

European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education



Criteria for inclusion and experiences with the first rounds of applications

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CEEN Workshop “External Reviews of Agencies: Lessons Learned”

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Reminding some basics ...



- Founded in March 2008 by the E4 Group
 - New, independent organisation
 - Mandated to manage the Register
- Register Committee
 - Independent decision-making body
 - 10 members, nominated by stakeholders, serving in their individual capacity
 - Chair appointed by E4 jointly



Main objectives



Enhancing trust

- Facilitate recognition of qualifications and periods of study
- Thus, support mobility

Providing information

- Identify credible quality assurance agencies and programmes/institutions they reviewed
- Prevent “accreditation mills” from gaining credibility

Promoting a European dimension

- Allow HE institutions to choose a suitable QA agency
- Fulfil external QA requirements, if national rules permit

What it is, what it isn't ...



- EQAR will:
 - allow QAAs to demonstrate their accountability at European level
 - provide information to students and the labour market
 - serve as a basis for HE institutions to choose a QAA
- EQAR will not:
 - provide a forum to network, share experience, ...
 - be a platform for policy debate on quality assurance
 - have a representative function

Overview: Inclusion on the Register



1. **self-evaluation** produced by the QA agency
2. **site visit** by independent review team (QA professionals, students and academics)
3. external **review report**
4. **application** for inclusion on EQAR
5. **decision** by EQAR

Application criteria and process



- Specified in EQAR's Procedures for Applications
 - Developed by the Register Committee
 - Consultation of the General Assembly (government and stakeholder representatives)
- Two main aspects:
 1. The external review undergone by the agency
 2. The actual work of the applicant agency
- Application and annual fee: 950€ + VAT = 1 149,50€

1. External review



- Decisions based on reviews performed by third parties (coordinator + review team)
 - Need to ensure that EQAR's decisions are made on a truthful and reliable basis
 - Ensuring that the external review report provides an accurate picture of the agency's activities
- Requirements include, inter alia:
 - Composition of the review team
 - Independence of the review coordinator and team
 - Expectations for review reports
 - ...

2. Agency's work



- Criterion: substantial compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
 - Part 2: External quality assurance of HE
 - Part 3: External quality assurance agencies
- Comprehensive understanding of “substantial compliance” with the ESG
 - No checklist
 - Not: “Partial compliance is allowed for up to x ESG.”
 - Not: “At least, y ESG must be in full compliance.”
 - Different breadth of ESG, overlap between ESG, ...

Decision making on applications

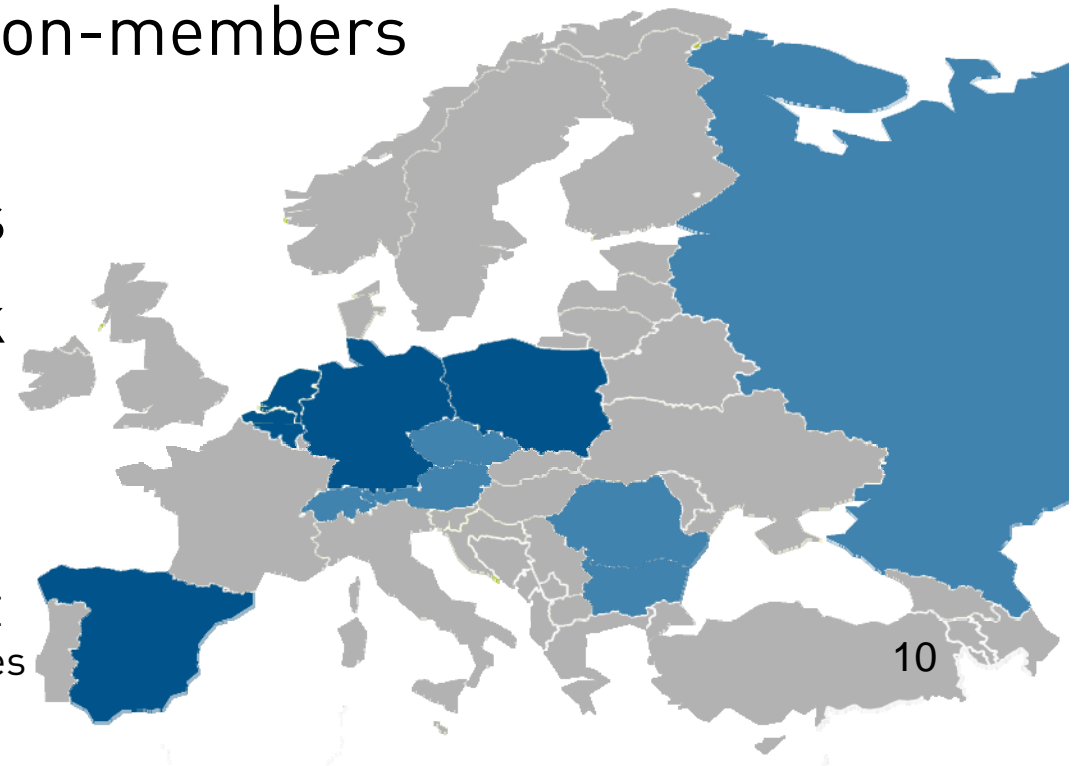


- A two-step procedure:
 - Only where the requirements for external reviews are fulfilled (1.), substantial compliance is considered (2.).
- But:
 - Substantial compliance (2.) is the core question, and it is the more difficult of the two steps.
- Problems with 1. expected to diminish over time

First two rounds of applications

- 14 applications received
 - Nov 2008: 10 / Feb 2009: 4
 - 9 accepted / 2 withdrawn / 1 rejected / 2 still pending
 - 12 ENQA members / 2 non-members
 - Problems occurred with regard two both aspects
 - Accepted agencies work in 12 countries in total

Dark blue: countries where listed agencies are based
Light blue: listed agencies have been working with HE institutions in these countries - however, this does not imply any official recognition or mandate in these countries



First applications – some reflections



- External review of QAA is a dynamic domain
- A number of differences in terms of ...
 - Comprehensiveness and level of detail
 - “Strictness” in using the ESG
 - Aspects focused on within the different ESG
 - Ways of covering part 2 of the ESG
 - Only addressing ESG vs. Range of other purposes

Next steps



Updated Guide for Applicants	first weeks of June
Next deadline for applications	26 July 2009
Register Committee meeting	30 Sep & 1 Oct
Detailed report on the first round of applications	October 2009
External assessment of EQAR	2010



Thank you for your attention!

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