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LEGISLATIVE ALIGNMENT WITH THE ESG: THE PATH TOWARDS MEETING THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

KEY COMMITMENT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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KEY REQUIREMENTS ON REACHING THE ESG COMPLIANCE

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THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ESG COMMON REFERENCE POINTS

- Part 1: internal quality assurance
- Part 2: external quality assurance
- Part 3: quality assurance agencies

The ESG provide the basis for enhancing trust, mobility and recognition between higher education systems.



ENQA REVIEW

- to verify agencies' compliance with the ESG (the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area)
- to support agencies in their efforts to constantly review and enhance their work
- for ENQA membership and other purposes, including registration in EQAR (for 5 years)

ESG PART 2

- 2.1. Consideration of internal quality assurance
- 2.2. Designing methodologies fit for purpose
- 2.3. Implementing processes
- 2.4. Peer-review experts
- 2.5. Criteria for outcomes
- 2.6. Reporting
- 2.7. Complaints and appeals

2.1. CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Standard: External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part I of the ESG.

Challenges:

- Not only to provide a mapping grid, but to reflect
- To ensure that all standards of part I are in place, including all aspects of ESG 1.4
- Effective implementation in practice not only in papers

2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE

Standard: External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

Challenges:

- Fitness-for-purpose (type and number of procedures, added value of each)
- Stakeholders involvement

2.4. PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS

- Standard: External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

Challenges:

- Recruitment of experts
- Training and preparation of experts
- Students in expert panel
- Inconsistency in the number of experts

2.6. REPORTING

- Standard: Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

Challenges

- Publication of full reports, including with a negative outcome
- Quality of reporting
- Accessibility of reports

2.7. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

- Standard: Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

Challenges:

- Mixed up definitions of what is a complaint vs. an appeal
- Rather informal handling of complaints, lack of transparency
- Legal constraints for establishing an independent appeals procedure
- Important to separate appeals board members and decision-making body

ESG PART 3

- 3.1. Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance
- 3.2. Official status
- 3.3. Independence
- 3.4. Thematic analysis
- 3.5. Resources
- 3.6. Internal quality assurance and professional conduct
- 3.7. Cyclical external review of agencies

3.1. ACTIVITIES, POLICY AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Standard: Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

Challenges

- Stakeholder (labour market, students) involvement in the governance
- Strategic planning and link with yearly work plans
- Classification of activities within and outside the scope of the ESG

3.3. INDEPENDENCE

- Standard: Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.
- Organisational independence
- Operational independence
- Independence of formal outcomes

Challenges:

- too tight relations with a higher education community in which the agency operates
- independence from the private owner or public authorities
- Independence of decision-making

3.5 RESOURCES

Standard: Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

Challenges:

- Sufficient financial and human resources
- Lack of resources to engage in thematic analysis
- Prospects of agency resources vs. the agency's existing resources and ability to implement external quality assurance procedures

REMEMBER:

- to keep a continuous dialogue between all stakeholders involved – agency, ministries, higher education institutions, students, academic staff, society in general
- to be critical and identify key areas of action and further improvement
- to keep the right balance between issues set by legislation and left for the agency to decide
- quality assurance agencies act as a support for institutions in their continuing development and, equally, have a key role as protectors of the public interest
- the ESG can be met if they are perceived as addressing the whole national system of higher education and not only the agencies as such



THANK
YOU

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