

ENQA and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

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ENQA was first established as the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in 2000.

In 2004 it became the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

ENQA is a membership association composed by Quality Assurance Agencies: 41 full members from 25 European countries.

To be a full member of ENQA, the agencies have to pass an external evaluation every 5 years. The fulfillment of the part III of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) is the main requirement.

Main functions of ENQA:

- To represent its members at the European level and internationally
- To organize different meetings and workshops in quality assurance topics
- To launch and support working groups about quality assurance
- To function as a communication platform: publications, surveys, studies

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) have been produced by ENQA, in cooperation and consultation with its member agencies in 2005, after the European Ministers asked ENQA to develop them in 2003 (Berlin communiqué). The ESG are now in a process of revision.

The main aims of the ESG are:

- 1) The consistency of quality assurance across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will be improved by the use of agreed standards and guidelines.
- 2) Higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies across the EHEA will be able to use common reference points for quality assurance.
- 3) Procedures for the recognition of qualifications will be strengthened.
- 4) The credibility of the work of quality assurance agencies will be enhanced.
- 5) The exchange of viewpoints and experiences amongst agencies and other key stakeholders
- 6) The mutual trust among institutions and agencies will grow

The ESG are divided in three parts covering:

- Part 1: Internal quality assurance of higher education institutions.
- Part 2: External quality assurance of higher education.

The standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance, have been developed for the use of higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies working in the EHEA, covering key areas relating to quality and standards.

- Part 3: Quality assurance of external quality assurance agencies.
The standards must ensure that the professionalism, credibility and integrity of the agencies are visible and transparent to their stakeholders.

Each part of the ESG includes different criterion which are divided in:

Standard: main explanation of the criteria

Guidelines: provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the standards.

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.

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.

1.3 Assessment of students

STANDARD:

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

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.

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.

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..

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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..

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 System-wide analyses

STANDARD:

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

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.

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.

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..

3.8 Accountability procedures

STANDARD:

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

Thank you for your
attention

<http://www.acsug.es>

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