

New developments and progress at ASHE Croatia

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agency for science and higher education croatia

enqa. eqar ///

Summary



- New legislative framework
- Impact on QA in HE and science in Croatia
- ASHE
- QA activities



Legal framework



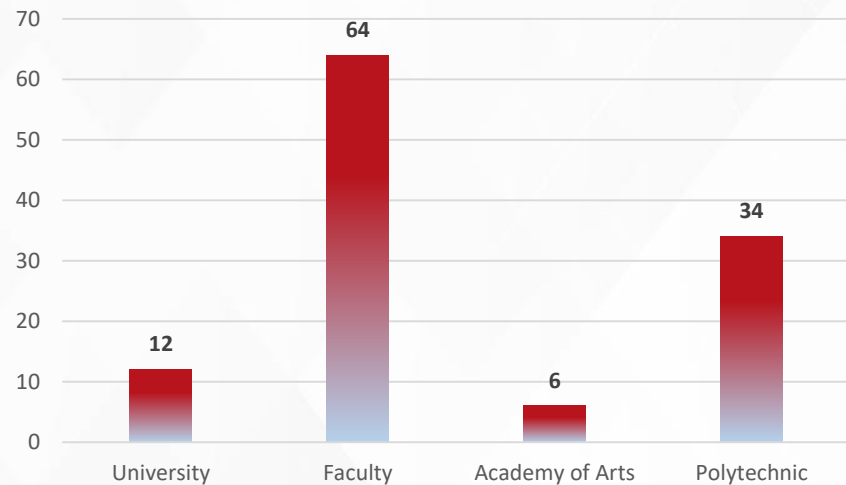
- **Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (10/2022)**
 - Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (2003)
- **Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science (12/2022)**
 - Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (2009)
- Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications
- Croatian Qualifications Framework Act
- Ordinance on the Croatian Qualifications Framework



Croatian HE system

- Long academic tradition, some universities are among the oldest in South-East Europe
- HEIs are: universities and their constituent units (faculties and arts academies),
lost the right to self-accreditation of study programmes
polytechnics (polytechnics and colleges → transformed to polytechnics)
- Depending on their type of funding: public or private
- 12 universities (9 public and 3 private)
- 34 polytechnics (14 public and 20 private)
- 161,077 students (2020/2021)
- 116 HEIs

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY TYPE



Changes



- Rectors' Conference (rectors from all public universities → all universities)
- Conference of Polytechnics (Council of Polytechnics and colleges; national criteria for job selection of teachers)
- National Council for Higher Education, Science and Technological Development (15 members)
- Internationalisation; joint study programmes
- Funding; program contracts
- Dismissal of teachers at public HEIs





- Internal QA
 - HEIs and research institutes → Internal QA and enhancement system → **unit for QA and enhancement** → an annual report.
- External QA → ESG, international standards
 - ASHE
 - Quality standards + elements + quality indicators determined by ASHE + public consultation



- shall have **the status of a legal person** with public authorities
- **shall be autonomous and independent** in carrying out the activities
- **shall comply with the ESG**
- shall be periodically evaluated → EQAR, ENQA

History

- ASHE was founded in 2005 with the aim of conducting procedures of external evaluation and improving the quality of science and higher education in Croatia.
- The Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education adopted in 2009 enabled the Agency to achieve its full independence and bring its QA activities into compliance with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
- In accordance with this Act the Agency became the only national body responsible for carrying out external QA activities in higher education and science.
- 2011 – externally evaluated – ENQA/EQAR membership/full compliance with ESG
- 2016 – renewal of ENQA status
- 2017 – renewal of EQAR status;
- 2022 – renewal of ENQA status;
- 2024 - third cycle of external evaluations.



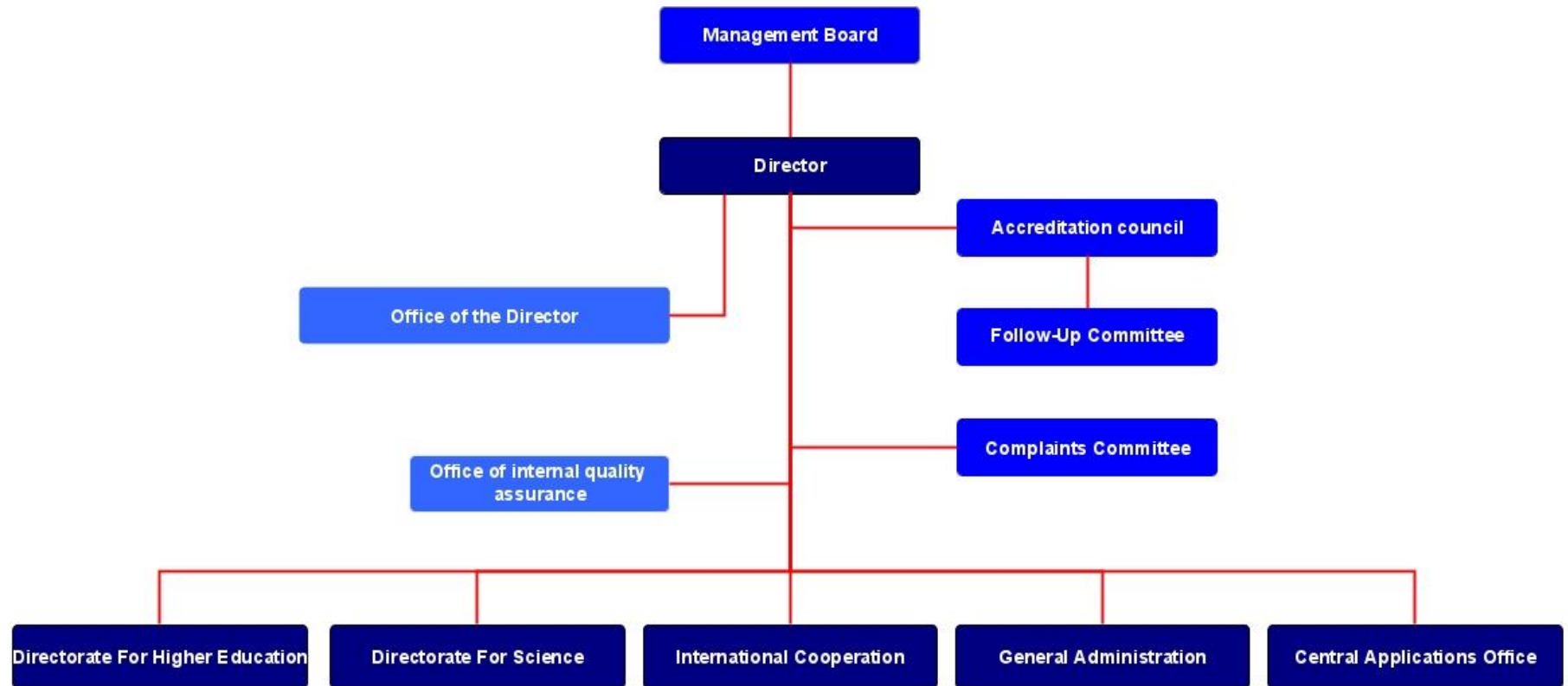
Changes



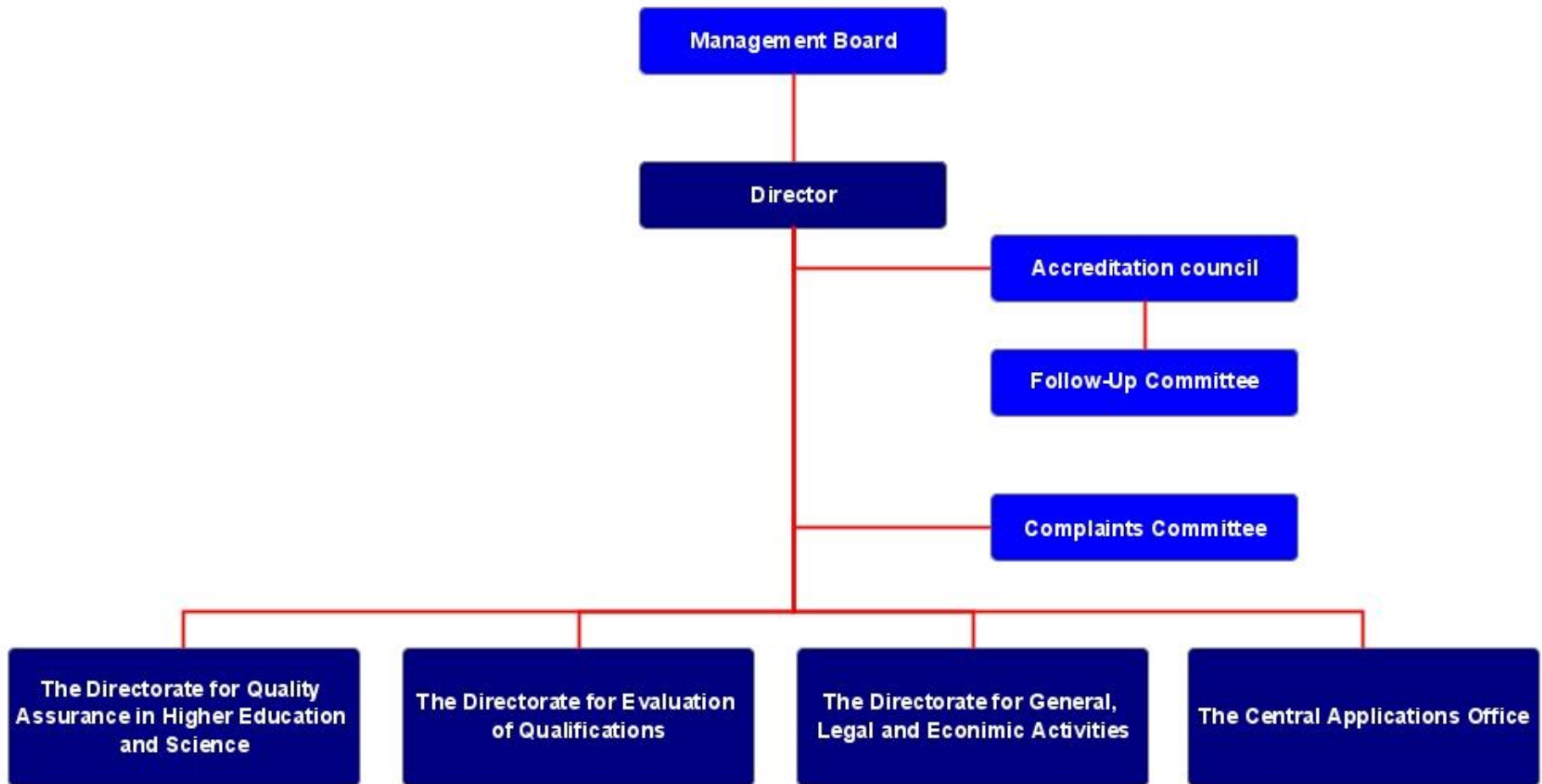
- Statute
 - Internal organization
 - Scope of work
 - Cross-border activities
 - The right to make final decisions



ASHE organizational structure until 2022



ASHE organizational structure



ASHE's bodies



- the Management Board
- the Director of the Agency
- the Accreditation Council
- the Complaints Committee
- the Follow-up Committee



ASHE's bodies



	Management Board (MB)	Director	Accreditation Council (AC)	Complaints Committee (CC)	Follow-up Committee (FC)
Number of members	9	1	13	7	7
Appointed by	Government 1+7 ASHE workers' council (1)	Management Board	Management Board	National Council (NC)	Accreditation Council
Nominated by	Rectors conference-3 Conference of Polytechnics -2 NC -1 Ministry-2	Public call	Public call NC, Rectors conference, HEIs, research institutes 6 full professors, 2 professors of professional studies, 2 scientific advisers, 1+1 students 1 business sector	Full professors: 2 legal experts 1 professor of professional studies 1 full-time student	AC+ Public call 1 is member of AC, president+ Public call (6) 5 teachers/researchers+ 1 student
Term of office	4	4	4	4	4



ASHE – scope of work



- carry out:
 - **external evaluation procedures**
 - **evaluation of programme contracts**;
 - the procedure of recognition and evaluation of foreign HE qualifications;
- encourage the acquisition and **expansion of knowledge and research** on the system of quality in HE, research and artistic activity in the Republic of Croatia and **conduct training of expert panel members** participating in EE Procedures;
- **gather and process information** on the system of HE, research and artistic activity;

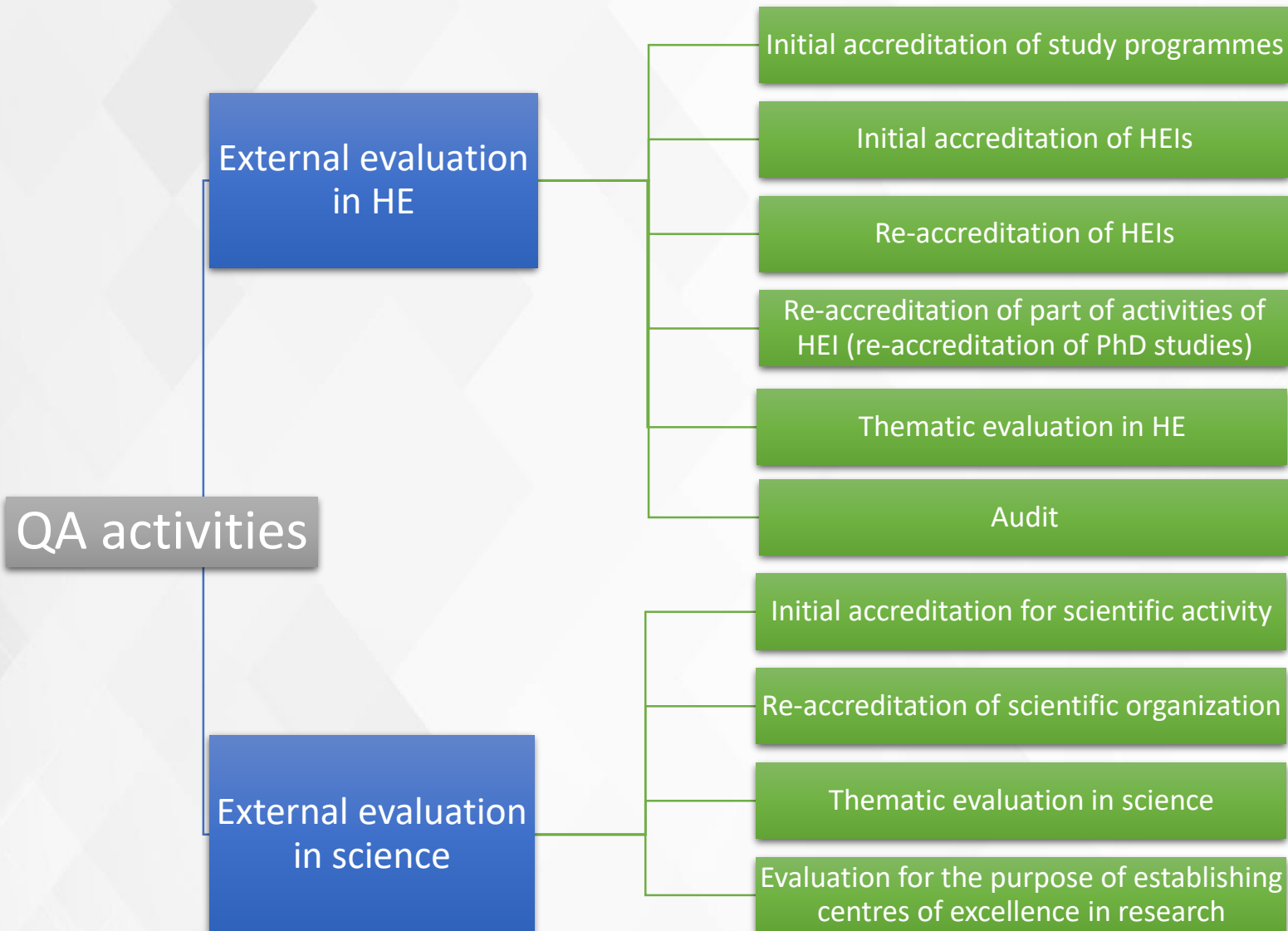


ASHE – scope of work



- provide information and unify data on the conditions of enrolment in HEIs in Croatia;
- carry out the tasks of cooperation and participation in the international associations and networks;
- **carry out evaluation of HEIs and research institutes abroad;**
- perform other duties in accordance with other regulations.

External QA activities until 2022 (inclusive)



ASHE Quality Assurance activities

1. INITIAL ACCREDITATION

- of HEI (new or change in the status)
- of research institute (RI, new or change in the status)
 - of study programme
- The accreditation of joint study programmes (the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes)

2. RE-ACCREDITATION

- **mandatory for all public and private HEIs** in five-year cycles (third cycle from 2024)
 - **mandatory for all RI** in five-year cycle
- scope: quality assurance (accountability) and quality improvement (enhancement)

3. ONE-OFF EVALUATION

- assess one or more areas of activity of a HEI or a research institute
- scope: to take into account petitions or other notifications that point to the need to protect the public interest

4. THEMATIC EVALUATION

- scope: similar evaluation subjects or areas of activity of one or several evaluation subjects
- Evaluates a particular aspect of HEI/RI or the system of HE/science
- Its purpose is the improvement of the evaluated segment of operations of HEI/RI

Four stage peer-review method (ESG 2.3.)

- 1 Self-assessment
- 2 External assessment / site-visit
- 3 Report
- 4 Follow-up



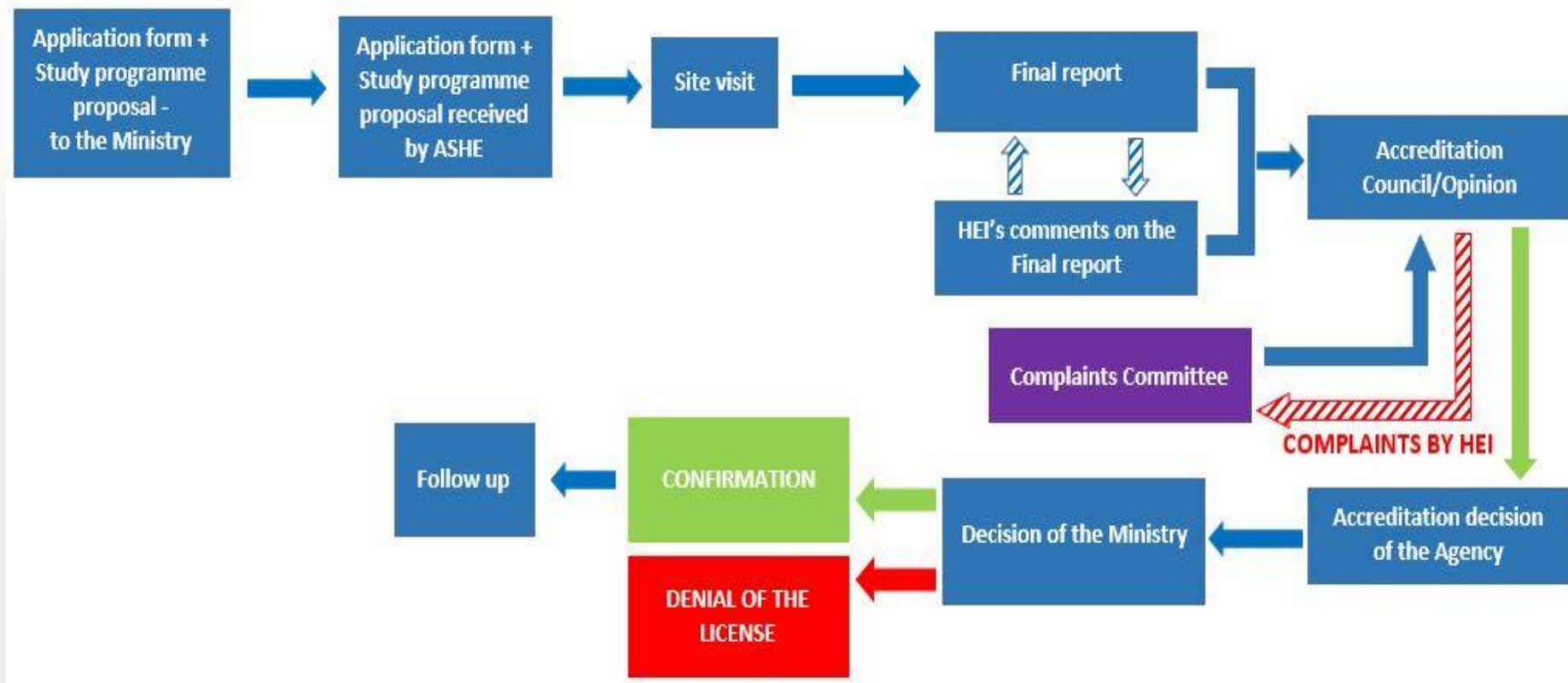
Initial accreditation for delivering a study programme



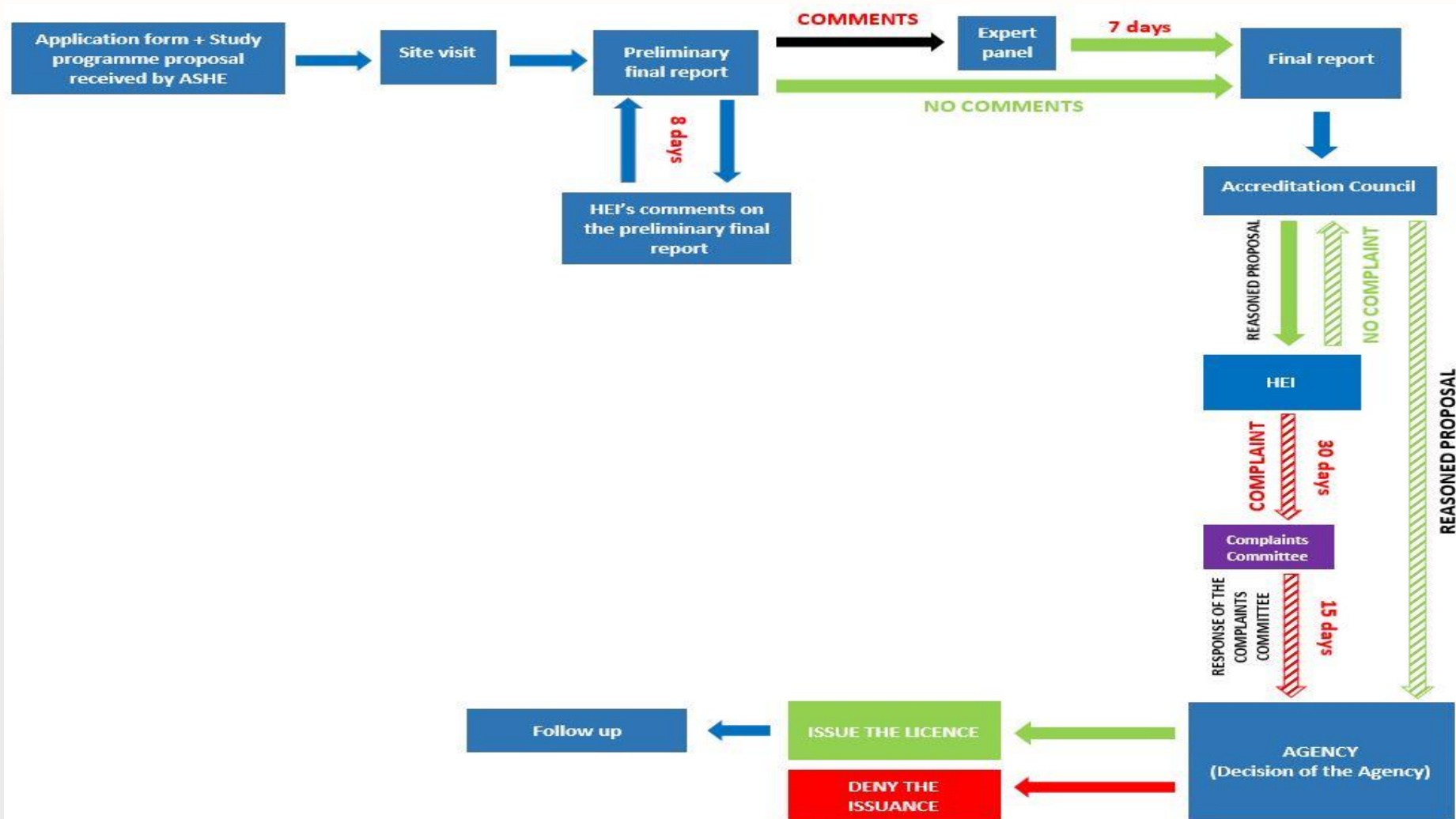
Act on QA	2009	2022
Subject: study programmes carried out by	private HEIs public polytechnics and colleges	All private & public HEIs
Start of the procedure – the request for initial accreditation	Ministry→ASHE	ASHE
Expert panel	3 members (1 student)	5 members (1 student)
Study visit	1 day	1 day
Expert panel grades	three-point scale	three-point scale
Assessment areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ LO ✓ Study programme ✓ Teaching process and student support ✓ Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ QA at HEI ✓ Study programme ✓ Teaching process and student support ✓ Resources
Accreditation Council	Opinion	Reasoned proposal
ASHE	ASHE's accreditation recommendation	decision
Decision	Minister responsible for HE and science	ASHE
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HEI's action plan (6 months) - report - every year until the first generation of students enrolled in the study programme graduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HEI's action plan (3 months) - Report



Initial accreditation – until 2023



New initial accreditation – from 2023





Thank you for your attention!
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