



azvo

agencija za
znanost i visoko
obrazovanje

Visit of TKTA to ASHE

azvo.hr

16 – 18 October 2025.
Zagreb, Croatia

ENQA and EQAR application, review process, achieving compliance with the ESG

ASHE and TKTE representatives – presentations and discussions

Development of quality culture in EHEA

- QA development driven by the implementation of the **Bologna goals**.
- EU Recommendation 2005:
 - invites Member States to **set up QA systems** and **establish QA agency/ies**
 - QA results play a significant role in **helping HEIs to improve its performance**
- The first QA agencies were established in the late 1990s; in Croatia in 2005.
- EU Recommendation 2025:
 - **simplify QA procedures**, make them **fit for purpose** and **enhancement oriented**, shift towards **institutional approach**, implement **European Approach** for QA of joint programmes...

Purpose of QA in HE

- Assure the quality – **ACCOUNTABILITY**
- Improve the quality – **ENHANCEMENT**
- Inform the public about the quality of HEIs and study programs – **TRANSPARENCY**

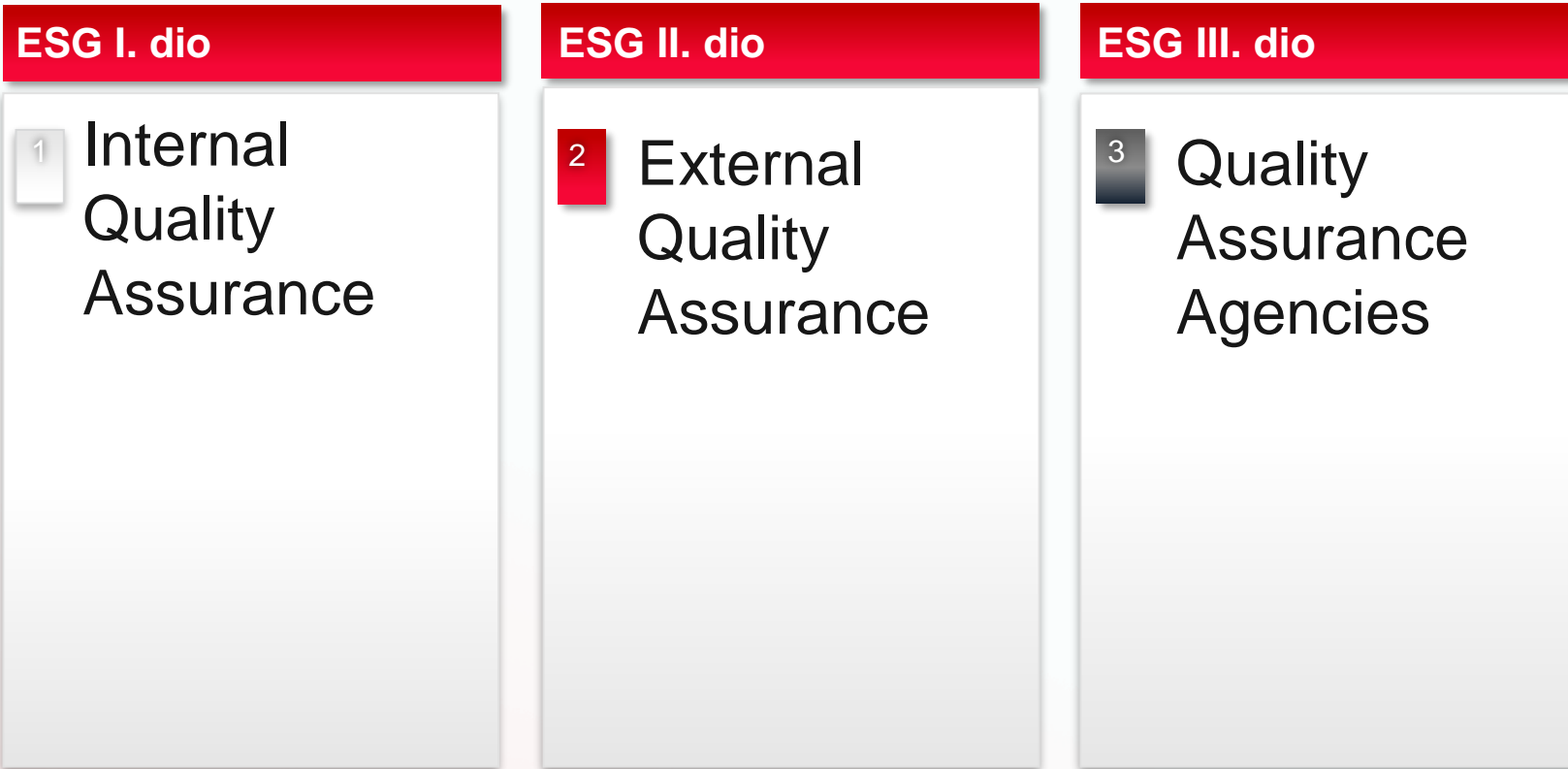
TRUST

TRANSPERENCY

ESG as a tool for QA in HE

- The Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area **(ESG) provide the framework for internal and external QA.**
- ESG set common framework for **QA systems for learning and teaching.**
- ESG adopted at the EHEA Ministerial Conference in **2015**, drafted by E4 Group (ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESU).
- Implementing quality assurance in line with the ESG is one of the **key commitments of the Bologna Process.**
- ESG revision underway, **revised ESG to be adopted in 2027.**

ESG – three parts





European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

- An umbrella organization that represents its members at European level and internationally and promotes European cooperation in the field of quality assurance in higher education.
- It was founded in 2000.
- **60** members
- **42** affiliates

<https://www.enqa.eu/membership-database/>



- **European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education**

- Official register / list of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area Founded in 2008.
- The founders are: ENQA, EUA, ESU and EURASHE.
- **57** registered agencies

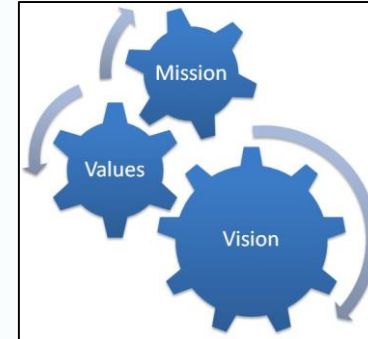
<https://www.eqar.eu/register/agencies/>

Who/What

The EHEA's official Register of QA agencies that comply substantially with the ESG.

Mission

Further the development of the EHEA by increasing the **transparency** of QA, and thus enhancing the **trust** and confidence in European HE.



History

The only official organisation established directly as a result of the Bologna process.
2005 – Bergen, the concept of a European register of QA agencies is welcomed by the ministers

2007 - London, ministers welcomed the establishment of a register by E4 Group

2025 - 60 registered agencies - <https://www.eqar.eu/register/agencies/>

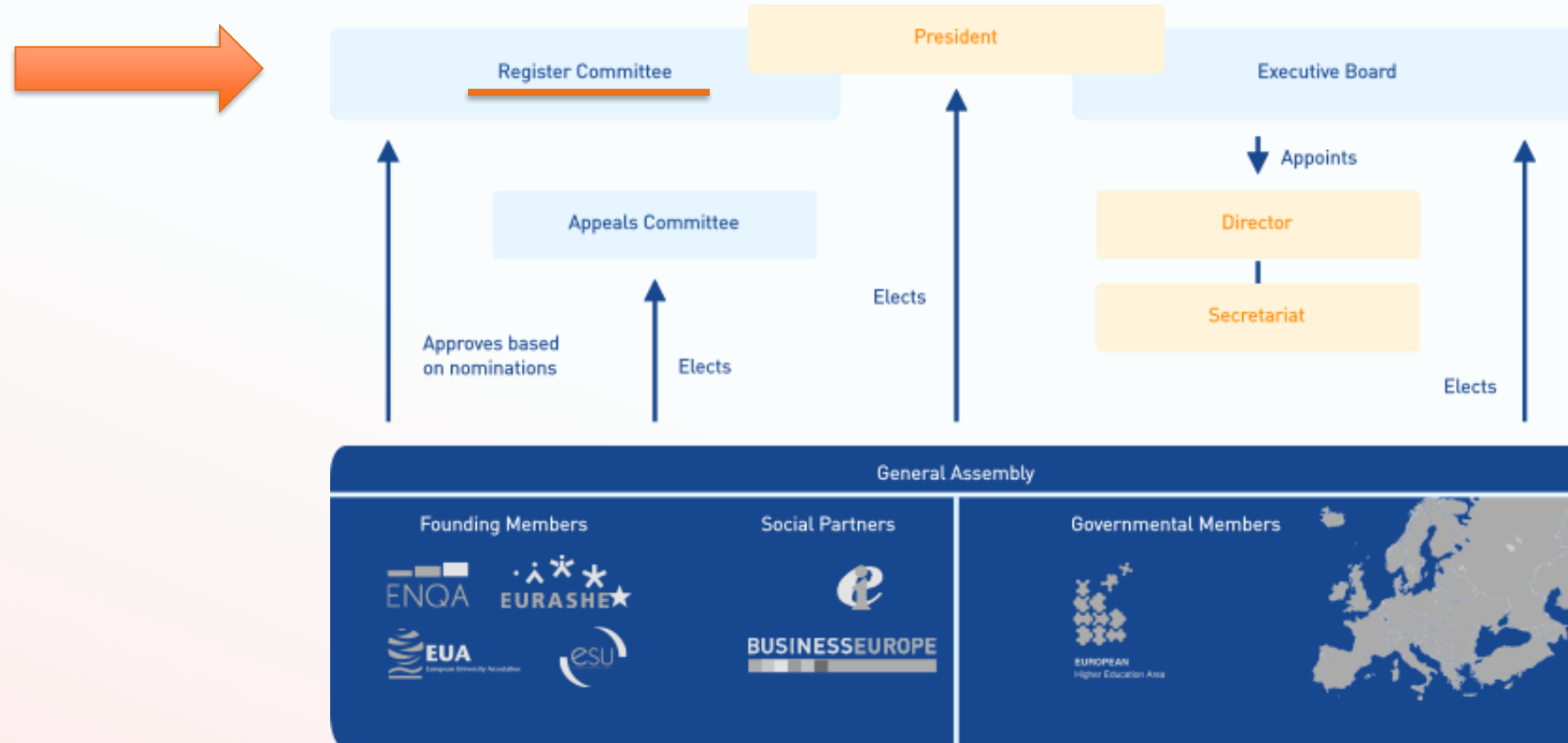
EQAR members

Founding Members: ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE

Governmental Members

Social partner Members

EQAR organization



EQAR Register Committee

- 11 members with experience in QA and HE
- members act independently, in their individual capacity
- each Founding Member nominates 2 members
- each Social Partner Member nominates 1 member
- the Register Committee is approved by the General Assembly
- chaired by the President (without voting right)
- A Vice-chair elected among the members
- meetings at least three times per year (usually more frequently)

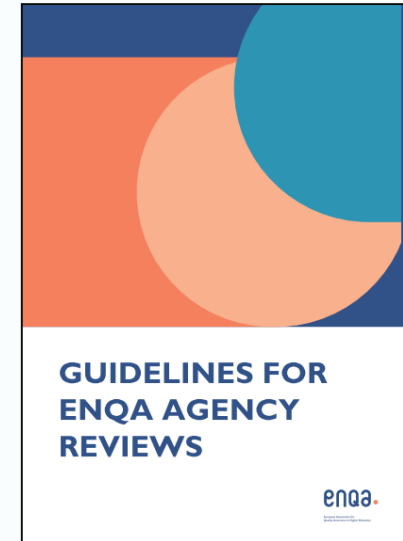
Register Committee responsibilities

- Receives, evaluates and decides on applications for **inclusion on the Register** (full reviews) and applications for **renewal of the registration** (full reviews, targeted reviews);
- Considers Substantive Change Reports;
- Considers third-party complaints;
- Conducting and extraordinary review of an agency's registration;
- Adopting and revising Procedures for Applications in consultations with the General Assembly.



Agency review process

- External **review against ESG is a prerequisite** for application to become ENQA member and EQAR registered.
- **ENQA is primary provider** of agency external reviews but agency can choose other suitable provider for conducting the review.
- **ENQA guidelines** describe the review process in details
- Purpose of the review:
 - ENQA membership/EQAR registration
 - trust/credibility of agency and HE system.



Application for the review

- Review is **initiated by a request from an agency** (14 months prior the expected completion of the review).
- **ENQA review coordinator** –main contact person between agency and review panel.
- **Terms of reference** signed by agency, ENQA and EQAR.
- **ESG and non-ESG activities** should be clearly specified in ToR.
- **First review will pay attention to the policies, procedures and criteria in place.**
- Every subsequent report will require clear evidence of results.

Four stages review process

- **Production of self-assessment report (SAR)**

- ENQA guide of SAR content
- agency explains how it complies with each ESG II and ESG III standards
- ENQA coordinator checks the SAR and share with the review panel

- **External evaluation**

- ENQA ARC approves reviewers (QA professionals, academics, students)
- agency can reflect on the panel composition
- training of experts (two days + briefing prior the site visit + kick-off meeting)
- site visit (discussions with stakeholders; 2, 5 days)

Four stages review process

- **Review report**

- review panel draft external review report (ERR)
- factual accuracy check
- ENQA ARC validates report

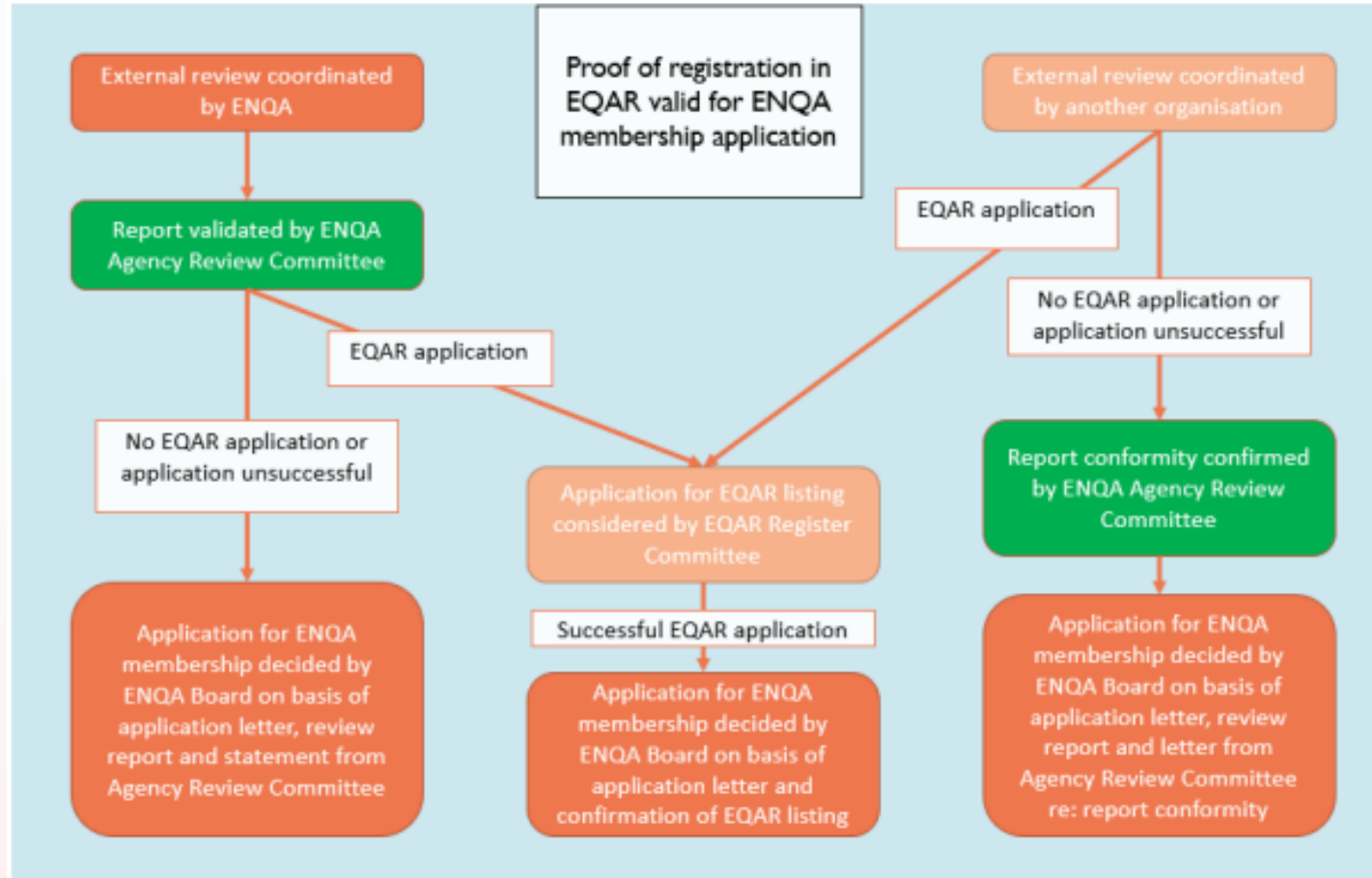
- **Follow-up**

- agency is requested to submit follow-up report after two years
- progress visit to the agency (voluntary)

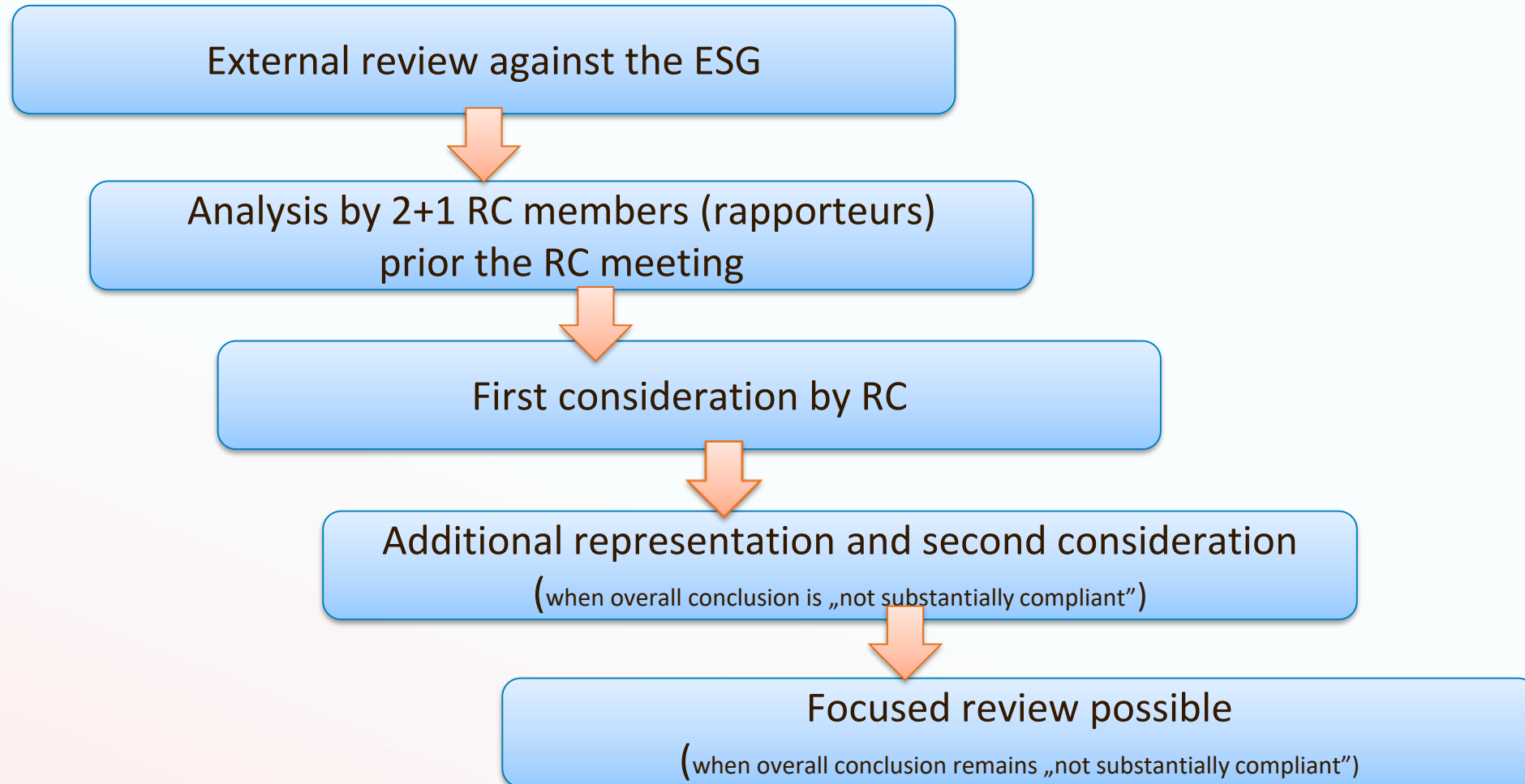
The panel's judgement on compliance against ESG

- External review report is the basis for decision-making process
- Under each ESG standard review report should include:
 - EVIDENCE
 - ANALYSIS
 - CONCLUSION
 - RECOMMENDATION/SUGGESTION
- In the review report panel assess compliance for each ESG standard:
 - COMPLIANT
 - PARTIALLY COMPLIANT
 - NON COMPLIANT

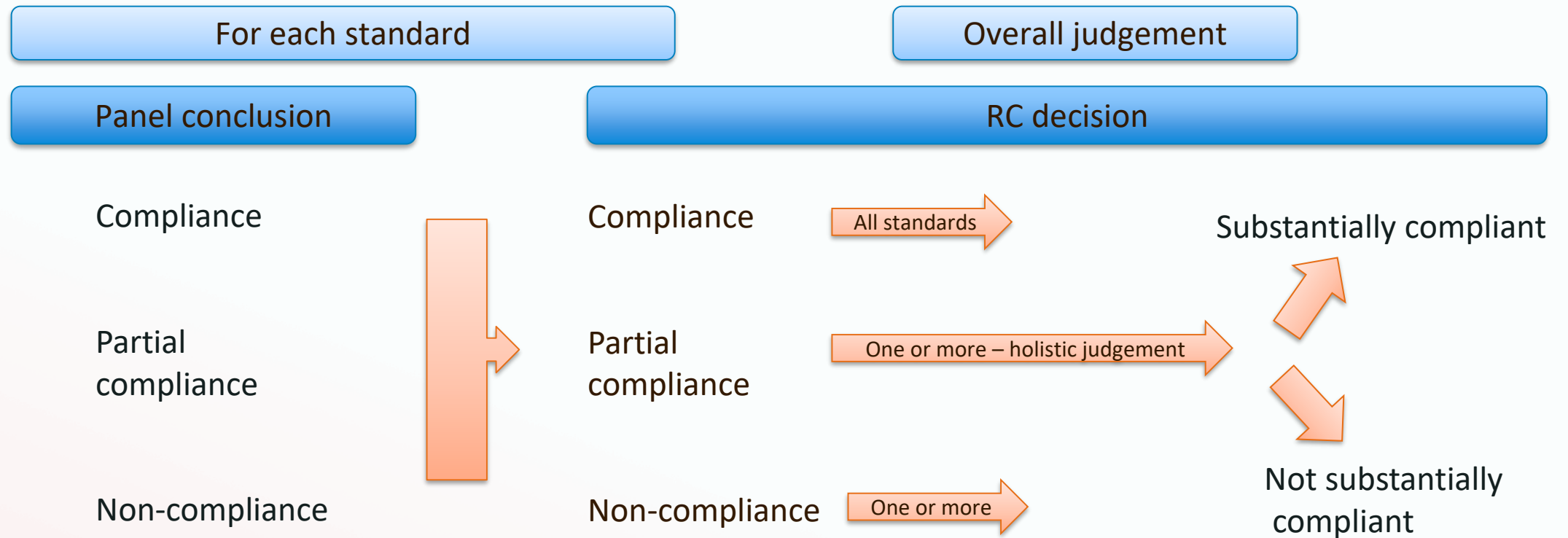
ENQA and EQAR decision-making process



EQAR Register Committee decision-making process



EQAR Register Committee decision-making process



Ensuring consistency in decision-making process

ESG Compliance



EQAR Use and Interpretation of ESG

Use and Interpretation of the ESG for the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies

1. Introduction

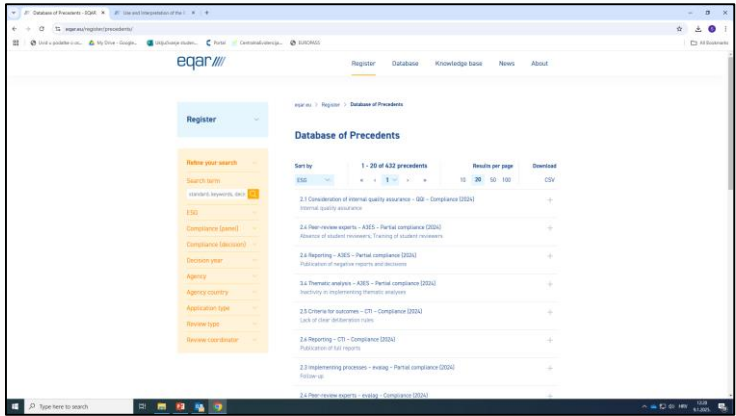
The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015) provide the European framework against which the quality assurance agencies (QAAs) and their activities are assessed.

eqar

Register Committee
November 2024

Ref. RC/12.1
Ver. 4.0
Date 27/11/2024
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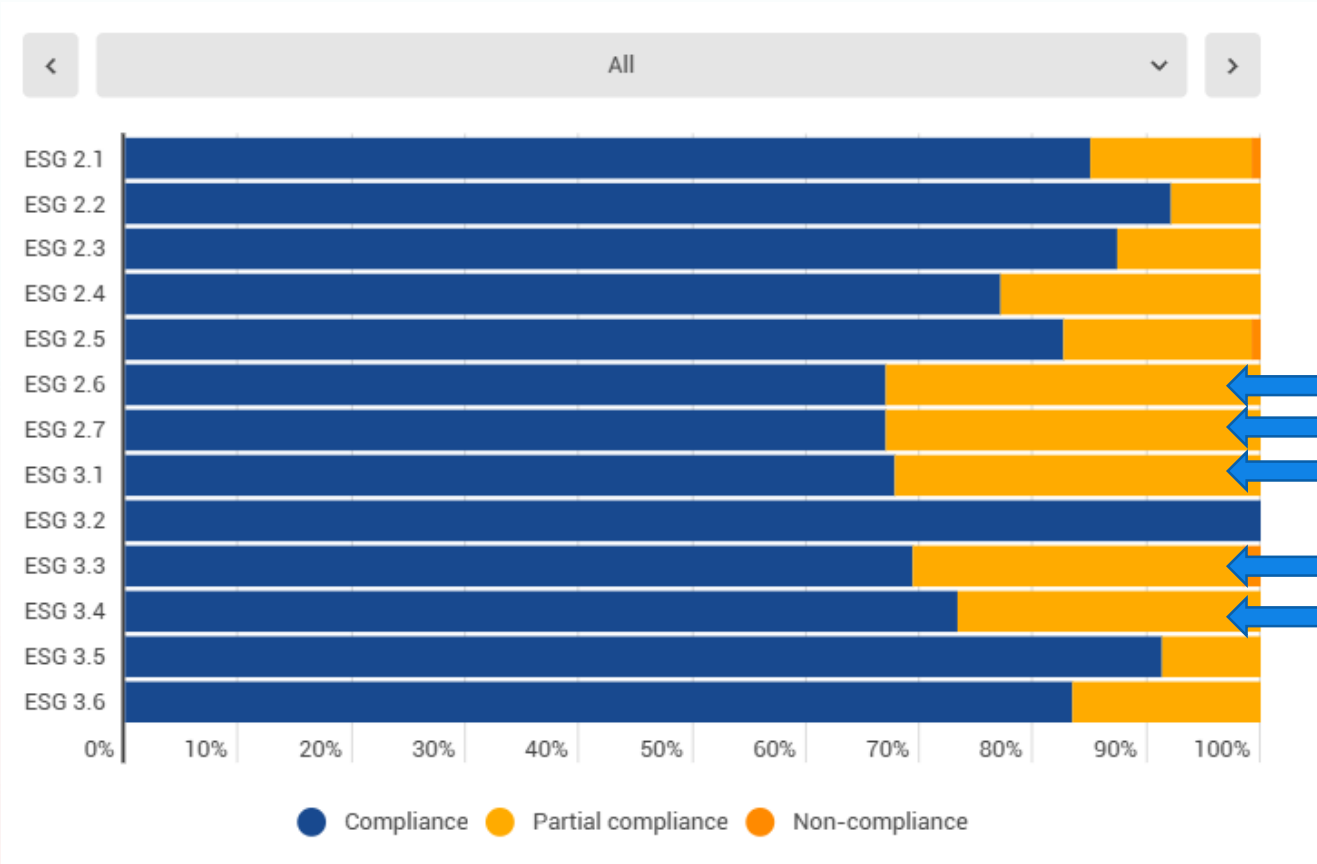
EQAR Database of Precedents



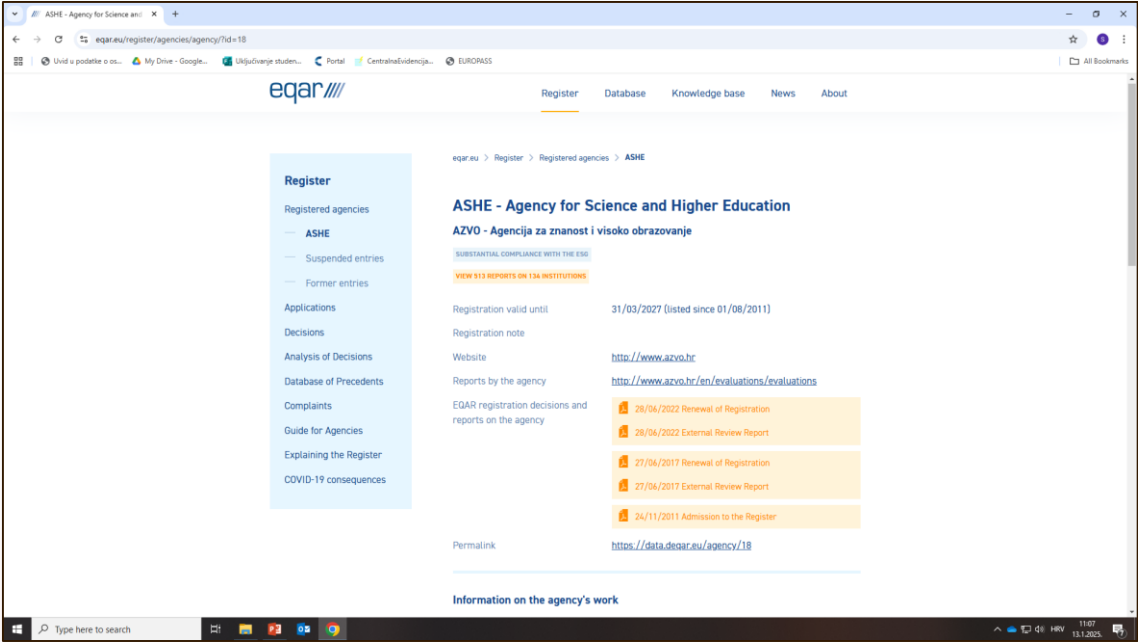
EQAR Use and Interpretation of ESG

- revised version (4.0) adopted in December 2024
- minor changes/clarifications related to the following ESG standards:
 - 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6

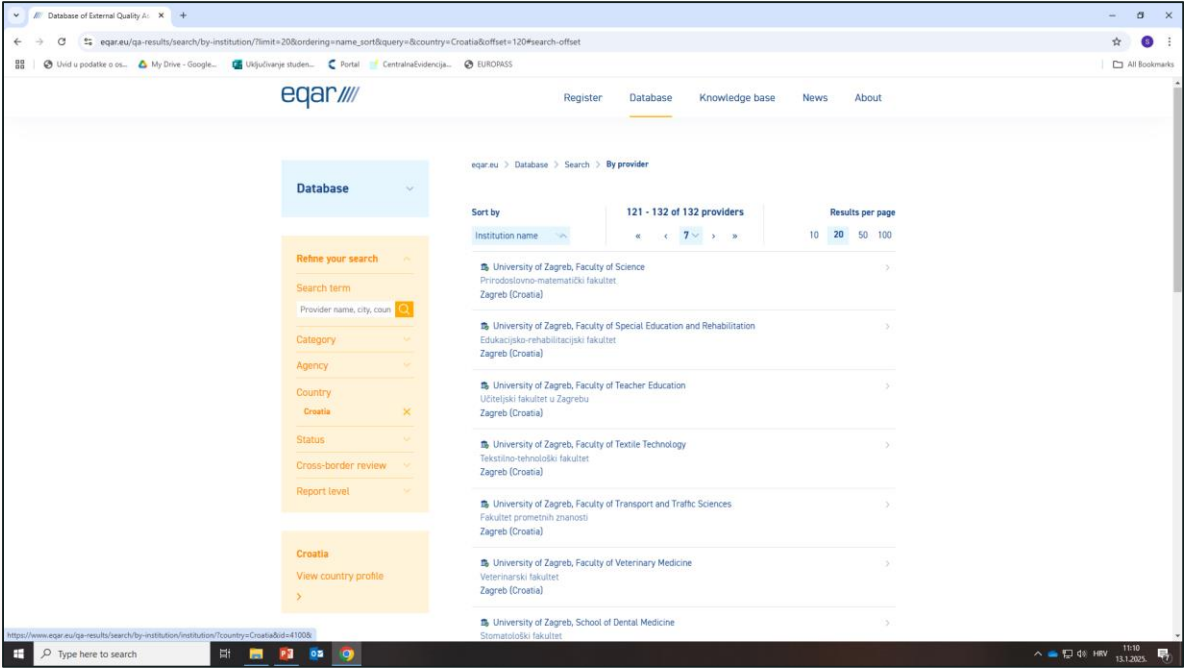
Level of compliance with ESG



Transparency



Registered agencies



DEQAR



Conclusion

- QA agencies have specific and important role in the national HE system but also actively cooperate internationally.
- They primarily perform QA activities and results of these activities support the enhancement of quality of HEIs and strengthening their internal QA mechanisms.
- In addition to the core QA activities many agencies in EHEA have wider role in HE sector and become one of important players.
- By performing all its tasks agencies contribute to the **quality enhancement**, promote **trust** and **transparency**, encourage **recognition of qualification** and **mobility**.
- ENQA supports agencies in their development.
- EQAR enables **trust** and **transparency** in the EHEA.

Key success factors for QA agencies and adjustment with ESG

- Independence
- Involvement of stakeholders
- Resources
- Agency's internal QA
- Connecting internal and external QA
- Four stage peer-review process
- Peer-review experts
- Consistent decision-making
- Transparency...

Independence

Organizational independence

- guaranteed in official documents
- balanced distribution of power** among stakeholders in governing the agency
- nomination and appointment** of agency's bodies (Management Board, Accreditation Council, Appeal Committee, Follow-up Committee...) and director
- rules for dismissing** the members of agency's bodies and director

Operational independence

- managing agency's own resources**, staff recruitment, deciding about organisational structure
- development and revision of **own procedures and methodologies**
- nomination and appointment of external experts

Independence of formal outcomes

- preventing undue influence** of stakeholders on outcomes

ASHE example - Independence

TKTE case?

- Independence defined by the Act on QA in HE and Science.
- **Director** appointed by the Management Board, **public call for nomination** of candidates, **rules for dismissal** defined by the Statute.
- **Management Board** appointed by the Government based on **nominations from stakeholders' groups** (2 ministry's representatives).
- **Accreditation Council** appointed by the Management Board, **public call for nomination** of candidates and **nominations by stakeholders' groups**.
- Independent decisions on organisational structure, staff recruitment, managing budget allocation etc.
- Independent **development and revision of methodologies** and standards .
- Independent conducting of external QA procedures, appointment and training of experts.
- **Independent decision-making** about external QA outcomes.

QA activities and involvement of stakeholders

- Different types of **external QA activities** (accreditation, audit, assessment, review, programme and institutional approaches, cross-border activities...) conducted on the regular basis in accordance with the agency's publicly available **mission, goals and objectives**.
- Involvement of **students' and other stakeholders'** representatives in the agency's bodies, review panels and QA activities (development of methodologies, evaluations, decision-making process etc.).
- Clear distinction between **ESG and non-ESG activities**.
- Support to HEIs but **not „consultancy“**.

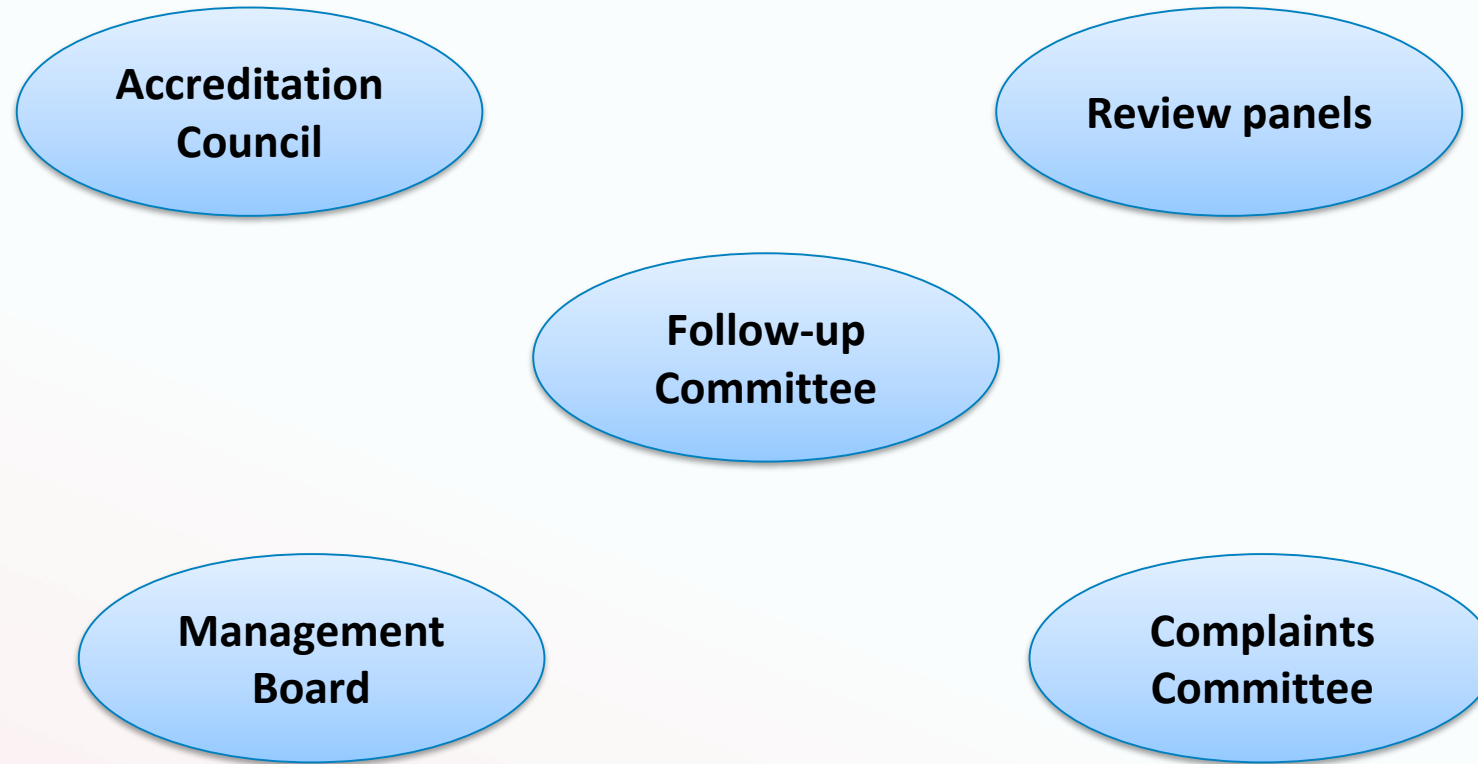
ASHE example – QA activities

TKTE case?

- Initial accreditation of studies (all three cycles)
 - undergraduate and graduate studies (face to face and online)
 - doctoral studies (face to face and online);
- Initial accreditation of higher education institutions;
- Reaccreditation of higher education institutions (third cycle);
- Cross-border evaluation;
- European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes.

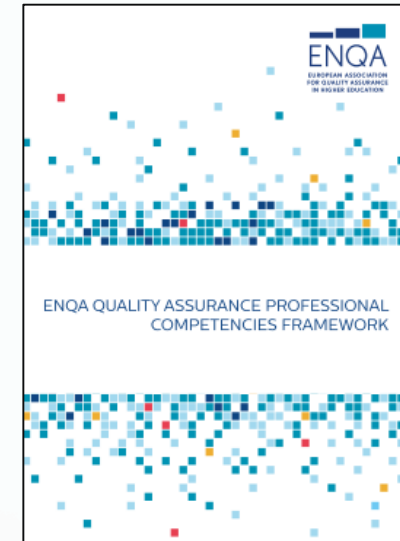
ASHE example – involvement of stakeholders

TKTE case?



Resources

- Sufficient **human and financial resources** to manage all activities
 - number of QA staff and their expertise – **QA professionals** in line with the ENQA competence framework
 - sustainable resources for future plans
 - managing own resources effectively.

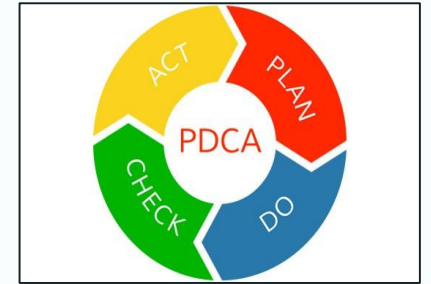


ASHE example - resources

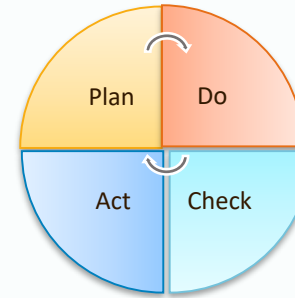
- 7 employees directly involved in external QA activities + 10 employees from other departments trained for the involvement in external QA activities;
- Financed from state budget + EU funds (AZVOK ESF).

Agency's internal QA and professional conduct

- Internal **QA system that guarantee the quality and integrity** of agency's activities.
- **Effective** internal QA system (fulfilling all phases of PDCA cycle); successful in producing change in agency's policies and practices for the purpose of quality enhancement.
- Published **internal quality policy**, formal **procedures** and documentation (quality manual, guidelines) covering all activities, consistent implementation, involvement of stakeholders, collecting feedback.
- **Improvements** following recommendations from the previous external review.
- Internal checks and balances, regulations/provisions to ensure professional conduct and integrity.



ASHE example – internal QA



TKTE case?

- Internal QA based on **PDCA**.
- Internal QA adjusted with ESG, former ISO-9001 system is to be replaced by CAF model.
- **Quality Policy and Quality Manual** that describes procedures, internal data base.
- **Strategy** (2021-2025; adoption of new Strategy is underway), mission, vision, values.
- **Collecting feedback** from stakeholders (experts, HEIs, Accreditation Council, ASHE employees...), **analysis** of collected feedback.
- **Improvements** based on the results of internal QA.
- Internal **QA Department**.
- Former internal and external audits (as a part of ISO certification).
- ENQA ASHE external review based on ESG every five years.



ASHE example – professional and ethical conduct

TKTE case?

- Act on Quality Assurance, Labour Act, Employment contract, Guidelines for Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Service.
- Quality Policy, Code of Ethics.
- Accreditation Council Rules of Procedure, Complaints Committee Rules of Procedure, External evaluation procedures.
- ASHE Ethics Officer, ASHE person for protection of workers' dignity".
- ASHE Committees and review members need to sign the Confidentiality and Non-conflict of Interest Statement and Statement on Consent – GDPR.

Connecting internal and external QA

- External QA addresses effectiveness of internal QA of HEIs;
- Agency's quality standards address all ESG part I standards;
- Expert panel reports address all ESG part I standards.

ASHE example – accreditation standards adjusted with ESG part I

TKTE case?

ESG standard	Re-accreditation of HEI/Cross-border evaluation of HEI	Initial Accreditation Study Programme/online Study Programme	Initial Accreditation HEI	Initial Accreditation Doctoral Studies /online Doctoral Studies	Accreditation of joint programmes according to EA
1.1. Policy for quality assurance	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.6	9
1.2. Design and approval of programmes	1.1, 2.1, 2.2	1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6	1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5	1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5	2.1, 2.3, 3
1.3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	3.1, 3.2	3.2, 3.4 (3.3, 3.5 for online programme)	3.2, 3.4	2.4	5
1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	3.3	3.1.	3.1	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	4
1.5. Teaching staff	4.1, 4.2, 5.1	4.1., 4.2. (4.3 for online programme)	4.1, 5.1	4.1, 4.3	7
1.6. Learning resources and student support	3.4, 3.5, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6	3.3., 4.3., 4.4., 4.5. (3.4, 4.6, 4.7 for online programme)	3.3, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5	1.5, 4.4, 4.5 (1.5, 4.4, 4.6 for online programme)	6, 7
1.7. Information management	1.3	1.3.	1.5	1.2	
1.8. Public information	1.3, 1.5	1.4.	1.6	3.3, 3.4	8
1.9. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	2.2	1.3.	1.5	1.2	
1.10. Cyclical external quality assurance	1.5				

ASHE example – accreditation standards adjusted with ESG part I

TKTE case?

- Standards for **initial programme accreditation** focused on:
 - LO of study programme and courses
 - study programme content
 - planned teaching and assessment methods
 - resources to deliver the study programme
- Standards for **institutional re-accreditation** focused on:
 - internal QA, mission, strategic goals
 - quality of study programmes
 - teaching and assessment methods
 - support to students, students satisfaction
 - resources
 - research

ASHE example – accreditation standards adjusted with ESG part I

Standards with descriptors (elements), indicators and evidence examples included

Standard	The level of fulfilment of the standard					
4.1. <i>The higher education institution ensures adequate teaching capacities.</i>	The standard is not fulfilled		Minimal fulfilment of the standard		Satisfactory fulfilment of the standard	The standard is completely fulfilled
<p><u>Elements and indicators of the standard</u></p> <p><i>The higher education institution has an adequate number of teachers employed full time at the scientific-teaching or artistic-teaching positions (for universities or constituents of the university), or an adequate number of teachers employed full time at teaching positions (for polytechnics / universities of applied sciences), along with an appropriate number of teachers in the scientific field in which the programme is being delivered (21 teachers at universities, at least 3 of which are from said scientific field; at least 7 teachers at a faculty or arts academy, at least 3 of which are from said scientific field; and 7 teachers at polytechnics / universities of applied sciences, at least 3 of which are from said scientific field).</i></p> <p><i>At philological studies, a maximum of half the teachers may be employed to teaching positions of language instructor, senior language instructor and language instructor advisor.</i></p> <p><i>The ratio between the total number of enrolled students and the total number of full-time teachers and those with nominal teaching titles does not exceed 30 : 1 (when calculating the ratio, the number of working hours of teachers who are not employed full time is added up to the number of working hours required of a full-time teacher).</i></p> <p><i>The total annual teaching load of all teachers does not exceed 20% of the total annual teaching load (in the case of public higher education institutions).</i></p> <p><i>Total annual teaching load of an individual teacher does not exceed 20% of the total annual standard teaching load.</i></p> <p><i>Teachers' workload ensures appropriate distribution of teaching, scientific/artistic activities, professional and personal development and administrative duties.</i></p> <p><i>All teachers, including external associates, are qualified for the courses they deliver, have relevant work experience and integrate the latest trends and knowledge from the labour market into the teaching process.</i></p>						



Four stages peer-review process

- Setting up methodologies that are **fit for purpose**.
- **Predefined and published methodologies** and procedures, user friendly and accessible to stakeholders (handbooks, manuals, templates for SAR and the report etc.).
- **Consistent implementation** of procedures.
- Site visits organized **in person** (adequate duration, meetings with all relevant stakeholders etc., good preparation...).
- Support to reviewers in **completing the report**.
- Consistent **follow-up** activities.

ASHE example - HEI's self-assessment

TKTE case?

- **ASHE support** to HEIs, but **not „consultancy”**;
- **Workshops** for HEIs (at the beginning of cycle, each year for HEIs included in annual plan);
- **Communication** with HEIs (meetings, email: akreditacija-visoko@azvo.hr);
- Clearly articulated and user-friendly **accreditation documents**:
 - Procedure of accreditation describing all procedural steps*
 - Standards for assessing the quality*
 - Templates for self-evaluation report that follow standards*
 - Analytic supplement to self-evaluation report – tables for entering data into IT system ISPIK.*

ASHE example - workshops for HEIs

TKTE case?

- Workshops for **drafting self-evaluation report**
 - procedural details
 - interpretation of standards
 - example of good practice (representative of HEI that has already underwent procedure and representative of reviewer participated in the procedure)
 - case study (SER against one chosen standard)
- Workshops for **entering data into IT system ISPIK**
 - explanation of tables for collecting data
 - explanation of IT system ISPIK and CroRIS and how to use them, practical work

ASHE example - HEI's self-evaluation against standards

Standard	The level of fulfilment of the standard					
4.3. <i>The higher education institution ensures support to teachers in their professional development.</i>	The standard is not fulfilled		Minimal fulfilment of the standard		Satisfactory fulfilment of the standard	The standard is completely fulfilled
<u>Elements and indicators of the standard</u> <p><i>The higher education institution has a teacher development plan with defined performance indicators. It sets the priorities for teachers' professional development annually. The criteria for promotion and rewarding of excellence are clear, transparent and consistently applied.</i></p> <p><i>The higher education institution has clearly defined the way it supports the teachers in their professional and career development. The higher education institution encourages the transfer of knowledge within the organisation.</i></p> <p><i>The higher education institution promotes and provides opportunities for the improvement of teaching competencies at the institutional level.</i></p> <p><i>The higher education institution ensures and encourages the development of teaching skills.</i></p> <p><i>The higher education institution encourages improvements of teachers' competences based on gathered and analysed feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of their work (teacher self-assessment, peer observation, student surveys, focus groups, etc.).</i></p> <p><i>The higher education institution encourages the participation of teachers in international mobility programmes, collaborative networks, etc.</i></p> <p><i>The higher education institution encourages and supports the participation of teachers in international and national competitive projects.</i></p> <u>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan for the professional development of teachers; • information on the manner in which teacher participation is encouraged and their actual participation in teaching competencies development programmes (workshops, seminars), with an emphasis on support to student learning; • data on teachers' participation in programmes aimed at improving digital competence; • information on the manner in which the teacher mobility is encouraged, and their actual participation in international mobility programmes; 						

ASHE example – HEI’s analytical supplement to the SAR

ANNEX I. (EVIDENCE OF FULFILMENT OF QUANTITATIVE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS)

Table 1a. Teacher-student ratio (must not exceed 1 : 30) at the higher education institution (Art. 12, Par. 8 and 9 of the AQAHES)

The ratio between the total number of enrolled students and the total number of full-time teachers and those with nominal teaching titles shall not exceed 30:1. When calculating the ratio, the number of working hours of teachers who are not employed full time is added up to the number of working hours required of a full-time teacher. A complexity coefficient of 1 is used for teachers, 0.75 for senior assistants and 0.5 for assistants. A complexity coefficient of 0.5 is used for teachers with nominal teaching titles. A complexity coefficient of 1 is used for full-time students and 0.5 for part-time students.

Total number of students studying full time at all study programmes (Coefficient 1)	
Total number of students studying part time at all study programmes (Coefficient 0.5)	
I. TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS:	
Total number of teachers at the higher education institution (Coefficient 1)	
Total number of senior assistants at the higher education institution (Coefficient 0.75)	
Total number of assistants at the higher education institution (Coefficient 0.5)	
Total number of nominal* teachers at the higher education institution (Coefficient 0.5)	
II. TOTAL NUMBER OF TEACHERS AT THE HEI:	
TEACHER (II.) /STUDENT (I.) RATIO	

ANNEX II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

TABLES RELATED TO ASSESSMENT AREA II. STUDY PROGRAMMES AND LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMMES

NOTE: These tables contain compulsory learning outcomes for a single study programme. Please add the code description for each learning outcome (LO) in the separate table below.

Table 2.1. Learning outcomes of the study programme for the evaluated academic year

Study programme name (type, level, SP Register code and SP Register entry code)

Learning outcomes* of the study programme	LO 1	LO 2	LO 3	LO 4	LO 5	LO 6	LO 7	LO 8	LO 9	...
Total number of courses per learning outcome										
Course 1		+						+		
Course 2			+	+		+				+
Course 3		+					+		+	
Course 4				+	+					
...	+	+	+					+		

TABLES RELATED TO ASSESSMENT AREA IV. TEACHING CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Table 4.1.a Staff structure (UNIVERSITIES) in the evaluated academic year

Staff*	Full-time staff		Cumulative employment		External associates**	
	Number	Average age	Number	Average age	Number	Average age
Full professors with tenure						
Full professors						
Associate professors						
Assistant professors						

ASHE example –site visit

TKTE case?

- Duration: **3 days** for program accreditation and **5 days** for institutional reaccreditation (including training and drafting report).
- ASHE coordinator and interpreter participate at the site-visit.
- Meetings with different stakeholders' representatives
 - Management, QA team
 - Students (representatives of Student Union and individual students)
 - Teachers, Heads of study programmes
 - Alumni, Labour market representatives
 - Career centre staff, Head of library
 - International office staff, Erasmus coordinators, ECTS coordinator
 - Teaching and research assistants
 - Heads of research projects.

ASHE example – writing report

TKTE case?

- **Instructions** for writing a report – during training of experts.
- **Template** for writing a report follows standards.
- Draft report and grading – last day of site visit.
- ASHE coordinator support to panel during drafting the report
- Final report – in 30 days.

ASHE example – follow-up

TKTE case?

- Follow-up Committee (7 members appointed by the Accreditation Council);
- Five-year **Action plan** ;
- **Report** on the implementation of the action plan.

Review experts

- Consistent selection of experts.
- Different stakeholders' groups representatives.
- Mandatory involvement of students as panel members with equal rights and obligation.
- International expertise, Labour market representatives, where possible.
- Involvement of experts with adequate field specific competences
- Preventing conflict of interest.
- Adequate training of experts (not just briefing).

ASHE example – review experts

TKTE case?

- Panel composition: 2 national experts, 2 international experts, student (most often case).
- Selection of experts: public call, ASHE pool of experts, direct contacting of possible experts.
- Criteria for selection: relevant field expertise, teaching/research experience, QA experience, international experience, managerial experience if possible, good command of English language, communication skills, teamwork.
- Accreditation Council appoints experts.
- Training of experts: online training + onsite training prior the visit.

Consistent decision-making

- Pre-defined and published criteria for each QA activity.
- Mechanisms for ensuring consistency in the application of criteria and decision-making process.

ASHE experience – consistent decision-making

TKTE case?

- **Quality standards with indicators and examples of evidence** adopted before the beginning of new cycle, underwent public debate, published on ASHE website.
- **Rules for assessing quality standards** by experts and decision-making by Accreditation Council.
- **Training of experts** with the focus on standards and rules for assessing the standards.
- **Role of coordinator.**
- **Templates for self-assessment and writing report** adjusted with standards.

Complaints and appeals

- Complaint – about the procedure
- Appeals – about the outcome
- Agency's specific processes for complaints and appeal.
- Agency's **internal processes** for complaints and appeal.
- **Clearly communicated** complaints and appeal procedure.
- Appeal considered **by another body** than the one adopted the decision.

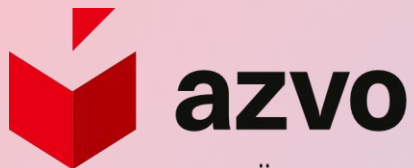
ASHE example – complaints and appeals

TKTE case?

- Complaints Committee
 - deals with complaints and appeals
 - 7 members appointed by the National Council for Science, HE and Technology
 - at least two members should be from the legal profession

Hvala na pozornosti!

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