



Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area



Education and Culture DG

International co-operation in
higher education and training

Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance
agencies in the European Higher Education Area



Table of contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Purpose and organisation of the review	4
1.2 Principles	5
2. Remit of the review	6
3. Key features of the review	7
3.1 Notification to the ENQA Board	7
3.2 Formulation of terms of reference and protocol for the review	7
3.3 Nomination and appointment of a panel of reviewers	8
3.4 Production of a self-evaluation report by the Agency under review	9
3.5 A site-visit by the panel of reviewers to the Agency under review	10
3.6 Production and publication of a final report	13
3.6.1 Outline report structure	13
3.6.2 Writing up findings	15
3.6.3 Drafting process	16
3.6.4 Report style	16
3.7 Submission of the report to the ENQA Board and the decision making process	17
4. Roles and responsibilities	18
4.1 Review Chair	18
4.2 Review Secretary	18
4.3 Panel members	19
4.4 Coordinating body	20
5. Timeline	21
6. Financial issues	23
7. Interpreting the ENQA membership criteria/European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)	24
8. Appeals procedure	26

Annexes	27
Annex I – Introductory section and structure of the final review report	27
Annex II – Financial Guidelines for ENQA coordinated reviews	30
Annex III – Regulations of ENQA.....	32
Annex IV – Membership Provisions.....	43
Annex V –Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (Parts I, II and III)	48
Annex VI – Scrutiny form for reconfirmation of or application for Full Membership .	59
Annex VII – Mapping grid for Panel members.....	68

1. Introduction¹

1.1 Purpose and organisation of the review

In accordance with the ENQA membership criteria laid down in the Membership Provisions² of ENQA, member agencies are required to undergo external reviews against the membership criteria, and thereby the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) as adopted by the European Ministers in charge of higher education in Bergen in 2005, at least once every five years.

In addition to periodical reviews, the present Guidelines also concern reviews to be conducted in order to apply *for the first time* for Full membership of ENQA and for inclusion in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)³. According to the ENQA regulations, applications for Full Membership are considered only if accompanied by an independent external review report on the Agency's conformity with the membership criteria.

The membership criteria of ENQA contain Part III of the ESG and additional requirements and guidelines.

The review against the membership criteria can also include other aspects of the Agency's work or organisation (see section 2). In any case, the principles and processes outlined in these Guidelines are still likely to apply.

REVIEWS COORDINATED AT NATIONAL LEVEL

In line with the principle of subsidiarity which underpins the ESG, external reviews of ENQA member agencies are normally initiated and coordinated at national level by national authorities, as part of their routine quality assurance arrangements.

REVIEWS COORDINATED AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Where it is not appropriate or not possible for the review to be organised at a national level (for example where there is no suitable or willing national body to coordinate the review), or where an agency so requests, the reviews may be organised by ENQA or by an international quality assurance organisation.

- *by ENQA*

ENQA itself has only limited resources to coordinate reviews. Agencies wishing to engage ENQA to conduct their review must be able to justify why a national review would not be appropriate or possible. ENQA reserves the right to decline to coordinate an agency's five-yearly external review.

1 This new version of the Guidelines includes the former (i) Guidelines for national reviews of ENQA member agencies, (ii) Briefing Pack for review panel members of ENQA co-ordinated reviews and (iii) Principles for ENQA coordinated reviews.

2 Annex 1 to the ENQA Regulations

3 EQAR lists quality assurance agencies that have proven their credibility and reliability in a review against the same standards as for ENQA membership, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG).

- *by an international quality assurance agency/organisation*
For the same reasons as described in the previous paragraph, agencies may also commission another independent and trustworthy quality assurance agency/organisation to coordinate their review.

External reviews conducted at national and international levels share the same purpose, which is to test agencies' compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG. It should be noted that there is a clear distinction between the coordination of the review and the review itself. The Coordinating body's main responsibility is to arrange the practicalities of the review (see 4.4). This includes the recruitment of the Review panel, which must be independent of the Coordinating body. The Review panel is in charge of evaluating agencies and is responsible for the review itself and its outcomes.

The present Guidelines contain information and guidance to assist agencies to be reviewed, coordinating organisations and review panel members, and thus to ensure that the review will produce the information needed to satisfy the requirements of ENQA membership and EQAR listing. The Guidelines apply irrespective of whether the review is co-ordinated by ENQA or another body.

1.2 Principles

The review will be based on the following principles:

- the review is an evidence-based process carried out by independent experts;
- the information provided by the Agency is assumed to be factually correct unless other evidence points to the contrary;
- the review is a process of verification of the information provided in the self-evaluation report and other documentation and the exploration of any matters which are omitted from that documentation;
- the level of conformity with the ENQA membership criteria (and thereby, the ESG) that is expected is "substantial compliance", not rigid adherence (see section 7).

2. Remit of the review

There are likely to be two types of external review:

- Type A: a review whose sole purpose is to fulfil the periodic external review requirement of ENQA membership / EQAR listing; and
- Type B: a review which has a number of purposes, one of which is to fulfil the periodic external review requirement of ENQA membership / EQAR listing.

External reviews of agencies undertaken by ENQA are designed principally to test compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG (Type A).

If an agency requests that its review includes other aspects of its work or organisation (Type B), e.g. the demands of national legislation, then the additional activities can be covered in the same terms of reference and contract between the Agency and the Coordinating body. In the case of a Type B review, additional resources might be required.

3. Key features of the review

Certain elements will be required in a review for it to be acceptable to the ENQA Board as a vehicle for demonstrating that the Agency has met the Full membership criteria/ESG, namely:

- the management of the review process must be completely independent of the Agency itself;
- all parts of the review's management and process must be transparent and therefore easily open to examination by the ENQA Board;
- the report produced must be sufficiently detailed to provide satisfactory assurance for the ENQA Board of the robustness of the review;
- the report must provide sufficient, verified information which clearly shows that the ENQA membership criteria/ESG have been met.

It is unlikely that these principles can be adhered to if the agency under review is in an essential process of transition. The panel is expected to review the *current* status of an agency and not upcoming developments which e. g. may affect the legal status of an agency and its operations in a substantive vein.

The review will generally consist of seven phases – these are outlined below with a commentary on key features that lend themselves to the fulfilment of the above requirements.

3.1 Notification to the ENQA Board

As soon as a member agency knows that a review is to take place it should inform the ENQA Board, through the ENQA Secretariat.

When the review is not conducted by ENQA, the Agency should provide the ENQA Secretariat with the identity and contact details of the body coordinating the review and vice versa. The Coordinating body should be approved by the ENQA Board. In addition, it is advisable that the Coordinating body (or the Review Secretary if ENQA coordinates the review) keeps ENQA informed of progress throughout the review (terms of reference, composition of Review panel, timetable of the review), no matter whether it is of type A or B. This is both to enable the Board to plan its workload and to help ensure that the outcomes of the review process meet the requirements of the ENQA Board in assessing compliance with membership criteria.

3.2 Formulation of terms of reference and protocol for the review

The Coordinating body and the Agency draft and agree the terms of reference, protocol and preliminary timetable for the review.

The terms of reference for the review should be drafted well before the process starts and should be published on the Agency's website. They should:

- clearly identify whether the review is intended to be a type A or type B;
- clearly state an outline of how the review is going to run – number of reviewers, administrative arrangements, approximate timings, language issues and arrangements for translation if necessary, etc.

The terms of reference, protocol and timetable for the review will form the basic outline of the review process itself. They will be contained as an annex to a contract between the Coordinating body and the Agency to be reviewed. The contract will specify the fee payable and procedures for payment. It will also contain information on the procedures to be used in the event of an appeal.

The Coordinating body (if not ENQA) will submit the terms of reference, protocol and preliminary timetable for the review to the ENQA Board for consideration.

Prior to the appointment of the Review panel, the Coordinating body, on the advice of the ENQA Board, will have agreed the terms of reference, protocol and timetable for the review with the Agency under review. Once the Review panel is appointed, the Coordinating body will supply these documents to the Review Chair and Review Secretary for distribution to the review panel members.

3.3 Nomination and appointment of a panel of reviewers

Nominations of experts could be sought from a wide range of sources – including agencies, stakeholders, local authorities, etc. – but the selection process must be carried out by the Coordinating body (and not by the Agency being reviewed), to avoid conflict of interests and preserve the integrity of the process.

The Coordinating body (if not ENQA) should communicate the composition of the Review panel to the ENQA Board for consideration.

Non-conflict-of-interest agreements

Experts will be required to notify the Coordinating body in writing of any connection or interest, which could result in a conflict, or potential conflict, of interest related to the review. Experts will be required to notify the Coordinating body as soon as possible of any changes in or additions to the interests already disclosed which occur during the review process. If experts are unsure as to whether an interest should be disclosed, they should discuss the matter with the Coordinating body.

COMPOSITION OF THE PANEL

There is no single ideal model for the composition of a review panel. The key requirements, however, are that members of the panel should be totally independent of the Agency under review and have a sufficient level of knowledge, experience and expertise to conduct the review to a high standard.

A review panel will be able to perform its independent function most successfully when it comprises members who between them have a wide range of professional experience of higher education and quality assurance; this normally includes:

- one or two quality assurance experts from outside the national system being reviewed: international member(s) on the panel can provide very valuable insights for the review and help to establish its credibility, and it is therefore recommended that at least one member of the panel should be a quality assurance expert from beyond the jurisdiction of the Agency under review;
- representatives of higher education institutions;
- student members;
- stakeholder members (for example, an employer).

In the light of this, the review panel will normally consist of five or six members: four or five external reviewers and a review secretary. One of the four or five external reviewers should act as chair. The Chair and Secretary may come from the same country. However, it is advisable that they come from different agencies/organisations. No current or recent former member of staff of the Agency under review should take part in the Review panel or act as chair/secretary to the review.

The Secretary will be a full member of the panel of equal status with the other members, but with specific and different duties from theirs. The work of the Review Secretary will require an experienced (having a good knowledge of international quality assurance in higher education and of the ESG, as well as excellent communication and English writing skills) person, with adequate time available to do this job and s/he will be remunerated accordingly.

The composition of expert panels within ENQA coordinated reviews can be viewed as an example of good practice: two of the reviewers will be nominated by the ENQA Board on the basis of proposals submitted to ENQA by the national agencies, and will normally be drawn from senior serving members of Board/Council or staff of ENQA member agencies. The Review Secretary will be nominated by the ENQA Board. The fourth and possibly the fifth external reviewer will be drawn from nominations provided by the European University Association (EUA) and/or the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE). The nomination of the student member will be asked from the European Students' Union (ESU). Current members of the ENQA Board will not be eligible to serve as reviewers in the ENQA coordinated reviews.

TRAINING OF EXPERTS

To undertake reviews even more rigorously, fairly, transparently and consistently, reviewers of agencies are advised to attend the training sessions organised by ENQA. Based on the lessons learned, feedback and materials from the already completed reviews, the training sessions will aim at providing experts with, among others, the necessary knowledge and guidance on the interpretation of the membership criteria/ESG. Indeed, it is important that review panels are briefed about the way in which the membership criteria/ESG are to be interpreted. Reviewers who have attended such training sessions will be included in the ENQA pool of trained reviewers.

Each training session will gather 30 to 50 participants, who are provided with training modules prepared by the ENQA Secretariat, in consultation with the Board. If appropriate, a telephone briefing will be organised with the Review panel to discuss the process of the whole review.

3.4 Production of a self-evaluation report by the Agency under review

An essential part of the review process for the Agency is the preparation of its self-evaluation document. This is the Agency's opportunity to reflect on how it measures up to the ENQA membership criteria/ESG and to gather the key documentation which supports its claim of compliance.

The exact form and content of the self-evaluation report is something which will need to be considered carefully by the Agency under review. However, all relevant quality assurance activities to be evaluated by the panel must be properly covered in the self-evaluation report and annexed documents. As the self-evaluation report normally

provides a substantial portion of the evidence which the Panel will draw on in forming its conclusions, it is also important that the report provides clear information, that it is full, frank and analytical, and that its contents can be corroborated by documentary and/or oral evidence about the ways in which the Agency meets the ENQA membership criteria/ESG. The Agency may attach as annexes the most crucial documentation (within reason, preferably not more than 15 to 20 annexes) it thinks may help support its analysis. Further documents might be prepared by the agency for the site visit. The self-evaluation report, annexes and additional documents for the site visit should be in English and made easily available to the panel.

The Annex to the ESG gives a detailed account of what might be included in the self-evaluation report of an agency undergoing an external review. This suggests that it is likely to be useful for a self-evaluation report to contain:

- a brief outline of the national higher education system, the history of the particular agency and of the evaluation of higher education in general;
- evidence of the external quality assurance undertaken by the agency;
- details of the evaluation method applied by the agency including: the elements of the methodology; an account of the role of the external expert group; documentation of the agency's processes and procedures;
- details of the system of appeal;
- details of the agency's own internal quality assurance procedures;
- information and opinions on the agency from its key stakeholders.

The Agency will publish the completed self-evaluation report on its website and submit it to the Review Secretary.

3.5 A site-visit by the panel of reviewers to the Agency under review

The details of the duration and schedule of the site visit may vary between reviews and may depend on whether the review is a type A or type B.

The length of the visit should be determined at the beginning of the review process when terms and conditions are being decided upon. It is likely that a visit duration of at least two days will be necessary for a review panel to reflect on, and validate fully the self-evaluation, as well as to clarify any points at issue. This will, however, depend on the country and Agency in question.

The site visit has a number of key functions:

- to enable the team to share, face-to-face, the impressions gained from the pre-visit information;
- to explore in meetings and interviews with the key individuals at the Agency under review, the Agency's compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG;
- to explore through additional documentation more information relating to the Agency's compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG;
- to formulate the Panel's preliminary findings regarding compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG and communicate these to the Agency;
- to produce a material for the draft report as a basis for further development after the site visit.

To enable the site visit to fulfil these key functions, it is essential that the process and the panel's time are managed efficiently and effectively.

BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

Information available

The Agency will supply a number of sources of information to the Review Secretary for distribution to the Panel. This information should be in English and easily available. The Panel should carefully study them before the site visit.

- Agency's self-evaluation document
See section 3.4.
- Any previous reviews or reports
If the Agency, or any part of the Agency, has undergone any previous reviews, at a national or European level, or has been the subject of research or study, these should be submitted prior to the review.
- ENQA Board correspondence
When the ENQA Board offers candidate membership to an agency on the basis of an application, its offer letter will include details of the areas in which the Agency was felt not to have demonstrated its compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG. If the Agency under review is currently a Candidate member wishing to seek full membership, this information will indicate the areas where a review panel may wish to focus special attention.
- Publicly available information
Review panel members will also need to familiarise themselves with the publicly available information about the Agency, primarily its website and published documents.
- Information on the national legal framework
A description of the legal framework of the higher education system in the country where the Agency is based would be very useful for the Review panel to better understand the relation between the Agency and national circumstances and the Agency's operations. Such information can be made available on the Agency's website or distributed by the Agency to the Review panel upon request.

Panel briefing

The Panel will meet on the day before the site visit. The Chair and panel members will discuss the schedule of the visit (including panel meetings, meetings/interviews, and time to study documentation), their impressions gained from the pre-visit information, and any highlighted lines of inquiry which the Panel wish to focus on, i.e. what areas of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG the site visit may need particularly to focus on. Although the review will need to focus on *all* of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, by developing 'lines of inquiry' the Panel will be able to target its efforts where there is most concern about the level of compliance. At this point, the Panel might identify any additional documentation which it would like to have access to during the site visit. In contrast, it may be evident from the information available before the site visit that the

Agency clearly fulfils some of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, and these areas may warrant only a briefer exploration during the site visit.

Either during the panel briefing or the following morning, the Panel will decide the agenda for the first meeting or interview and formulate tentative outline agendas for the other meetings. The basic structure of the meetings should preferably be decided in advance, i.e. who will ask the questions, and in what order.

For the purpose of developing well-structured lines of inquiry and the schedule for the site visit, it might be useful for the panel members to draft a mapping grid, based on the ENQA membership provisions/ESG (Annex VI).

DURING THE SITE VISIT

Meetings or interviews with key agency personnel or stakeholders

There are two major sources of information available during the site visit: meetings or interviews with staff or stakeholders and any documentary information the Panel asks for or the Agency wishes to make available on site. Both of these sources should be used to verify the information presented before the site visit and provide a supplementary source of evidence with which to assess the Agency's compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG.

The site visit is normally conducted in English. If the Agency wishes to use interpreters in the interviews, it should let the Panel know at least one month prior the visit (see section 3.2). The Panel will approve the interpreters, who must be external to the Agency's operations. The Agency will bear the cost of interpretation. When planning the site visit, it should be kept in mind that the use of interpretation may lengthen the duration of the interviews and may also lead to small differences in understanding of detail.

During the site visit, it is strongly advised that the Review panel should meet, among others, all staff members from the Agency that have contributed to writing the self-evaluation report.

At the beginning of each meeting the Review Chair should:

- introduce the panel members and ask for introductions from those present;
- outline the areas to be covered and in what order;
- agree the finish time for the meeting.

After each meeting or interview the Panel will discuss briefly where the meeting has taken the review – what is now known and what still needs to be investigated. This should assist the Review Secretary in drawing up a bullet list of, or completing a mapping grid on, the key outcomes of the meeting for later reference. The Panel should then refine the list of themes/questions for the subsequent meetings if necessary.

Final panel meeting

Just before the end of the site visit, the Panel will meet to draw together its conclusions based on the information presented. At this point it will be useful to take the time to work through each aspect of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG and confirm the Panel's key findings and any areas of concern.

Agency de-briefing

A final de-briefing meeting at the end of the site visit is optional. It will involve the panel members and staff and Council/Board members of the Agency, as decided by the Panel. The Chair of the panel can outline the Panel's key findings and explain the next steps in the review process.

AFTER THE SITE VISIT

It should be noted that as a general rule, the Agency should not submit new information to the panel after the site visit. All relevant information should be provided to the Review panel only before or during the site visit. After the site visit, only factual comments on the review report are possible.

3.6 Production and publication of a final report

The main outcome of the review process is the report. The review report will be drafted by the Review Secretary, in collaboration with the Chair and rest of the panel members, on the basis of the self-evaluation report, site-visit and Review panel's findings.

It is essential that before publication, the Review Secretary provides the Agency under review with a copy of the draft report and sufficient time to check its contents for errors of fact. At this stage, the Agency can only ask for corrections of factual errors or essential misunderstandings in the draft report. At this stage of the review process the Agency should not submit any additional material or documentation. A final report will then be produced. The final report should not exceed 40 pages in length.

The Coordinating body (or the Review Secretary if ENQA coordinates the review) should submit the review report and any annexes to the ENQA Board in English for consideration and decision on granting or (re)confirming membership. If the report has been drafted in a language other than English it should be translated under the supervision of the Review Chair.

The form of the Review panel's report is likely to depend on the type of review that has been carried out.

3.6.1 OUTLINE REPORT STRUCTURE

- 1 Executive summary
- 2+ Glossary
- 3 Introduction (contextual information should be given:
 - i. reason(s) for the commissioning of the review;
 - ii. the place of the Agency in the quality assurance structure of its jurisdiction;
 - iii. the main functions of the Agency;
 - iv. the engagement of the Agency with the ENQA membership provisions/ESG;
 - v. how was the review carried out (e.g. what was the work method employed, how was consensus reached within the Review panel, etc.);
 - vi. the national (and international) context of the review, e.g. description of the national higher education system/legal framework)

- 4 Findings (each membership criterion should be discussed separately)
 - 4.1 a) ENQA criterion 1 / ESG Part 2: External quality assurance processes
 - b) ENQA criterion 1 / ESG 3.1, 3.3: Activities
 - 4.2 ENQA criterion 2 / ESG 3.2: Official status
 - 4.3 ENQA criterion 3 / ESG 3.4: Resources
 - 4.4 ENQA criterion 4 / ESG 3.5: Mission statement
 - 4.5 ENQA criterion 5 / ESG 3.6: Independence
 - 4.6 ENQA Criterion 6 / ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members
 - 4.7 ENQA Criterion 7 / ESG 3.8: Accountability procedures
 - 4.8 ENQA criterion 8: Miscellaneous
- 5+ Any sections relating to additional terms of reference of the review or additional relevant information which is not covered by the ENQA membership criteria/ ESG.
- 6 Conclusion and development. If the Review panel wishes to, this section might also include an analysis from both the Review panel and the Agency on how the review was conducted and the way forward.
- 7 Annexes (*Key pieces of evidence – i.e. extracts from legislation, policies and procedures etc. – may be added to the report in the form of appendices*)

It would be useful for the report also to include the following information:

- the terms of reference of the review;
- the details of the timescale over which the review was conducted;
- the identity of all panel members and administrative support arrangements;
- a description of the main stages of the review;
- any recommendations for improvement.

Review panels are invited to give an explanation of key terms in optional section 2.

As regards type A reviews, even if the sole purpose of the review is to assess the Agency's compliance with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, this does not preclude the Review panel from including in its reports any additional reflections or developmental recommendations that it may wish to offer. If these are extensive, they can be included in the optional section 5 of the report, or if more brief as part of the conclusion.

It should be noted that the ENQA Board is requesting only the opinion of the Review panel on the fulfilment of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, not its judgement on the granting or (re)confirmation of Full Membership. Consequently, the Board reserves the right to deviate from the opinion of the Panel if the review process was not carried out properly and independently and if the evidence in the report was not supporting the judgements.

Where a review has a wider purpose (type B), it is recommended that the report should nevertheless include a full chapter which deals specifically with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, written in the same manner as has been described above for type A reviews.

This would then provide the primary source of reference for the ENQA Board when forming its conclusions. The full report should still, however, be submitted for consideration.

The introductory section and structure of the final review reports template is provided as Annex I - this gives more detailed guidance on what should be included in each of the sections.

3.6.2 WRITING UP FINDINGS

To enable the ENQA Board to make an assessment of the compliance of the Agency reviewed with the ENQA membership criteria/ESG and to reach a sound conclusion, it is important that the findings section is written in a way that reveals both the evidence for and the reasoning behind the Panel's conclusions.

Structure

The ideal presentation of findings is the following:

- ENQA membership criteria 1-8 (parts II and III of the ESG) should be fully covered;
- Each criterion/ESG standard should be discussed separately;
- Under *each* ENQA membership criterion/ESG standard, the report should include:
 - i. EVIDENCE: a short description of the evidence gathered – *making reference to meetings or documentation explored*;
 - ii. ANALYSIS: a consideration of how far, based on the evidence available, the Agency does (or does not) meet the criterion/ESG standard; and
 - iii. CONCLUSION (judgement on compliance): in the opinion of the Panel, how compliant the Agency is with the criterion/ESG standard:
 - *fully compliant*: the Agency is entirely in accordance with the criterion/ESG standard, which is implemented in an effective manner;
 - *substantially compliant*: the Agency is to a large extent in accordance with the criterion/ESG standard, the principle/spirit of which is followed in practice;
 - *partially compliant*: some aspects or parts of the criterion/ESG standard are met while others are not. The interpretation of the criterion/ESG standard is correct, but the manner of implementation is not effective enough;
 - *non-compliant*: the Agency fails to comply with the criterion/ESG standard.

The Panel is not required to comment on overall compliance, but may do so if it wishes.

iv. RECOMMENDATION (if any)

- ENQA additional membership criteria should also be covered.

Judgements expected

As mentioned above, the judgement on compliance with each criterion/ESG standard is either fully compliant, substantially compliant, partially compliant or non-compliant.

Please note that wordings such as “full compliance has not been achieved” or “not yet fully compliant” are not acceptable.

Where an agency is found to be either partially compliant or non-compliant with a criterion, the reason for this should be explained. Full or substantial compliance may be impossible for some agencies, owing to restrictions placed on them by the very nature of their work and/or legislation in place in their country(ies) of operation. When considering such cases, the ENQA Board will take mitigating circumstances such as these into account.

This evidence-analysis-conclusion-recommendation format will enable the ENQA Board to see how and why conclusions have been reached based on the evidence available to the Review panel.

3.6.3 DRAFTING PROCESS

For the sake of both efficiency and accuracy, it is important that the report is drafted throughout the review process rather than just completed at the end of the site visit. Some of section 1, most of section 2, and some of section 3, can be completed to draft form before the site visit takes place. The Review Secretary is also advised to add notes to the report during the course of the site visit building on the outcomes of the meetings and further scrutiny of documentary evidence.

The Review Secretary’s initial draft should be as complete as possible before it is circulated to the Chair and panel members. The panel members should carefully proof-read the report and return it to the Review Secretary with any comments or amendments before the set deadline.

After making any changes to the report the Review Secretary will produce a revised draft which, after agreement from the Review Chair, will be submitted to the Agency for comment on its factual accuracy. Any further revisions to the report based on the Agency’s comments will be agreed between the Review Chair and Review Secretary, in consultation with the panel.

The final text will then be submitted by the Coordinating body (or the Review Secretary if ENQA coordinates the review) to the ENQA Secretariat for the attention of the Board, and to the Agency.

3.6.4 REPORT STYLE

Although ENQA does not have a strict house style, the following principles should be followed:

- Font: Verdana, 11pt for main body text
- There can be up to three levels of headings:
 - 1 Main heading (bold 12pt)
 - 1.1 Sub heading level 1 (bold 11pt)
 - 1.1.1 Sub heading level 2 (italic 11pt)
- Bullet points should be formatted as in this list using a dash “-”.

The ENQA Secretariat will be able to provide more advice on style formatting towards the end of the drafting process.

3.7 Submission of the report to the ENQA Board and the decision making process

ENQA's General Assembly has delegated to the Board the consideration of review reports and subsequent decisions in respect of membership. Apart from applications for Candidate Membership, the Board will use external review reports to reach a conclusion on whether an agency has or has not met the membership criteria/ESG. The process for the scrutiny of member reviews is given in detail in the *Scrutiny form for reconfirmation of or application for Full Membership* (internal document, Annex V). The outline of the process is, however, as follows:

- Report distributed by the ENQA Secretariat to the Review Committee of the ENQA Board;
- Review Committee members produce an analysis of the report and a recommendation to the Board in the format of a Scrutiny form;
- Board gives a decision as set out in the Scrutiny form. In its decision it relies upon the application, the review report and the scrutiny by the Review Committee. The Board is not, however, obliged to follow the recommendations by the Review panel or by the Review Committee. The Board makes its decision in the light of gathered evidence.

If the report's contents, or the way the review has been conducted, do not, in the Board's opinion, allow it to come to a conclusion, it will decide what additional information it requires. This may comprise further documentary evidence, additional information from the Review panel or the Coordinating body, or the Agency itself, or information acquired during a short visit to the review coordinator, Review panel or Agency. The Board's powers in respect of membership matters, and the rules relating to appeals against a decision of the Board, are contained in the Membership Provisions (Annex I to the Regulations) and in article 7 of the Regulations of the Association.

After completion of a successful review process, the final report will be published on the websites of ENQA and the reviewed Agency.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Review Chair

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Review panel to:

BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

- Take overall responsibility for the functioning of the review, the assessment of the Agency against the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, and production of the report;
- Liaise with the Review Secretary and Agency to establish a provisional timetable of activities for the site visit;
- Review the documentation, including the self-evaluation document, provided by the Agency and any other information available prior to the site visit, to ensure it is complete and adequate for the needs of the Panel;
- Agree the lines of inquiry to be pursued during the site visit - undertaken with contributions from the rest of the Panel;
- Work with the Review Secretary to produce an outline report.

DURING THE SITE VISIT

- Chair all meetings and discussions;
- Ensure that all lines of inquiry identified are satisfactorily answered.

AFTER THE SITE VISIT

- Comment on the initial draft report produced by the Review Secretary;
- Review any changes suggested by the Agency after it has commented on the draft report;
- Sign off the final report;
- Provide, if appropriate, in cooperation with the Review Secretary, an informal feedback letter to the ENQA Board on the review process, including feedback upon overall operation of the review; usefulness of preparation activities; frankness and completeness of the documentation provided by the Agency; the quality of the dialogue experienced during the site visit; and the report drafting process.

AT ALL TIME

- identify possible misunderstandings of concepts within the Review panel.

4.2 Review Secretary

It is the responsibility of the Secretary of the Review panel to:

BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

- Act as chief liaison person in the course of the review process with the Coordinating body, the Agency and the local technical assistant (if any), and perform any administrative duties not carried out by the Coordinating body (see section 4.4);

- Liaise with the Chair and the Agency to set up a provisional timetable of activities for the site visit;
- Distribute documentation, including the self-evaluation document, received from the Agency to the rest of the Review panel;
- Work with the Review Chair to produce an outline report;
- Produce a short briefing paper for the panel outlining the background to the review and lines of inquiry that have been agreed.

DURING THE SITE VISIT

- Act as the Panel's chief liaison person with the Agency during the course of the site visit;
- Take notes at the meetings attended and the Panel's private discussions;
- Keep a record of matters which require further clarification and draw these to the attention of the Panel;
- Make sure that everyone in the Agency, especially those having low English skills, feel comfortable during meetings with the members of the Review panel.

AFTER THE SITE VISIT

- Produce an initial draft of the report – based on the documentation provided and the notes taken during the site visit - and circulate it to the other panel members for comment;
- After incorporating any suggested changes, supply the draft report to the Agency under review to check its factual accuracy;
- Include the Agency's amendments (if any and if accepted by the Review panel) in the draft report, produce a final version of the report and submit it to the Review panel, the Agency and the Coordinating body.
- Draft, if appropriate, together with the Review Chair, an informal feedback letter to the ENQA Board on the review process.

The Review Secretary will keep the Coordinating body informed of progress throughout the review.

4.3 Panel members

It is the responsibility of the members of the Review panel to:

BEFORE THE SITE VISIT

- Review the documentation, including the self-evaluation document, provided by the Agency and any other information available prior to the site visit;
- Contribute to developing the lines of inquiry to be pursued during the site visit.

DURING THE SITE VISIT

- Participate in all meetings and discussions and contribute to pursuing agreed lines of inquiry.

AFTER THE SITE VISIT

- Carefully proof-read the initial draft report produced by the Review Secretary and return it to the Review Secretary with any comments or amendments before the set deadline;
- Provide support and assistance to the Review Secretary concerning the final report on the external review.

4.4 Coordinating body

The tasks that are carried out by the Coordinating body will be:

- Liaison with ENQA in the course of the review process (if ENQA is not coordinating the review);
- Drafting and agreeing the terms of reference and the contract with the Agency;
- Submitting the terms of reference and the contract to the ENQA Board for consideration (if ENQA is not coordinating the review);
- Recruitment of the Review panel (including the elaboration of contracts and of non-conflict-of-interest agreements) following the ENQA Board consideration and decision on the panel's composition;
- Initial liaison between the Review panel and the Agency under review;
- Receiving and filing of the final review report;
- Sending the final review report to the ENQA Secretariat (if ENQA is not coordinating the review) for scrutiny by the Review Committee of the ENQA Board;
- Payment of reviewers' fees and travel and accommodation expenses.

The Coordinating body should have a high and verifiable level of independence of the Agency under review in order to avoid any risk of conflict of interests. A reciprocal review process, where two agencies organise the review of each other, is not feasible because this method is unlikely to meet the requirements of externality and independence and may give rise to conflicts of interest.

Because of its limited administrative capacity to support reviews and in order to ensure that it is not subject to unsustainable administrative demands from the external review process, the role of the ENQA Secretariat in ENQA coordinated reviews will be limited to the aforementioned tasks of the Coordinating body. Therefore the majority of administrative tasks will be carried by the Review Secretary.

5. Timeline

The following timeline gives an indication of the schedule that a review might follow. A specific timetable will be established for each review undertaken.

Before the site visit

ACTION	TIME
The Agency informs the ENQA Board, through the ENQA Secretariat, that a review is to take place. The Agency should provide the ENQA Secretariat with the identity and contact details of the body coordinating the review (if not ENQA) and vice versa.	Up to 1 year before the site visit
The ENQA Board approves the Coordinating body (if not ENQA)	9–12 months before the site visit
Terms of reference, protocol and preliminary timetable for the review are drafted by and agreed between the Coordinating body and the Agency.	5–8 months before the site visit
The Coordinating body (if not ENQA) submits the terms of reference, protocol and preliminary timetable for the review to the ENQA Board for consideration.	3–6 months before the site visit
The Coordinating body (if not ENQA) nominates the Review panel and submit the panel's composition to the ENQA Board for consideration.	3–7 months before the site visit
The Coordinating body appoints the Review panel in accordance with ENQA policy.	2–6 months before the site visit
The Review Secretary agrees the site visit schedule with the Review Chair and Agency.	6–10 weeks before the site visit
The Agency produces its self-evaluation document and submits this along with any other documentation of relevance to the Coordinating body – then passed to the Review Secretary, along with the present Guidelines, for distribution to the other panel members.	8–12 weeks before the site visit
If appropriate, a telephone briefing gathering the Review panel and the Coordinating body takes place to discuss the process of the whole review.	6–8 weeks before the site visit
The Review Chair reviews the documentation provided by the Agency and makes an initial identification of lines of inquiry with reference to the terms of reference of the review and the information received from the Agency.	4–6 weeks before the site visit
These are developed further in consultation with the rest of the Review panel.	
The Review Secretary produces an outline report in collaboration with the Chair and a briefing paper – outlining the background, schedule and draft lines of inquiry for the review and circulates this to the Review panel.	2–4 weeks before the site visit

During the site visit

Action	Time
Briefing meeting of the Review panel. The panel members will discuss the schedule of the visit and agree how the lines of inquiry will be dealt with.	Day before site visit
The site visit takes place (see section 3.5).	2–3 days
A panel meeting takes place as the penultimate session of the site visit. At this meeting the team will review the evidence presented, and draw preliminary findings, and if possible put these into the “skeleton” report.	Last day of the site visit
The Panel may then have a final meeting with the representatives of the Agency in which the preliminary findings of the review are communicated.	Last day of the site visit

After the site visit

ACTION	TIME
The Review Secretary will produce the initial draft report and circulate it to the Chair and panel members (see section 3.6 for drafting and structure guidance)	2 weeks after the site visit
The panel members will review the draft and suggest any comments, or amendments, and provide these to the Review Secretary.	3 weeks after the site visit
The Review Secretary will produce a revised draft which, after agreement from the Panel, is submitted to the Agency for comment on its factual accuracy.	4–6 weeks after the site visit
The Agency will submit any amendments to the report relating to factual accuracy to the Review Secretary for consideration.	6–8 weeks after the site visit
The Review Secretary will produce a final version of the report.	8–10 weeks after the site visit
The Review Secretary will submit the final review report to the Review panel, the Agency and the Coordinating body.	10–12 weeks after the site visit
The Coordinating body (if not ENQA) will submit the final review report to the ENQA Secretariat.	10–12 weeks after the site visit
The ENQA Secretariat will ask the panel members and the Agency to fill in a feedback questionnaire on the review process.	12–14 weeks after the site visit

6. Financial issues

The Coordinating body will normally charge the Agency being reviewed a fee to meet the full costs of the review. This will include elements to cover fees for review panel members, all travel and accommodation expenses, and administrative fees for coordinating the review.

As for the ENQA coordinated reviews, the amount of the fee will be stated in the review contract between ENQA and each panel member. The elements covering the fees for review panel members and the ENQA administrative overhead will be determined by the ENQA Board; the element covering travel and accommodation expenses will be charged at cost. The approximate total of the whole review will be payable by the Agency to ENQA on signature of the contract. ENQA will not undertake any further preparations for the review until the payment has been received.

The current (as of 2009) fees for ENQA-coordinated reviews, with a review team of five experts, are the following:

Fee of the Chair	5,000 EUR
Fee of each panel member (3 persons)	3,000 EUR
Fee of the Secretary	5,000 EUR
Administrative overhead	5,000 EUR
Approximate travel expenses (<i>if the travel and subsistence costs go under this estimate, ENQA will refund the difference to the Agency under review; if they are exceeded, ENQA can claim from the Agency the difference after the completion of the review</i>)	6,000 EUR
Approximate total	30,000 EUR

7. Interpreting the ENQA membership criteria/European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

It is important that all ENQA membership reviews should be undertaken rigorously, fairly, transparently and consistently. It is therefore necessary that review panels should be briefed about the way in which the membership criteria/ESG are to be interpreted. To this end, ENQA organises training courses for experts of agency reviews (see section 3.3).

The principal criterion for Full membership of ENQA is compliance with the membership criteria/ESG, listed more in detail in Annex IV. However, the ESG have a number of purposes and were not originally intended as a checklist for establishing compliance for ENQA or other membership purposes.

There may, as a result, be occasions where a strict reading of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG would indicate substantial rather than full compliance with one or more standards, but the panel may come to the conclusion that this should not jeopardise an overall judgement of compliance. This may occur when national legislation requires a different approach, or where an alternative way of achieving an objective is used, or because of other justifiable reasons.

The Review panel will need to exercise its judgement, in the light of all the evidence before it, and the intentions of the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, as to whether substantial compliance is being achieved, taking account of the circumstances in which the Agency is required to operate (see section 3.6.2). There is little point in adopting a “hard line” position in respect of compliance with the ESG if, by doing so, trustworthy and credible agencies are prevented from gaining Full membership of ENQA through no fault of their own.

If, based on the review report, the ENQA Board finds that a current full ENQA member agency is not meeting the ENQA membership criteria/ESG in a sufficient way, the Agency will be given up to two years to make changes to enable it to do so. The Agency will be designated as a Candidate Member of ENQA during that time. If, after a further review by the Board, or its nominated reviewers, the membership criteria have still not been met, the Agency, by confirmation of the General Assembly, will be debarred from ENQA, in accordance with the Regulations.

If the ENQA Board finds that a Candidate Member applying for ENQA Full Membership is not meeting the criteria in a sufficient manner, the Candidate Membership will cease, the applicant will not be allowed to re-apply for two years and, in the meanwhile, it will be encouraged to apply for associate status.

The terms of reference and fees for re-reviews will be subject to agreement by the Coordinating body.

ENQA membership criteria / European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

The ESG are available in Annex IV of the present Guidelines. Please note that the ENQA membership criteria contain Part III of the ESG and additional requirements and guidelines. The below mentioned criteria contain additional parts (in *italics*) to the ESG.

- ENQA Criterion 3 / ESG 3.4 – Resources
Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes, procedures *and staff*.

- ENQA Criterion 7 / ESG 3.8 – Accountability procedures
[. . .] *iii. a mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years which includes a report on its conformity with the membership criteria of ENQA.*

- ENQA criterion 8 – Miscellaneous
 - i. *The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgments and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups;*
 - ii. *If the agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of the agency;*
 - iii. *The agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.*

8. Appeals procedure

If an agency wishes to appeal against the decision of the Board or the judgement by the Review panel that it is not meeting the ENQA membership criteria/ESG, the ENQA Appeals and Complaints Committee will hear the appeal. Current ENQA Board members will not be eligible to serve as members of the Appeals and Complaints Committee, but one of them should normally be a former member of the Board. The appeals procedure itself is specified in the ENQA Regulations (Article 7 and Chapter II of Membership provisions).

The ENQA Board reserves the right to modify the present Guidelines at its discretion.

Adopted by the ENQA Board

14 September 2009

Annex I – Introductory section and structure of the final review report

Report of the panel of the external review of Agency X

INTRODUCTION (DRAFT STANDARD TEXT)

This is the report of the review of [Agency X] undertaken in [month, year, of site visit] 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). The membership provisions are listed in Annex # to the report.

1 BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

ENQA's regulations require all Full member agencies to undergo an external cyclical review, at least once every five years, in order to verify that they fulfil 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 regulations. Substantial compliance with the ESG thus became the principal criterion for Full 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. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, external cyclical reviews for ENQA membership purposes are normally conducted on a national level and initiated by national authorities in a EHEA State, but carried out independently from them. However, external reviews can also be coordinated by ENQA if they cannot be nationally organised. This may be the case, for instance, when no suitable or willing national body can be found to coordinate the review. In that event, ENQA plays an active role in the organisation of the review, being directly involved as coordinator, whereas, in the case of national reviews, it is only kept informed of progress throughout the whole process.

The external review of [Agency X] was conducted in line with the process described in *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area* and in accordance with the timeline set out in the Terms of Reference. The review panel for the external review of [Agency X] was composed of the following members:

N.N. role, organisation, country (Chairman)

N.N. role, organisation, country (Secretary)

N.N. role, organisation, country

N.N. role, organisation, country

N.N. role, organisation, country

In addition to fulfilling the periodic external review requirement of ENQA membership, the review of [Agency X] had the following purposes: [...]

[Agency X] 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 [Agency X] 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.

2 GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

3 INTRODUCTION

Contextual information should be given:

- i. reason(s) for the commissioning of the review;
- ii. the place of the Agency in the quality assurance structure of its jurisdiction;
- iii. the main functions of the Agency, its current main areas of responsibility and work, including the review methods it uses;
- iv. the engagement of the Agency with the ENQA membership provisions/ ESG;
- v. how was the review carried out (e.g. what was the work method employed, how was consensus reached within the Review panel, etc.);
- vi. the national (and international) context of the review)

4 FINDINGS

(EACH MEMBERSHIP CRITERION SHOULD BE DISCUSSED SEPARATELY)

- 4.1 a) ENQA criterion 1 / ESG Part 2: External quality assurance processes
b) ENQA criterion 1 / ESG 3.1, 3.3: Activities
- 4.2 ENQA criterion 2 / ESG 3.2: Official status
- 4.3 ENQA criterion 3 / ESG 3.4: Resources
- 4.4 ENQA criterion 4 / ESG 3.5: Mission statement
- 4.5 ENQA criterion 5 / ESG 3.6: Independence
- 4.6 ENQA Criterion 6 / ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members
- 4.7 ENQA Criterion 7 / ESG 3.8: Accountability procedures
- 4.8 ENQA criterion 8: Miscellaneous

5+ ANY SECTIONS RELATING TO ADDITIONAL TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW OR ADDITIONAL RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION WHICH IS NOT COVERED BY THE ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA/ESG

6 CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT

The panel is not required to comment on overall compliance, but may do so if it wishes. If the Review panel wishes to, this section might also include an analysis from both the Review panel and the Agency on how the review was conducted and the way forward.

Overall findings

In the light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the Review Panel is satisfied that, in the performance of its functions, [Agency X] is in compliance with

the *ENQA Membership Provisions*. The Panel therefore recommends to the Board of ENQA that [name of agency] should have its Full Membership of ENQA confirmed for a [further] period of five years.

OR

In the light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the Panel does not consider that, in the performance of its functions, [Agency X] complies with the *ENQA Membership Provisions* for the following reasons:

- xxx
- xxx
- xxx

OR

In the light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the Review Panel is of the opinion that, in the performance of its functions, [Agency X] is not fully compliant with the *ENQA Membership Provisions*. The agency is, nonetheless, in the opinion of the Review Panel, sufficiently compliant to justify full membership of ENQA.

The criteria where full compliance has [have] not been achieved is [are]:

XXX

and the agency is recommended to take appropriate action, so far as it is empowered to do so, to achieve full compliance with these [this] criteria at the earliest opportunity.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

(These can be made even if the Panel is satisfied that the Agency complies, but they should then not be points which would contradict that recommendation)

7 ANNEXES

Key pieces of evidence – i.e. extracts from legislation, policies and procedures etc. – may be added to the report in the form of appendices.

Annex II – Financial Guidelines for ENQA coordinated reviews

Financial guidelines

ENQA coordinated reviews

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

ENQA Secretariat is responsible for the financial management of the ENQA coordinated reviews. The contact details for the Secretariat are as follows:

Emmi Helle, Secretary General
European Association for Quality Assurance
in Higher Education (ENQA)
Unioninkatu 22/ Havis Business Center (3rd floor)
FI-00130 Helsinki
E-mail: emmi.helle@enqa.eu
Internet: www.enqa.eu
Phone: +358 9 2522 5712
Mobile: +358 400 896 609
Fax: +358 9 2522 5710

All claims for payment, or official invoices in the case the organisation of the expert has pre-financed his/her travel, of travel expenses should be submitted, together with original receipts and boarding passes related to the project, to the following address:

Administer Oy / ENQA
PL 176
00101 Helsinki
Finland

2. REIMBURSEMENT OF THE TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION COSTS

The Secretary of the review, in agreement with the Chair and the whole team, will be responsible for agreeing the actual dates of the site visit and for making of practical arrangements (i.e. the site-visit programme and the hotel bookings) with the Agency under review. **The Agency will help in arranging accommodation**, via local contacts, for the expert team during the site visit, **but the experts are expected to pre-finance their accommodation, meals and travel costs themselves** (not paid for by the Agency under review), and to **claim them from the ENQA Secretariat after the visit**. When this pre-financing is not possible (e.g. student members), the expert should contact the ENQA Secretariat to investigate alternative arrangements.

The Secretariat will reimburse the experts only for the direct travel, accommodation, insurance and meal costs upon receiving the relevant documentation. The ENQA Secretariat cannot reimburse any costs of which the receipts are missing. No per diems will be provided and therefore the expert should remember to retain all receipts. Only

travel, accommodation, meals and insurance costs directly relating to the activities of the project will be considered eligible for reimbursement. Travel and insurance costs will be based on the actual costs incurred. Economy class fares must be used when travelling by air, while first class is acceptable only when travelling by train and for long-distance flights. The meal and accommodation costs should be kept reasonable.

There are **two** ways in which to **claim for** travel expenses:

- a. **Official invoice.** Official invoice **has to be used in the case where** the organisation of the expert has paid for his/her travel and accommodation expenses and **these expenses will be reimbursed to the account of the organisation**, not to the expert. The official invoice from the organisation has to include **specification of costs and copies of the travel documentation and of the receipts** (the originals are not needed in the case of an official invoice). The invoice can be sent to the ENQA secretariat as an email attachment or by post.
- b. **Travel claim form.** Expert should use the travel claim form provided by the ENQA Secretariat **when s/he has paid the travel and accommodation expenses** him/herself and they **will be reimbursed to his/her private account**. In this case, the **original receipts and boarding passes** have to be attached to the travel claim form, it has to be signed by the expert and sent by post. If the original documentation is missing, the ENQA secretariat, due to its accounting procedures, will not be able to make the reimbursement. All other currencies used must be converted into Euros by the expert him/herself. The expert should state the used currency rate on the travel claim form.

Both the travel claim and the official invoice **have to include the following bank details**:

- Name of the bank;
- Address of the bank;
- Name of the account holder;
- Account number;
- SWIFT and IBAN codes.

3. PAYMENT OF THE EXPERT FEES

The fee will be paid by the ENQA Secretariat after the successful completion of the review, i.e. after the submission by the review team of the final review report and of the feedback letter to the ENQA Board, through the Secretariat. A form will be provided by the ENQA Secretariat for claiming the fee.

4. DEADLINE FOR CLAIMING THE EXPENSES

All the expenses have to be claimed from the ENQA secretariat **by [Date]**. ENQA Secretariat **cannot reimburse claims that arrive after this deadline**.

Annex III – Regulations of ENQA

Regulations of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

(as from 26 September 2008)

TITLE I. THE NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION

Article 1 – Name

The association shall be called The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Its acronym shall be ENQA. ENQA is the legal successor of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

TITLE II. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Article 2 – Objectives

ENQA has been established to promote European co-operation in the field of quality assurance in higher education. The objectives of ENQA are:

- to encourage and develop the exchange of information and experience relating to the quality assurance of higher education, in particular on methodological developments and examples of good practice;
- to function as a policy forum, developing and proposing standards, procedures and guidelines for quality assurance;
- to fulfil requests for expertise and advice from European Ministers of Education, national and regional public authorities and other bodies associated with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA);
- to facilitate quality assurance activities in the area of transnational higher education;
- to promote the development and implementation of effective systems for quality assurance and accreditation agencies;
- to co-ordinate the management of reviews of quality assurance and accreditation agencies;
- to maintain and develop co-operation with other appropriate European stakeholder organisations;
- to contribute to the establishment of the EHEA;
- to conduct dialogues with other networks and regions.

Article 3 – Activities

In order to achieve its objectives, ENQA disseminates information on experience, good practice and new developments in the field of quality assessment and quality assurance in higher education to stakeholders, namely to public authorities, higher education institutions, students and quality assurance agencies. ENQA's activities comprise events such as conferences, workshops and seminars as well as transnational quality assurance projects, publication of reports, cooperation with stakeholders and development and maintenance of its website. ENQA is a membership organisation which represents its members at the European level.

TITLE III. INVOLVEMENT IN ENQA

Involvement in ENQA can be obtained through:

- Membership (Full Member and Candidate Member)
- Associate status
- Affiliate status

MEMBERSHIP

Article 4 – Types of membership

ENQA has two types of membership: Full Membership and Candidate Membership. Membership is granted at the discretion of the Board of the Association. The admission of new members is subject to the following conditions:

- i. Full Membership
Full Membership of ENQA is open to quality assurance agencies that meet the relevant criteria described in Annex I Membership Provisions document.
- ii. Candidate Membership
Candidate Membership is available to quality assurance agencies that meet the criteria described in Annex I Membership Provisions document.

Article 5 – Membership fee

Full and Candidate Members are required to pay an annual membership fee. The amount of the annual, non-refundable membership fee shall be established by the General Assembly.

Article 6 – Membership application fee

Applicants for membership are required to pay a non-refundable membership application fee. The amount of the application fee shall be established by the General Assembly.

Article 7 – The Appeals and Complaints Committee

Functions:

There shall be an Appeals and Complaints Committee, which shall hear appeals and complaints against decisions and the conduct of procedures in respect of membership matters. The Appeals and Complaints Committee is a committee of ENQA, not a sub-committee of the ENQA Board.

A body whose application for membership is not accepted by the Board, or which is granted Candidate, rather than Full Membership, or which is redesignated from Full Membership to Candidate Membership against its wishes, may appeal in writing to the Board, indicating why it believes the Board's decision to be wrong. The Board shall ask the Appeals and Complaints Committee to review the decision, and the Board's decision on the appeal shall be taken in the light of the Committee's report. The Board's decision on appeals is final.

Composition:

The Appeals and Complaints Committee shall comprise four representatives of Full Members, one of whom will be designated as an alternate member. In cases of conflicts of interest involving one of the members of the Committee, the alternate member will

be asked to replace the member affected by the conflict of interest. The Appeals and Complaints Committee shall take decisions with a simple majority. The members of the Committee are appointed by the ENQA General Assembly for a three-year term. No member of the Committee shall serve continuously for more than six years. No member of the Committee shall also be a member of the Board, but at least one of the members shall normally be a former member of the Board.

ASSOCIATE AND AFFILIATE BODIES

Article 8

In addition to membership, ENQA has two types of formalised relationship with other bodies, Association and Affiliation. Associates and Affiliates of ENQA are not members of the Association. Bodies that do not wish to, or for whatever reason are unable to, apply to become members of ENQA may request associate or affiliate status within ENQA. Where appropriate, a body may be invited to take up Associate or Affiliate status.

Article 9 – Associates

An Associate body shall be a bona fide organisation or agency with a demonstrable interest in the quality assurance of higher education.

Article 10 – Affiliates

An Affiliate body shall be a network of bona fide quality assurance agencies or other bona fide umbrella organisation concerned with the quality assurance of higher education.

Article 11 – Application procedure

An application for association or affiliation with ENQA should be made in the form of a letter addressed to the ENQA Board. This should include a brief introduction to the body concerned, key contact details, and a statement formally requesting either Associate or Affiliate status. A decision shall then be made by the Board as to whether ENQA agrees to the request; the decision shall be communicated by letter. The Board may request further information before making its decision. The Board's decision shall be brought to the General Assembly for final endorsement.

Article 12 – Benefits

Associates and Affiliates shall be entitled to receive ENQA publications and attend seminars and workshops, and be given access to the password protected parts of the ENQA website. They shall not however, be entitled to call themselves 'members' of ENQA and shall have no voting or eligibility rights.

Article 13 – Fee

Associates and Affiliates shall pay a non-refundable fee which corresponds to one half of the Full membership fee.

COMMON PROVISIONS FOR MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES/AFFILIATES

Article 14

Members, Associates and Affiliates agree to abide by the regulations of ENQA.

Article 15

Members, Associates and Affiliates of ENQA may be asked to pay a fee to participate in workshops, projects and other activities organised by ENQA.

Article 16

The procedure for dealing with a Member, Associate or Affiliate whose fees are in arrears shall be decided by the Board.

Article 17 – Resignation and exclusion

Members, Associates and Affiliates may resign from ENQA membership and ENQA associate/affiliate status at any time by submitting a written notification of resignation to the President of ENQA. The resignation becomes effective immediately. The President shall notify the General Assembly and the Board of the resignation of the Member, the Associate or the Affiliate.

Members, Associates and Affiliates may be excluded by decision of the Board in case of breach of the present regulations, of the Membership Provisions or in the event of any action which is likely to cause prejudice to the Association's reputation or effectiveness.

The membership, associate and affiliate fees will not be reimbursed to the Agency in the case of resignation or of exclusion.

TITLE IV. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The bodies of ENQA shall be:

- The General Assembly
- The Board
- The Secretariat

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 18 – Functions

The General Assembly is the sovereign policy- and decision-making body of ENQA.

The responsibilities of the General Assembly are to:

- elect and dismiss the members of the Board;
- elect the President and Vice-Presidents of ENQA from amongst the members of the Board;
- amend ENQA's regulations;
- approve ENQA's annual work plan;
- receive, consider and approve the annual reports of the President and the Secretary General on the activities of the Association;
- receive, consider and approve ENQA's annual financial statements, including the annual external audit report;
- discharge the Board and the other accountable parties from liability for the accounts after approving the annual external audit report;

- identify and approve the external auditor and the number of chartered accountants who are to be involved in the annual external audit of ENQA's accounts;
- consider and determine the annual budget;
- establish the level of the annual membership fee to be paid by Full and Candidate members;
- establish the level of the annual fee to be paid by Associates and Affiliates;
- appoint the members for the Appeals and Complaints Committee;
- following a decision of the Board, ratify the admission of new members or the exclusion of members who are in breach of these Regulations;
- decide, if necessary, upon the relocation of the Secretariat from one country to another, giving one-year's notice if relocation to another country is to take place;
- take any decisions or make any recommendations to the Board that are necessary for the satisfactory functioning of ENQA within the framework of these Regulations.

Article 19 – Meeting and invitation

The General Assembly shall meet at least once a year. The date and place of the meeting shall be decided by the Board. The Secretariat and President of ENQA shall convene the meeting, giving at least 40 days' notice. Meetings of the General Assembly shall be chaired by the President of ENQA or, in the unavoidable absence of the President, by a Vice-President, to be nominated by the Board.

Article 20 – Composition

The General Assembly is composed of the representatives of Full and Candidate members of ENQA.

Article 21 – Election procedures

Full Members have the right to vote and speak at the General Assembly, and to nominate candidates for election to the Board. Candidate Members have the right to attend the General Assembly, except any closed parts of the meeting, and to speak at the invitation of the Chair. Candidate Members do not have the right to vote. Each Full Member agency represented in the General Assembly may cast one vote. Decisions of the General Assembly shall be adopted by ordinary majority. The members present at a meeting of the General Assembly constitute a quorum for the meeting (provided that representatives of more than half of the Full Members are present).

In the event of a vote, other than for the election of members of the Board, the President and the Vice-Presidents (see article 27), the voting procedure used may be either open or closed (secret). A closed ballot shall be used if one or more Full Members present so requests.

Article 22 – Observers

Key partner organisations, namely the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the European Students' Union (ESU), Education International (EI), BusinessEurope and the European Commission (EC) shall be invited to the General Assembly as observers. The Board may

also invite other observers. Observers may speak in open discussions of the General Assembly at the invitation of the Chair, but may not vote.

THE BOARD

Article 23 – Functions

The responsibilities of the Board are to:

- prepare and supervise a yearly work plan, to be discussed and approved by the General Assembly;
- prepare workshops and other activities as defined in the work plan;
- ensure that any specific mandate determined by the General Assembly is carried out;
- decide on the admission of new members or the exclusion of members in breach of these regulations;
- make recommendations to the General Assembly on any modification of these regulations;
- appoint the Secretary General;
- instruct and evaluate the work of the Secretary General in charge of the Secretariat, and the work of the Secretariat of ENQA;
- oversee the financial arrangements of ENQA and provide for the auditing of the accounts;
- take such other action as it may deem necessary in the interests of ENQA.

Article 24 – Composition

The Board comprises nine members, including the President and Vice-Presidents of ENQA, and has discretionary powers to co-opt a maximum of two further members. The elected members of the Board consist of representatives of agencies in Full Membership of ENQA. Co-opted members are appointed to serve until the next General Assembly.

Article 25 – Operation

The Board shall meet at least four times a year. The meetings shall be convened by the Secretariat giving at least 10 days' notice. Five elected members shall constitute a quorum.

The Board is accountable to the General Assembly.

Article 26 – Nomination of candidates

Full Members of ENQA nominate from amongst their number candidates for election to the Board. Nominations for the Board should be made to the Secretariat 40 days prior to the General Assembly. These should include a short CV of the nominees. Details of candidates shall be circulated to all member agencies prior to the General Assembly.

The principles of balanced gender distribution and balanced geographical distribution should be kept in mind while nominating candidates to the Board. A maximum number of two persons from any single member state of the EHEA shall be accepted for membership of the Board. The Board itself may indicate which candidates, if any, it encourages to be elected to the Board, keeping in mind the goals of balanced

gender and geographical distribution and the limit on the maximum number of members permitted from any one EHEA state.

Article 27 – Election of Board members

The members of the Board are elected by the General Assembly of ENQA for a three-year term. Three Board members retire each year, and three new members are elected at the annual General Assembly. Board members may not serve continuously for more than six years.

The elections of Board members, President and Vice-Presidents shall take place using a secret ballot of members. A simple majority shall determine the successful candidates. Each member agency shall have one vote per Board vacancy, one vote in the Presidential election, and two votes (one for each position) in the election of the Vice-Presidents.

The election of the Board as a whole shall take place by ballot and the results shall be announced to the General Assembly. The Board shall then seek nominations from among its membership for the position of President. The election shall take place and the result shall be announced to the General Assembly. The Board shall then seek nominations from among its membership for the positions of Vice-President. The election shall take place and the result shall be announced to the General Assembly.

If, in the election of Board members, two or more candidates receive the same number of votes, and the number of vacancies is insufficient to allow all to be elected, then the election between those candidates shall be rerun. If, in the second round of election, two or more candidates receive the same number of votes, the affected candidates shall be asked to agree among them which of them shall serve on the Board. If agreement cannot be reached among the candidates, the President at the time shall decide who shall be designated as a Board member. The election shall be re-run each time that an equal number of winning votes are cast for two or more candidates in the Presidential elections. Similarly, the election shall be re-run each time that an equal number of winning votes are cast for one of the positions of the Vice-President.

Article 28 – Representation of ENQA

Members of the Board represent ENQA by:

- fostering relations with other similar organisations;
- promoting the activities of ENQA;
- representing ENQA in relevant events;
- carrying out any specific mandates given by the General Assembly, the Board or the President, within the terms of these regulations.

Article 29

In the case of resignation, retirement, dismissal or death of a Board member, the Board may fill the arising vacancy by additional co-option. The same arrangement prevails for the vacancies of President and Vice-Presidents. Persons appointed under this clause shall hold office until the elections taking place at the next General Assembly.

Article 30 – Resignation and dismissal

Board members can be dismissed for stated reasons by the General Assembly by qualified, two-thirds majority of those present at the Assembly meeting (provided that more than half of the Full Members are present).

Board members may resign at any time by submitting a written indication of resignation to the President of ENQA. The resignation becomes effective immediately. The President shall notify the General Assembly and the Board of the resignation of the Board member.

THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS**Article 31**

Three of the Board's members are elected by the General Assembly to act as President and Vice-Presidents of ENQA. The terms of service for President and Vice-Presidents are one year, but may be renewed.

Article 32 – The President

The President of ENQA is also the Chair of the Board.

As the Chair of the Board, the President:

- presides over the meetings of the Board and casts the deciding vote in the Board when no majority decision can be reached;
- plans, together with the Vice-Presidents and the Secretary General, the agendas of the Board meetings as well as the order of items and the documentation to be discussed at those meetings;
- checks with the Secretary General the material for the Board meetings and for any other events;
- is responsible, together with the Secretariat, for the follow-up to the Board meetings (communication of decisions, etc.).

As the President of the Association, he/she:

- presides over the meetings of the General Assembly;
- does, together with the Vice-Presidents and the Secretary General, the strategic planning of the General Assembly meetings, and executes their follow-up;
- represents ENQA and its Board externally;
- represents ENQA, together with the Secretary General, in the Bologna Process;
- carries out any resolutions, decisions or specific mandates given by the General Assembly or the Board;
- conducts day-to-day work with the Secretariat;
- observes the financial situation of the association through following the monthly accounts;
- ensures, together with the Secretary General and the Finance Committee, that the annual work plans and budgets are followed;
- assumes any other reasonable responsibilities deemed necessary by the Board;
- submits an annual President's report to the General Assembly;
- is accountable to the General Assembly.

Article 33 – The Vice-Presidents

The Vice-Presidents:

- carry out such reasonable duties as the President may request;
- deputise for the President, at the President's request or in his or her absence;
- carry out the strategic planning of the Board, the General Assembly and any other meetings and events together with the President and the Secretary General;
- observe the financial situation of the association through following the monthly accounts;
- are accountable to the General Assembly.

THE SECRETARIAT**Article 34 – Functions**

ENQA shall have a Secretariat supporting the Association. The Secretariat shall provide such administrative assistance as may be required from it. The costs incurred by the Secretariat in carrying out its tasks of managing and administering ENQA are covered by the annual membership fees, the annual fees from Associates and Affiliates and contributions from such other sources as shall be available to it.

Article 35 – The Secretary General

The Head of the Secretariat shall be the Secretary General. The responsibilities of the Secretary General of ENQA are specifically to:

- maintain ENQA's records (including the files, minutes, databases and financial records);
- prepare an annual Secretary General's report, financial statements, and any other relevant documentation to be approved by the General Assembly;
- prepare the publications of ENQA;
- foresee that the ENQA website is regularly updated;
- convene, prepare, organise and record ENQA's meetings, including those of the Board;
- manage projects carried out under the aegis of ENQA, including grant applications and reporting;
- prepare the annual budgets and work plans and ensure, together with the President and the Finance Committee, that they are followed;
- instruct and supervise the work of the Secretariat;
- collect the annual membership fees, as well as the fees from Associates and Affiliates;
- collect any other financial contributions to the activities of ENQA;
- maintain ENQA's accounts and financial statements and submit these to the Board and the General Assembly;
- prepare, together with the accountancy agency, for the annual financial audit;
- function as a liaison between the Board, the Secretariat, the Members and the main co-operation partners of ENQA;
- appoint, in consultation with the President, the staff of the Secretariat and foresee for its job training;
- represent ENQA externally in the absence of Board members or when invited;
- represent ENQA, together with the President, in the Bologna Process;
- undertake such other reasonable duties as the President may request;

- assume any other responsibilities deemed necessary by the Board, not provided for in these regulations.

TITLE V. COOPERATION WITH KEY PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Article 36

In accordance with its broad objective to function as a policy forum developing and proposing standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance in the EHEA, and to maintain and develop co-operation with other appropriate European stakeholder organisations, ENQA is committed to a continuing cooperation with key European partner organisations. These include the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the European Students' Union (ESU), Education International (EI), BusinessEurope and the European Commission (EC).

TITLE VI. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 37

The financial year of the Association shall run from the first of January to the thirty-first of December.

Article 38

The finances of ENQA shall be subject to an annual external audit. The President shall propose the name of the external auditor each year to the General Assembly for approval.

Article 39

When proposing the budget, full accounts shall be submitted to the General Assembly, including a detailed report of the current financial position. A Finance Committee, comprised of three Board members, shall review the financial position of ENQA at least once a year and report to the General Assembly.

Article 40

In order to fund specific activities, ENQA may apply for financial support from other sources than the annual membership fees for purposes as described in Title II (Objectives and Activities).

Article 41

The President and the Secretary General, or, in the absence of the President, the Vice-Presidents, are authorised to sign formal documents on behalf of the Association.

TITLE VII. OTHER PROVISIONS**Article 42 – Dissolution of the association**

The General Assembly can approve a proposal to dissolve ENQA by a two-third majority of the Full members present. In the event of dissolution of the Association in one country and re-establishment in another one, the assets and liabilities of ENQA shall be transferred to the new Association. In the event of permanent dissolution, any assets of ENQA shall be divided equally among agencies that are Full members of ENQA at the time of its dissolution. Similarly, any liabilities of ENQA shall be met equally by agencies that are full members of ENQA at the time of its dissolution.

Article 43 – Disputes

Any dispute over the interpretation and/or the application of these regulations shall be resolved by the General Assembly, advised by the Board.

Annex IV – Membership Provisions

MEMBERSHIP PROVISIONS

CHAPTER I. CRITERIA FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

Comment: the Board recommended at its meeting of 11 June 2008 that this first chapter of the membership provisions should incorporate more clearly the ESG. As a result, the membership criteria are now identical to the text of the ESG. The parts highlighted in bold are additional to the ESG and were already mentioned in the version of 28 March 2008.

Full Membership of ENQA is open to quality assurance agencies in the field of higher education from EHEA member states that have been operating and conducting actual evaluation activities for at least two years.

Before being accepted as a Full Member, an applicant agency must satisfy the Board that it meets the eight criteria, listed below. The applicant agency will thereby also meet the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) as adopted by the European Ministers in charge of higher education in Bergen in 2005. The Board may modify the details of the procedures at its discretion.

Each criterion is followed by guidelines (in *italics*) which provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the criteria. Although the guidelines are not part of the criteria themselves, the criteria should be considered in conjunction with them.

ENQA CRITERION 1 – ACTIVITIES (ESG 3.1, 3.3)

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis. The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines⁴.

The external quality assurance activities may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the member.

ENQA CRITERION 2 – OFFICIAL STATUS (ESG 3.2)

Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

ENQA CRITERION 3 – RESOURCES (ESG 3.4)

Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an

⁴ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, ISBN 952-5539-04-0, Helsinki: ENQA, 2005.

effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes, procedures **and staff**.

ENQA CRITERION 4 – MISSION STATEMENT (ESG 3.5)

Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

This statement should describe the goals and objectives of the member's quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of its work. The statement should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the member and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statement is translated into a clear policy and management plan.

ENQA CRITERION 5 – INDEPENDENCE (ESG 3.6)

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.

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- *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.*

ENQA CRITERION 6 – EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA AND PROCESSES USED BY THE MEMBERS (ESG 3.7)

- i. The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available.
- ii. These processes will normally be expected to include:
 - a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
 - an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
 - publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
 - a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes. Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people. Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

ENQA CRITERION 7 – ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES (ESG 3.8)

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

These procedures are expected to include the following:

- i. a published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;
- ii. documentation which demonstrates that:
 - the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts, Committee/Council/Board and staff members;
 - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;
 - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. a means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
- iii. a mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years **which includes a report on its conformity with the membership criteria of ENQA.**

ENQA CRITERION 8 – MISCELLANEOUS

- i. **The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgements and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups**
- ii. **If the agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of the agency.**
- iii. **The agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.**

CHAPTER II. APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**Application form and documentation**

Applications for membership of ENQA shall be in the form specified by the Board (details obtainable from the Secretary General). Applications for membership are considered and decided upon by the Board on the basis either of submitted documentation alone, or of submitted documentation and a visit to the applicant body. Applications for Full Membership will only be considered where an independent external review report on the agency's conformity with the membership criteria, carried out in a manner and to a standard acceptable to the Board, is received (see 7iii above).

Candidate Membership procedure

If the Board decides, in the light of the application, that the applicant agency does not meet the above mentioned criteria for Full Membership, but is likely to be able to meet the criteria within two years of the Candidate Membership being granted, it may grant, at its discretion, Candidate Membership for a maximum of two years. At the end of that period (or sooner, if the Candidate Member so requests), the Board will require the submission of an external review report which demonstrates that the applicant meets the criteria. If, in the opinion of the Board, and following the submission of the evidence, the criteria are still not met, the application will lapse and the applicant will, by the decision of the Board, not be allowed to reapply for membership until a further period of two years has elapsed. During this period the agency will remain on the ENQA mailing list to ensure information dissemination on the activities of ENQA. If, following the request for further evidence, the Board grants Full Membership, the agency will be required to undergo an external review within five years of the date on which Candidate Membership was granted. If, however, the applying organisation does not have the intention or capacity to fulfil the Full Membership criteria, it can apply to become an Associate or Affiliate of ENQA (see Title III of the ENQA Regulations).

An applicant agency may apply for Candidate Membership rather than Full Membership in the first instance. The Board will grant such membership if it believes that the applicant demonstrates, through its application, substantial compliance with a majority of the criteria and further believes that the applicant will be able to demonstrate, through an acceptable external review submitted within no more than two years of the Board's granting Candidate Membership, full compliance with the criteria for Full Membership. If, after consideration of the review report by the Board, the Candidate Member is not, in the opinion of the Board, in full compliance with all the criteria, the application will lapse and the applicant will, by the decision of the Board, not be allowed to reapply for membership until a further period of two years has elapsed. During this period the agency will not be a Candidate Member but will remain on the ENQA mailing list to ensure information dissemination on the activities of ENQA.

External reviews

As indicated in criterion 7 above, it is a condition of membership that all Full Members of ENQA undergo an external review at least once every five years. If a member does not undergo an external review within five years of Full Membership being granted or reconfirmed, it will, by decision of the General Assembly, cease to be a member

of ENQA. If, as a result of an external review, a member is judged not to meet the membership criteria by the Board, it will be given two years to conform with the criteria, during which time the agency will be designated as a Candidate Member of ENQA. A further review will be carried out by the Board, or its nominated reviewers, at the end of the two-year period (or sooner, if the member agency so requests). An agency that, in the opinion of the Board, and following the further review, remains in breach of ENQA's membership criteria will, by confirmation of the General Assembly, be debarred from ENQA. A debarred agency will be permitted to reapply for membership after a further period of two years.

Notification and Appeal

Applicants that are not accepted for membership or which are offered Candidate Membership, shall be notified of the reasons by the President of ENQA and shall be informed of the areas where the Board considers that further development or changes are required or advised. A body whose application for membership is not accepted by the Board, or which is granted Candidate, rather than Full Membership, or which is redesignated from Full Membership to Candidate Membership against its wishes, may appeal in writing to the Board, indicating why it believes the Board's decision to be wrong. Appeals should be addressed to the Secretary General. The deadline for appeals is two calendar months from the date of the notification of the Board's decision. The Board shall ask the Appeals and Complaints Committee (see article 7 of the ENQA Regulations) to review the decision, and the Board's decision on the appeal shall take into account the Committee's report. The Board's decision on appeals is final.

CHAPTER III. TRANSITIONAL MEMBERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

The Regulations describe the objectives, membership, structure and funding arrangements of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. ENQA was established on 4 November 2004 in Frankfurt, Germany when ENQA succeeded its predecessor body, the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, which existed from 29 March 2000 until 4 November 2004, and which itself was founded in fulfilment of Council Recommendation 98/561/EC of 24 September 1998 on European co-operation in quality assurance in higher education.

At the first General Assembly of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education held in Frankfurt, Germany, on 4 November 2004, it was agreed that the organisations that were Full Members of the Network at the point of dissolution, should be designated as Full Members of ENQA, subject to their agreeing to undergo a review, to the satisfaction of the Board, as described in the section on external reviews (under Chapter II) of the present document, within the first five years of ENQA's existence (i.e. by 19 September 2010). It was further agreed that organisations that were Associate members of the Network and that wished to continue in membership of ENQA, should be invited to make an application for Candidate Membership and be subject to the provisions of Title III, sections I and III of ENQA's Regulations and of the present document. Existing Candidate Members would continue in that category and be subject to the provisions for achieving Full Membership shown in the present document.

Annex V – Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (Parts I, II and III)

Part 1: European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions

1.1 POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

STANDARD:

Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality.

The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

GUIDELINES:

Formal policies and procedures provide a framework within which higher education institutions can develop and monitor the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems. They also help to provide public confidence in institutional autonomy. Policies contain the statements of intentions and the principal means by which these will be achieved. Procedural guidance can give more detailed information about the ways in which the policy is implemented and provides a useful reference point for those who need to know about the practical aspects of carrying out the procedures.

The policy statement is expected to include:

- the relationship between teaching and research in the institution;
- the institution's strategy for quality and standards;
- the organisation of the quality assurance system;
- the responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units and individuals for the assurance of quality;
- the involvement of students in quality assurance;
- the ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised.

The realisation of the EHEA depends crucially on a commitment at all levels of an institution to ensuring that its programmes have clear and explicit intended outcomes; that its staff are ready, willing and able to provide teaching and learner support that will help its students achieve those outcomes; and that there is full, timely and tangible recognition of the contribution to its work by those of its staff who demonstrate particular excellence, expertise and dedication. All higher education institutions should aspire to improve and enhance the education they offer their students.

1.2 APPROVAL, MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS

STANDARD:

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

GUIDELINES:

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency.

The quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include:

- development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;
- careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content;
- specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional);
- availability of appropriate learning resources;
- formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme;
- monitoring of the progress and achievements of students;
- regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members);
- regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations;
- participation of students in quality assurance activities.

1.3 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

STANDARD:

Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

GUIDELINES:

The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education.

The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and that it takes into account the extensive knowledge which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support.

Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
- be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative;
- have clear and published criteria for marking;
- be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification;

- where possible, not rely on the judgements of single examiners;
- take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;
- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures.

In addition, students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

1.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING STAFF

STANDARD:

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

GUIDELINES:

Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students.

It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

1.5 LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

STANDARD:

Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

GUIDELINES:

In addition to their teachers, students rely on a range of resources to assist their learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries or computing facilities to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors, and other advisers. Learning resources and other support mechanisms should be readily accessible to students, designed with their needs in mind and responsive to feedback from those who use the services provided. Institutions should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.

1.6 INFORMATION SYSTEMS

STANDARD:

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

GUIDELINES:

Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance. It is important that institutions have the means of collecting and analysing information about their own activities. Without this they will not know what is working well and what needs attention, or the results of innovatory practices.

The quality-related information systems required by individual institutions will depend to some extent on local circumstances, but it is at least expected to cover:

- student progression and success rates;
- employability of graduates;
- students' satisfaction with their programmes;
- effectiveness of teachers;
- profile of the student population;
- learning resources available and their costs;
- the institution's own key performance indicators.

There is also value in institutions comparing themselves with other similar organisations within the EHEA and beyond. This allows them to extend the range of their self-knowledge and to access possible ways of improving their own performance.

1.7 PUBLIC INFORMATION

STANDARD:

Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

GUIDELINES:

In fulfilment of their public role, higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Published information might also include the views and employment destinations of past students and the profile of the current student population. This information should be accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity. The institution should verify that it meets its own expectations in respect of impartiality and objectivity.

Part 2: European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education**2.1 USE OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES****STANDARD:**

External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES:

The standards for internal quality assurance contained in Part 1 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. It is important that the institutions' own internal policies and procedures are carefully evaluated in the course of external procedures, to determine the extent to which the standards are being met.

If higher education institutions are to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance processes, and if those processes properly assure quality and standards, then external processes might be less intensive than otherwise.

2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES**STANDARD:**

The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

GUIDELINES:

In order to ensure clarity of purpose and transparency of procedures, external quality assurance methods should be designed and developed through a process involving key stakeholders, including higher education institutions. The procedures that are finally agreed should be published and should contain explicit statements of the aims and objectives of the processes as well as a description of the procedures to be used.

As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of higher education institutions.

2.3 CRITERIA FOR DECISIONS**STANDARD:**

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

GUIDELINES:

Formal decisions made by quality assurance agencies have a significant impact on the institutions and programmes that are judged. In the interests of equity and reliability, decisions should be based on published criteria and interpreted in a consistent manner. Conclusions should be based on recorded evidence and agencies should have in place ways of moderating conclusions, if necessary.

2.4 PROCESSES FIT FOR PURPOSE

STANDARD:

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

GUIDELINES:

Quality assurance agencies within the EHEA undertake different external processes for different purposes and in different ways. It is of the first importance that agencies should operate procedures which are fit for their own defined and published purposes.

Experience has shown, however, that there are some widely-used elements of external review processes which not only help to ensure their validity, reliability and usefulness, but also provide a basis for the European dimension to quality assurance.

Amongst these elements the following are particularly noteworthy:

- insistence that the experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity
- have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task;
- the exercise of care in the selection of experts;
- the provision of appropriate briefing or training for experts;
- the use of international experts;
- participation of students;
- ensuring that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached;
- the use of the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/follow-up model of review;
- recognition of the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement
- policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

2.5 REPORTING

STANDARD:

Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

GUIDELINES:

In order to ensure maximum benefit from external quality assurance processes, it is important that reports should meet the identified needs of the intended readership.

Reports are sometimes intended for different readership groups and this will require careful attention to structure, content, style and tone.

In general, reports should be structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations, and recommendations. There should be sufficient preliminary explanation to enable a lay reader to understand the purposes of the review, its form, and the criteria used in making decisions. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by readers.

Reports should be published in a readily accessible form and there should be opportunities for readers and users of the reports (both within the relevant institution and outside it) to comment on their usefulness.

2.6 FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

STANDARD:

Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

GUIDELINES:

Quality assurance is not principally about individual external scrutiny events: It should be about continuously trying to do a better job. External quality assurance does not end with the publication of the report and should include a structured follow-up procedure to ensure that recommendations are dealt with appropriately and any required action plans drawn up and implemented. This may involve further meetings with institutional or programme representatives. The objective is to ensure that areas identified for improvement are dealt with speedily and that further enhancement is encouraged.

2.7 PERIODIC REVIEWS

STANDARD:

External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

GUIDELINES:

Quality assurance is not a static but a dynamic process. It should be continuous and not “once in a lifetime”. It does not end with the first review or with the completion of the formal follow-up procedure. It has to be periodically renewed. Subsequent external reviews should take into account progress that has been made since the previous event. The process to be used in all external reviews should be clearly defined by the external quality assurance agency and its demands on institutions should not be greater than are necessary for the achievement of its objectives.

2.8 SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSES

STANDARD:

Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc.

GUIDELINES:

All external quality assurance agencies collect a wealth of information about individual programmes and/or institutions and this provides material for structured analyses across whole higher education systems. Such analyses can provide very useful information about developments, trends, emerging good practice and areas of persistent difficulty or weakness and can become useful tools for policy development and quality enhancement. Agencies should consider including a research and development function within their activities, to help them extract maximum benefit from their work.

Introduction to Part 3: European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies

The growth of European external quality assurance agencies has been expansive since the early 1990s. At the same time cooperation and sharing of best practices among agencies have been an integrated element in this development. Already in 1994/95 the so-called European Pilot Projects initiated by the European Commission resulted in the mutual recognition by agencies of the basic methodology of quality assurance: independent agencies, self-evaluations, external site visits and public reporting, laid down in the 1998 EU Council Recommendation on quality assurance in higher education. The creation of ENQA in 2000 was therefore a natural formalisation of this development in cooperation, and ENQA has been able to build on the state-of-the-art consensus arrived at during the 1990s.

The European standards for external quality assurance agencies, which follow, have been developed on the premises of this development in the young history of European external quality assurance. Moreover it is the conscious ambition that the standards should be neither too detailed nor too prescriptive. They must not reduce the freedom of European quality assurance agencies to reflect in their organisations and processes the experiences and expectations of their nation or region. The standards must, though, ensure that the professionalism, credibility and integrity of the agencies are visible and transparent to their stakeholders and must permit comparability to be observable among the agencies and allow the necessary European dimension.

It should be added that in this way the standards do also contribute naturally to the work being done towards mutual recognition of agencies and the results of agency evaluations or accreditations. This work has been explored in the Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (NOQA) and is part of the 'Code of Good Practice' by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

Several 'guidelines' have been added to provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the standards. Although the guidelines are not part of the standards themselves, the standards should be considered in conjunction with them.

Part 3: European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies

3.1 USE OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

STANDARD:

The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES:

The standards for external quality assurance contained in Part 2 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experiences gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are

integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education institutions.

The standards for external quality assurance should together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies constitute the basis for professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS

STANDARD:

Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

3.3 ACTIVITIES

STANDARD:

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

GUIDELINES:

These may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the agency.

3.4 RESOURCES

STANDARD:

Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise 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.

3.5 MISSION STATEMENT

STANDARD:

Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

GUIDELINES:

These statements should describe the goals and objectives of agencies' quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of their work. The statements should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the agency and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statements are translated into a clear policy and management plan.

3.6 INDEPENDENCE

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.

GUIDELINES:

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- 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.

3.7 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA AND PROCESSES USED BY THE AGENCIES

STANDARD:

The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

GUIDELINES:

Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes.

Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people.

Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions or conclusions which have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

3.8 ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES

STANDARD:

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

GUIDELINES:

These procedures are expected to include the following:

1. A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;
2. Documentation which demonstrates that:
 - the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts;
 - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;
 - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
3. A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years.

Annex VI – Scrutiny form for reconfirmation of or application for Full Membership

Scrutiny form for reconfirmation of or application for Full Membership

INTRODUCTION

The membership provisions of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) require all Full member agencies to undergo an external review at least once every five years. Candidate Members are also required to undergo an external review at the end of the two-year period (or sooner, if the Candidate Member so requests). In most cases the reviews are likely to be coordinated by national authorities but on occasion a member review may be co-ordinated by ENQA. Guidelines for the conduct of both nationally co-ordinated and ENQA co-ordinated reviews are available from the Secretariat.

New membership applications, if accompanied by an external review report, are also examined under this policy.

This policy, and the procedure that it outlines, applies irrespective of whether the review was co-ordinated by ENQA or another body.

PRINCIPLES

In its scrutiny of member reviews, the Board will seek to answer two fundamental questions:

- Does the information provided in the final report of the agency's review satisfy the Board that the review was conducted to the required level of independence, integrity and robustness?
- Does the final report of the agency's review provide sufficient, verified evidence that the agency meets the ENQA membership criteria and thereby the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG)?

In its analysis, the Board will reflect the understanding that compliance with the ENQA membership criteria (and so the ESG) can be adequately judged on substantial, but not necessarily exhaustive, evidence.

THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The initial scrutiny of member reviews has been delegated by the Board to its Review Committee (hereafter referred to as "the Committee").

The Committee's responsibility is to conduct the initial scrutiny of the final report of a member review, and make a recommendation to the Board based on its findings.

PROCEDURE**Stage 1: Receipt of report by the Secretariat**

The final report of the review should be submitted to the ENQA Secretariat, who will distribute it to the members of the Committee.

If the report has been produced through a nationally co-ordinated review the Secretariat should be kept up to date on the review timetable and terms of reference as well as on the date of submission of the final report. This will help to ensure that the work of the Committee and of the Board can be managed efficiently, and that the report can be examined as soon as possible. For more information please contact the Secretariat.

Stage 2: Analysis by the Review Committee

On receipt of the final report each member of the Committee will complete Template B. The template has been designed to prompt the Committee to address each ENQA membership criterion individually and also to gather their thoughts on the independence, integrity and robustness of the review process in a systematic and consistent manner.

The Committee members will then combine their analyses to form a conclusion and so to decide what recommendation to make to the Board. This conclusion and recommendation will be presented in the form of Template A, and will fall in to one of five categories:

1. The Committee finds that the member review was conducted to the required level of independence, integrity and robustness, and the final report provides sufficient, verified evidence that the agency meets the ENQA membership criteria and thereby the ESG.
In this case the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board (re)-confirms the agency as a Full Member of ENQA.
2. The Committee finds that the member review was conducted to the required level of independence, integrity and robustness but that the final report did not provide sufficient, verified evidence in specific areas to be able to conclude that the agency meets the ENQA membership criteria and thereby the ESG.
In this case the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board would request further information and/or documentation from the agency to address the specific areas raised by the Committee.
3. The Committee finds that the final report does not provide sufficient evidence that the review was conducted to the required level of independence, integrity and robustness, and so does not feel able to draw a conclusion as to the agency's compliance with ENQA membership criteria.
If the review has followed the relevant Guidelines, it is highly unlikely that the Committee would be led to draw this conclusion. If, however, this is the case then the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board request further information and/or documentation from the agency to address the concerns raised by the Committee.
4. The Committee finds that the final report provides sufficient evidence to conclude that the agency does not adequately comply with ENQA membership criteria.

In this case the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board does not reconfirm the agency's Full Membership and gives two years to the member to conform to the criteria, during which time the agency will be designated as a Candidate Member of ENQA. However, if the agency believes that it will not be in a position to meet the criteria within two years, it might apply for Associate status directly.

If the review in question is a review of a Candidate Member (or a member which has been re-designated from Full Membership to Candidate membership), the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board does not reconfirm the agency's Full Membership and that its Candidate Membership should be terminated.

If the review in question is a review of an applicant agency, the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board:

- does not grant the agency a membership and encourages it to apply for associate status within ENQA; or*
- grants the agency a Candidate membership (if the agency is likely to meet the criteria within two years of the Candidate membership being granted) and encourages it to undergo a nationally coordinated review within two years.*

5. The Committee finds that the final report and/or the review itself does not provide enough evidence to draw conclusions on the agency's compliance with the majority of ENQA membership criteria.

In this case the Committee is likely to recommend that the Board does not (re)-confirm the agency's Full membership and that the review is declared unacceptable.

Stage 3a: Review and decision by the Board

Board members will receive copies of:

- the final report of the agency's review
- the findings and recommendation of the Committee
- each of the three Committee members' analyses

If the Committee has made a recommendation of type 1, and the Board agrees with its findings, the scrutiny will proceed to stage 4.

If the Committee has made a recommendation of type 2 or 3, and the Board agrees with its findings, the scrutiny will proceed to stage 3b.

If the Committee has made a recommendation of type 4, and the Board agrees with its findings the scrutiny process will proceed no further. The agency will be given two years to conform to the criteria, during which time it will be designated as a Candidate Member of ENQA, provided that the agency believes that it will be in a position to meet the criteria within two years. Otherwise, the agency will be invited to apply for Associate status directly. The Board, or its nominated reviewers, will carry out a further review at the end of the two-year period (or sooner, if the member agency so requests).

If the Committee has made a recommendation of type 4 following a further review after the two-year period mentioned in the previous paragraph, the agency will be, by confirmation of the General Assembly, debarred from ENQA. The agency will be notified in writing of the reasons for the Board's decision, and subsequently will have

one month from the receipt of the letter from the President to submit an appeal to the Appeals and Complaints Committee through the Secretariat. If no appeal is received within the time limit, the agency's membership will be terminated, subject to a confirmation of the General Assembly.

If the Committee has made a recommendation of type 5 and the Board agrees with its findings, the scrutiny process will proceed no further. The agency will have the opportunity to undergo a second external review, within its original five-year timeframe, and submit to the Board, without prejudice, a more detailed review report addressing thoroughly the weak points.

The Board is free to disagree with the recommendation of the Committee, and so draw a conclusion of a different type. The consequences of the type of conclusion will, however, still be as described above.

Stage 3b: Request for further information by the Board *(if required)*

A Committee recommendation of type 2 or 3 indicates that there was not sufficient evidence provided in the final review report on which a full conclusion could be drawn. In this case the Board reserves the right to request further information (documentary or oral) about the review itself and the agency under review. This may take a number of forms, including, but not limited to:

- Any extant documentation to which the review makes reference, including the self-evaluation document, earlier reviews, published and internal agency documentation, etc.
- Communication with the review panel to seek further information or clarification

On receipt of this additional information, the Board will reach a conclusion as to whether the concerns and queries raised by the Committee have been adequately answered. If this is the case, then the scrutiny will proceed to stage 4.

If the Board remains unsatisfied, one of the following two courses of action will be offered to the agency:

1. If the Board is not satisfied with the evidence provided that review was conducted to the required level of independence, integrity and robustness, the agency will be given the opportunity to withdraw the review from scrutiny. The agency will then have the opportunity to undergo another review, which must be completed within the original five-year timeframe. The agency will conserve its Full Membership until the second review (within the original five-year period).
2. If the Board has concluded that, on the basis of the review and any other information that it has considered, the agency does in fact not meet all ENQA membership criteria, the agency will be given two years to conform to the criteria, during which time the agency will be designated as a Candidate Member of ENQA. The Board, or its nominated reviewers, will carry out a further review at the end of the two-year period (or sooner, if the member agency so requests).

Stage 4: (Re)-confirmation of Full Membership

After the final decision of the Board the Secretariat will notify the agency formally, by letter, of the (re)confirmation of its Full Membership of ENQA. The letter will include a notification (e.g. as an annex) on the compliance of the criteria.

Template A**Recommendation to the Board by the Review Committee on the final report of review of Agency**

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF AGENCY	
FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE	
RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD	
	To (re)-confirm Full Membership
	To request further information in relation to the findings outlined above
	Full Membership is not re-confirmed and the agency should be given two years to conform to the membership criteria
	To grant Candidate membership
	To reject the application and to encourage the agency to apply for an associate status within ENQA
	Full membership is not (re)-confirmed and the review should be rejected as unacceptable
	Full Membership is not reconfirmed (after the two-year period the agency was given to conform to the membership criteria) and should be terminated. The agency should be debarred from ENQA by confirmation of the General Assembly.
	Full Membership is not granted and Candidate Membership should be terminated.

Template B**Analysis of the final report of the review of Agency**

Completed by: Committee Members

Findings: integrity of the review process and quality of the report

HAS THE REVIEW BEEN CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWS, OR TO AN EQUIVALENT STANDARD OF INDEPENDENCE, INTEGRITY AND FRANKNESS? YES NO IF NOT, WHAT SHORTCOMINGS HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED?

--

DO ALL PARTS OF THE FINAL REVIEW REPORT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT, CLEAR AND VERIFIED INFORMATION/ EVIDENCE? YES NO IF NOT, WHAT SHORTCOMINGS HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED?

--

HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED ANY DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE PANEL'S CONCLUSIONS AND THE EVIDENCE BROUGHT FORWARD IN ITS REPORT? YES NO IF YES, WHICH CONCLUSIONS ARE DIVERGENT FROM THE EVIDENCE?

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Findings: membership criteria

The findings should be structured in accordance with the membership criteria contained in chapter I of the ENQA membership provisions (Annex I to the Regulations). Each criterion is followed by guidelines (in *italics*) which provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the criteria. Although the guidelines are not part of the criteria themselves, the criteria should be considered in conjunction with them.

ENQA CRITERION 1 - ACTIVITIES (ESG 3.1, 3.3)

“Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis. The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

The external quality assurance activities may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the member.”

--

ENQA CRITERION 2 – OFFICIAL STATUS (ESG 3.2)

“Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.”

ENQA CRITERION 3 – RESOURCES (ESG 3.4)

“Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes, procedures and staff.”

ENQA CRITERION 4 – MISSION STATEMENT (ESG 3.5)

“Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

This statement should describe the goals and objectives of the member’s quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of its work. The statement should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the member and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statement is translated into a clear policy and management plan.”

ENQA CRITERION 5 - INDEPENDENCE (ESG 3.6)

"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.

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- 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."

ENQA CRITERION 6 - EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA AND PROCESSES USED BY THE MEMBERS (ESG 3.7)

"i. The processes, criteria and procedures used by the member should be pre-defined and publicly available.

ii. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

The agency may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes. The agency should pay careful attention to its declared principles at all times and should ensure both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people. An agency that makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

ENQA CRITERION 7 - ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES (ESG 3.8)

“Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

These procedures are expected to include the following:

- i. a published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website; documentation which demonstrates that:
- ii. the agency’s processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts, Committee/Council/Board and staff members;
 - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;
 - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. a means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
- iii. a mandatory cyclical external review of the agency’s activities at least once every five years which includes a report on its conformity with the membership criteria of ENQA.”

ENQA CRITERION 8 I - MISCELLANEOUS (IF APPLICABLE)

“The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgements and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups.”

ENQA CRITERION 8 II - MISCELLANEOUS (IF APPLICABLE)

“If the Agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of the agency.”

ENQA CRITERION 8 III - MISCELLANEOUS (IF APPLICABLE)

“The Agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.”

Annex VII – Mapping grid for Panel members

PANEL SITE VISIT TO [Agency X]

[Date]

MAPPING GRID FOR PANEL MEMBERS

Part 1: The European Standards and Guidelines

Part 2: Other aspects of [Agency X]'s work for consideration

Part 3: Planning Schedule for meetings

PART 1: THE EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA				Issues for discussion	For session number
Part 2: European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education	2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.3 Criteria for decisions	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.4 Processes fit for purpose	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.5 Reporting	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.6 Follow up-procedures	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.7 Periodic reviews	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	2.8 System-wide analysis	Standard:	Guidelines:		
Part 3: European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies	3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.2 Official status	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.3 Activities	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.4 Resources	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.5 Mission statement	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.6 Independence	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies	Standard:	Guidelines:		
	3.8 Accountability procedures	Standard:	Guidelines:		

PART 2: OTHER ASPECTS OF [AGENCY X]'S WORK FOR CONSIDERATION AS PART OF THIS REVIEW, OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA.

Activity	Sub-activity	Issues for discussion	For session number

PART 3: PLANNING SCHEDULE FOR MEETINGS

Day 1 [date]				
Time	Event	Person for interview	Issues for discussion	Lead Panel member

