mentioned in the review report and/or those highlighted by the Board in its letter.”

Following this, on 19 December 2019 AHPGS officially approached ENQA to coordinate the abovementioned partial review and prepare a review report that will be considered for the purpose of ENQA membership renewal.

## **Chapter 2: Content of the partial review**

As explained in chapter 1 of this document, ENQA Board decided at its meeting on 28 November 2019 to reject AHPGS membership renewal, judging that the agency achieved non-compliance with the ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis and thus failed to prove sufficient overall level of compliance with the ESG.

The partial review will address the abovementioned ESG standard 3.4 through the following list of activities of AHPGS:

1. Programme accreditation in Germany
2. System accreditation in Germany
3. Institutional audit in Austria
4. Programme accreditation in Austria
5. Institutional evaluation in Romania
6. Programme evaluation in Romania
7. Institutional audit in Slovenia
8. Institutional accreditation in Switzerland (not yet been carried out in practice)
9. Other programme accreditations carried out abroad.

The agency is expected to produce a self-assessment report on the points raised in relation to the ESG 3.4, indicating in particular the changes that have taken place since the last full review. In addition, the agency will indicate any eventual changes and developments in the agency beyond those listed under the criteria under scrutiny.

The partial review does not foresee a site visit to the agency. As the ENQA’s policy for partial reviews<sup>1</sup> (see the chapter on site visits) states:

“The duration and the programme of the site visit will depend on the number of type of elements to be looked at by the review panel. In practice this is likely to mean a visit of 1-2 days. Other arrangements such as a visit by the panel chair only, or no visit at all (only study of the SAR and additional documentation) may also be considered if appropriate.” Therefore, in the case of this partial review, the panel is expected to analyse all evidence as provided in the SAR by the agency. Additionally, the panel is welcome to request for additional documentation to be provided by the agency in written.

<sup>1</sup> See here: [https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ENQA-Agency-Reviews\\_Partial-Reviews.pdf](https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ENQA-Agency-Reviews_Partial-Reviews.pdf)

The report by the reviewers will concentrate on the same criteria and assess how the compliance has evolved since the last full review. It will also assess any eventual changes that have been brought to the attention of the panel in the self-assessment report.

### **Chapter 3: Panel composition**

The Board will nominate three external reviewers to complete the task.

The composition of the panel for the AHPGS full review in 2018 was as follows:

<b>Andy Gibbs</b>	Chair (EUA nominee), academic
<b>Nuria Comet</b>	Secretary (ENQA nominee), quality assurance professional
<b>Stephanie Hering</b>	Panel member (ENQA nominee), quality assurance professional
<b>Samin Sedghi Zadeh</b>	Panel member (ESU nominee)

The proposal is to use **one member** of the panel which carried out the last full review in order to ensure consistency, sufficient background knowledge on the agency, and the external trust in the outcomes (independent of the Board). The two other panel members should be selected so to complement the panel with altogether three viewpoints, that of a student, an academic and a quality assurance professional.

The proposal is to employ:

<b>Oliver Vettori</b>	Chair (EUA nominee), academic
<b>Stephanie Hering</b>	Panel member (ENQA nominee), quality assurance professional
<b>Francisco Joaquín Jiménez González</b>	Panel member (ESU nominee)

One of the two members (the quality assurance professional or the student) will be appointed as a secretary by the Chair.

The panel members will be asked whether they are willing and able to carry out the work within such timelines (see below).

### **Chapter 4: Timeline**

Terms of Reference and agreement with AHPGS	By 17 January 2020
Completion of partial review SAR by AHPGS	By 20 January 2020
Appointment of partial review panel members and agreement on reviewer contracts, setting date for the completion of the partial review report	By 31 January 2020
Delivery of draft report to ENQA Secretariat	20 March 2020
Draft report to AHPGS for factual check	27 March 2020
Completion of report and submission to ENQA	3 April 2020
Consideration of the report by ENQA Board and decision	29 April 2020

## **Chapter 5: Costs**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>COST</b>
Expert fee - Chair	€ 2 000
Expert fee - panel member	€ 1 500
Expert fee - panel member	€ 1 500
Coordination fee ENQA	€ 2 500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 7 500</b>