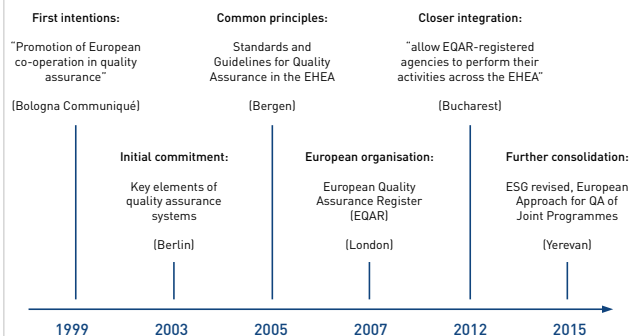


Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) – what changed in the 2015 version?

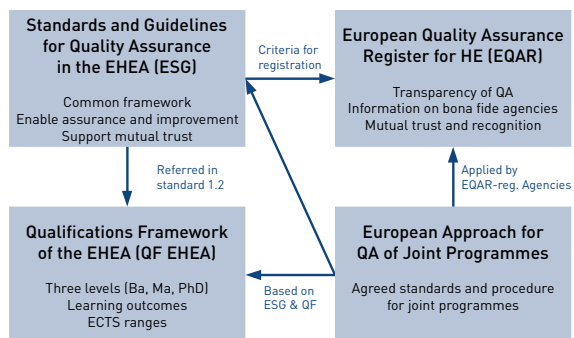
Seminar: Implementation of ESG at Croatian HEIs
Zagreb, 20 February 2017
Colin Tück



History



European Framework for Quality Assurance in HE



Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA (ESG)



- Common standards for:
 - 1) Internal quality assurance
 - 2) External quality assurance
 - 3) Quality assurance agencies
- Developed jointly by the main stakeholders
 - Higher education institutions – EUA, EURASHE
 - Students – ESU
 - Quality assurance agencies – ENQA
 - Staff & employers – Education International, BusinessEurope (2015)
- Agreed by ministers in 2005, revised in 2015

ESG 2005 → 2015



- Starting points for revision:
 - Analysis of implementation by stakeholders (MAP-ESG)
 - Ministerial mandate: “improve their **clarity, applicability** and **usefulness**, including their **scope**”
 - Keep strength, overcome weaknesses
- Technical improvements
 - Remove ambiguity (e.g. status of standards vs guidelines)
 - Reflect how ESG are used (e.g. criteria for EQAR)
- Adapt to new developments
 - Reflect progress and developments in QA
 - Internationalisation
 - New modes of learning

ESG – purposes



- Set a common framework for quality assurance systems at European, national and institutional level;
- Enable the assurance and improvement of quality;
- Support mutual trust, thus facilitating recognition and mobility within and across national borders;
- Provide information on quality assurance in the EHEA.

ESG – scope



The focus of the ESG is on **quality assurance related to learning and teaching** in higher education, including the learning environment and relevant links to research and innovation. [...]

The ESG apply to all higher education offered in the EHEA **regardless of the mode of study or place of delivery**. Thus, the ESG are also applicable to all higher education including **transnational and cross-border provision**. [...]

Higher education aims to fulfil **multiple purposes**; [...] Therefore, **stakeholders**, who may prioritise different purposes, **can view quality in higher education differently** and quality assurance needs to **take into account these different perspectives**. Quality, whilst not easy to define, is mainly a result of the interaction between teachers, students and the institutional learning environment. Quality assurance should **ensure a learning environment in which the content of programmes, learning opportunities and facilities are fit for purpose**. [...]

The term 'quality assurance' is used in this document to describe all activities within the continuous improvement cycle (i.e. **assurance and enhancement** activities).

ESG – principles



- Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for quality
- Responds to the diversity of systems, institutions, programmes and students
- Support the development of a quality culture;
- Take into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society

ESG – internal QA



- Institutional policy for QA – see ESG 1.1
- Managing quality of study programmes
 - Design and approval – see ESG 1.2
 - Objectives and learning outcomes in line with qualifications framework (NQF & QF-EHEA)
 - Student-centred teaching, learning, assessment – 1.3
 - Admission, progression, recognition – 1.4
 - Ongoing monitoring – 1.9
- Staff, resources, student support – 1.5 & 1.6
- Information management & public information – 1.7 & 1.8

ESG 2005 – Part 1	ESG 2015 – Part 1
1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance	1.1 Policy for quality assurance
1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards	1.2 Design and approval of programmes
1.3 Assessment of students	1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff	1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
1.5 Learning resources and student support	1.5 Teaching staff
1.6 Information systems	1.6 Learning resources and student support
1.7 Public information	1.7 Information management
	1.8 Public information
	1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
	1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

(table: Achim Hopbach)

ESG – external QA

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- Fitness for purpose
 - **Address ESG Part 1** – see ESG 2.1
 - Methodology – at institutional or programme level, or both – 2.2
 - Criteria transparent and consistent – 2.5
- Four-stage model – 2.3
 - Self-evaluation or self-assessment
 - External assessment by groups of experts, including student(s) expert and site visit – 2.4
 - Guideline: international expert(s), employers/practitioners
 - Public report (in full) and (if accreditation/audit) decision – 2.6
 - Follow-up procedure
- Appeals and complaints – 2.7

ESG 2005 – Part 2	ESG 2015 – Part 2
2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures	2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance
2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes	2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose
2.3 Criteria for decisions	2.3 Implementing processes
2.4 Processes fit for purpose	2.4 Peer-review experts
2.5 Reporting	2.5 Criteria for outcomes
2.6 Follow-up procedures	2.6 Reporting
2.7 Periodic reviews	2.7 Complaints and appeals
2.8 System-wide analyses	

(table: Achim Hopbach)

ESG – QA agencies



- Clear and explicit mission – 3.1
- Activities
 - External QA in line with ESG Part 2 – 3.1
 - Involve stakeholders – 3.1
 - Thematic analyses – 3.4
- Status and Independence – 3.2, 3.3
- Resources – 3.5
- Internal QA and professional conduct – 3.6

ESG 2005 – Part 3

- 3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education
- 3.2 Official status
- 3.3 Activities
- 3.4 Resources
- 3.5 Mission statement
- 3.6 Independence
- 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes
- 3.8 Accountability procedures

ESG 2015 – 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

[table: Achim Hopbach]

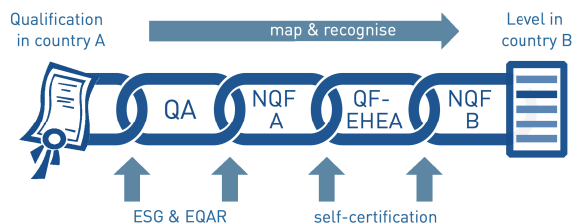
ESG 2005 → 2015



- More firmly embedded in “EHEA infrastructure” (e.g. links to QF, Lisbon Convention, ECTS, etc.)
 - Reflecting new developments in European HE
 - More common ground in QA across Europe
- EHEA has grown closer together over last 10 years

A vision for QA, Trust and Automatic Recognition

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Thank you for your attention!

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European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)

eqar

Mission: enhancing trust and confidence

Role: manage the register of QAAs that comply substantially with the ESG

- Established by E4 at Ministers' request, jointly governed by stakeholders and governments
- Non-profit and independent, acting in the public interest
- Objectives:
 - Enhance trust
 - Prevent „accreditation mills“ from gaining credibility
 - Recognition of QA decisions and results
 - Allow registered QAAs to operate across the entire EHEA, HEIs to choose suitable QAA



EQAR in practice

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Registration based on external review of agency



Annual updates on reviews and countries



Substantive change reports



Third-party complaints



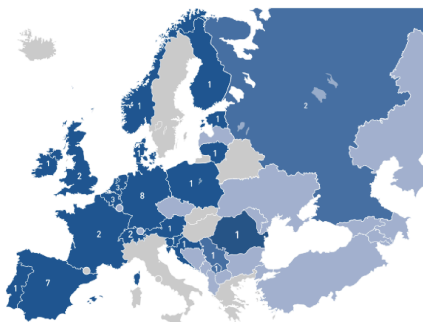
Periodic renewal every 5 years



EQAR-registered agencies

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- 43 registered QAAs
- Governmental members without registered agency



EQAR – system information

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Austria

Austria has been a Governmental Member of EQAR since 2006.

Focus of external quality assurance

- Public universities: Institutional audit
- Universities of applied sciences: Institutional and initial programme accreditation; Institutional audit (after an uninterrupted accreditation period of 12 years)
- Private universities: Institutional and initial programme accreditation
- University colleges of teacher education: own methodology

Can higher education institutions choose a suitable EQAR registered agency?

- Public universities: yes
- Universities of applied sciences: after having been re-accredited by the national Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria)
- Private universities & university colleges of teacher education: no
- Eligibility requirements for foreign agencies:
 - Registration on EQAR
 - QA agencies have to submit an expression of interest to the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy.

Condition for the agency's work: compliance with the criteria by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy

- Further information: regulations of the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (HQS-QS) from March 2012 (§ 19.) (page 141 & 142) BMWF Presentation

