Euroepan aspects relating tothe revised ESG, May 2015

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<u>Quality assurance in the EHEA:</u>

• At the higher education institution level:

Higher Education Institutions develop its own QA systems

• At the national level:

Quality Assurance agencies in most of the European countries

• At the European level

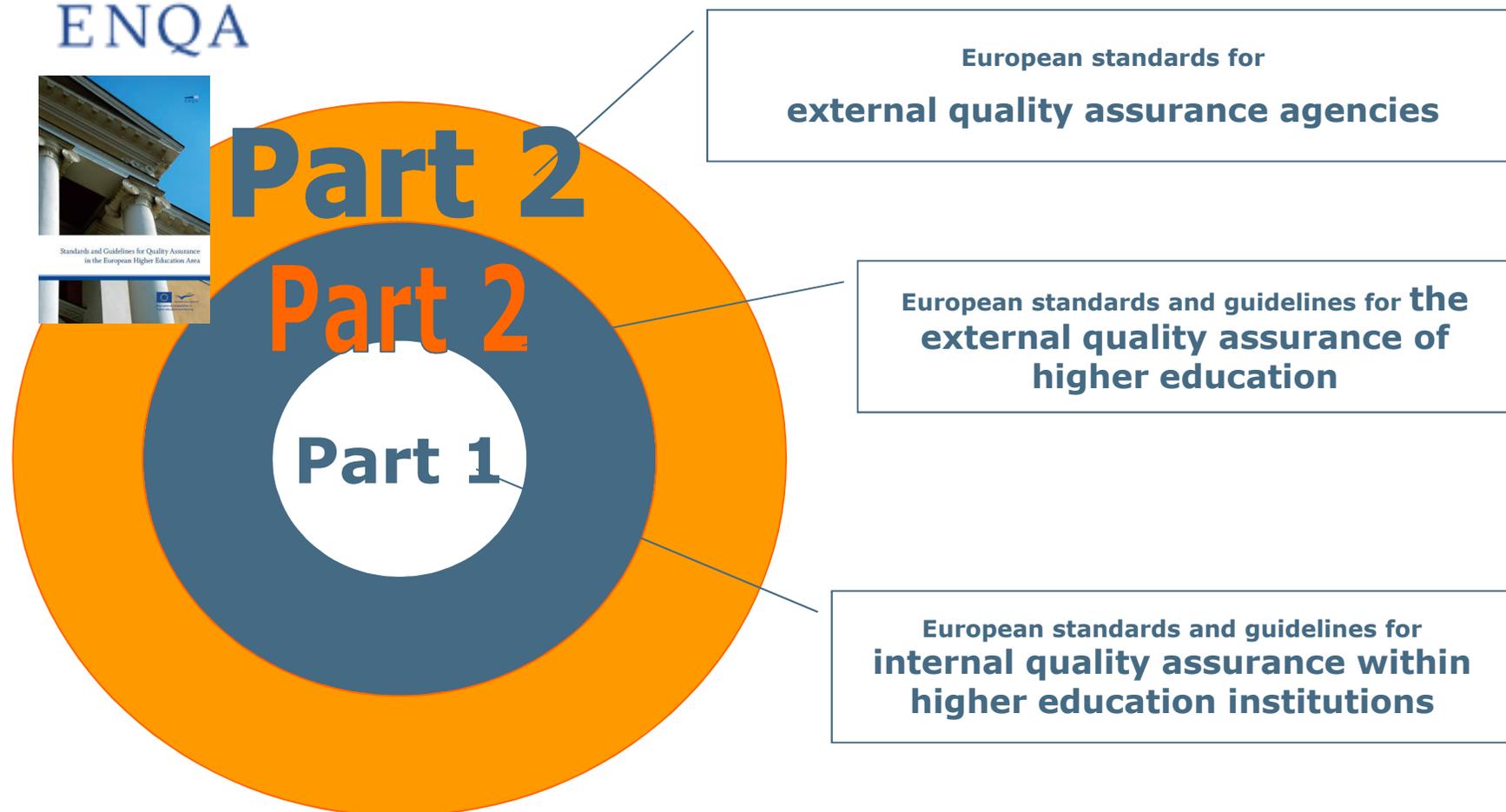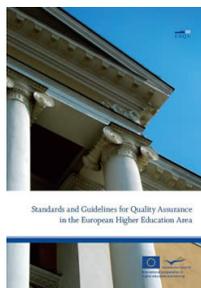ENQA and the European Quality Assurance Register

The QA framework in Europe

EHEA

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

ENQA

eqar

Spanish legal framework

University Act, Modified in 2007

Royal Decrees: 2004, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2011

Evaluation Procedures of ANECA

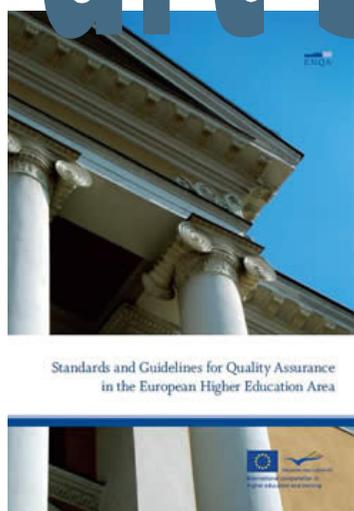PEP | ACADEMIA | AUDIT | DOCENTIA | MONITOR | VERIFICA | ACREDITA | MENCIÓN

Purposes of the ESG

- **They set a common framework** for quality assurance systems for learning and teaching at European, national and institutional level
- **They enable the assurance and improvement of quality** of higher education in the European higher education area
- **They support mutual trust**, thus facilitating recognition and mobility within and across national borders
- **They provide information on quality assurance** in the EHEA

European standards for external quality assurance agencies

European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education

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

Part 2

Part 2

Part 1

External quality assurance agencies

Part 3
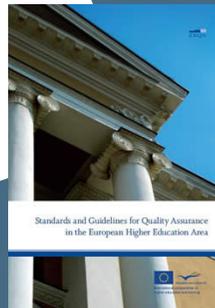
3.1 Use external quality for higher education

3.2 Official status

3.3 Activities

3.4 Resources

3.5 Mission statement

3.6 Independence

3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies

3.8 Accountability procedures

European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education

Part 2

2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures

2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes

2.3 Criteria for decisions

2.4 Processes fit for purpose

2.5 Reporting

2.6 Follow-up procedures

2.7 Periodic reviews

2.8 System-wide analyses

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
in the European Higher Education Area

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

Part 1
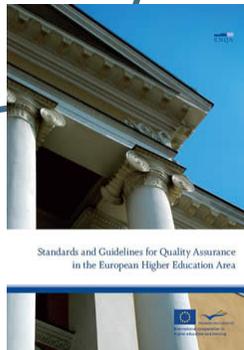
1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance

1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

1.3 Assessment of students

1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff

1.5 Learning resources and student support

1.6 Information systems

1.7 Public information

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
in the European Higher Education Area

Why revision?

- Original ESG adopted in 2005
    - Need updating taking account of developments since
    - Need clarification

- Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué April 2012

    "We will revise the ESG to improve their clarity, applicability and usefulness, including their scope. The revision will be based upon an initial proposal to be prepared by the E4 in cooperation with Education International, BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), which will be submitted to the Bologna Follow-Up Group."

Yerevan, May 2015- some outcomes

- Ministerial Communique
  - Strong importance given to the **conceptual shift to student-centered learning** (from teaching to learning and from inputs to outcomes; flexible learning paths; descriptions of learning outcomes; appropriate assessment and teaching methods…)
  - **Fostering employability** (labour market relevance of degrees through dialogue with labour market, combination of study and work placements etc.)
  - Making systems of HE **more inclusive**
  - Points at difficulties in implementation and demands more action
  - Strong focus on quality of education, **little reference to quality assurance**
  - QA one of the success stories of Bologna – only reported shortcoming: lack of progress in the involvement of students
- Adoption of two central documents for QA:
  - the revised ESG
  - The European Approach to QA of Joint Programmes in the EHEA
  - (Also the ECTS users' guide revised version, now as an official Bologna document)

Guiding principles for the revision

- Keep the strengths: integrated concept and understanding of QA, broad applicability, broad ownership
- Overcome the weaknesses: vagueness, redundancies, inconsistencies
- Update: ESG as part of the 'Bologna-Infrastructure', taking into account recent developments in QA and HE
- Guarantee adaptability to future developments
- Keep a balance between changing too much and too little

Principles of European QA

- **HEIs have primary responsibility** for the quality of their provision and its assurance
- QA **responds to the diversity** of HE systems, institutions and programmes
- QA supports the development of a **quality culture**
- QA involves stakeholders and takes into account the **expectations of all stakeholders and society**

Some important changes overall

- **Underlined that apply to all programmes** whichever mode or place of delivery in the EHEA (elearning, TNE…) →
  - programmes delivered abroad should be "as good" as at home, but does this mean "the same"? → criteria?
  - Site visits to programme abroad? Cost, practicalities etc. or the other extreme: see UK
  - Can e-learning be evaluated along the same criteria as traditional forms of education? E.g. drop-out rates, teacher-student ratio, m2/student, the student experience, assessment methods (LOs)…
- Apply to agencies **wherever they carry out EQA** (if want to be in ENQA or in EQAR), and **weather the activities are compulsory or voluntary** → CBQA needs to be ESG compliant, too
- Underlines the **importance of enhancement for all QA processes**, and the support EQA needs to give to the **development of a quality culture**
- Strong focus on **the shift to student-centered learning**

Main changes in Part 1

- **Flexible learning central:** frequent reference to LLL, RPL, different delivery modes, diverse student body etc.
- **LOs and SCL have a strong focus**, and are mentioned in 5 out of the 10 standards!
    - 1.2: design of programmes, explicit reference to LOs, national QFs and QF-EHEA
    - 1.4: student admission and progression have a stronger focus than before and refer throughout to LOs based approach
    - 1.6: student support standard emphasis the diversity of the student population
- A new standard focusing altogether on student centered learning, teaching and assessment (1.3) → **requires a shift in thinking about "what is quality" in teaching and learning**. Headache for both IQA how to demonstrate this ☺
- The real question for EQA: how can EQA support the implementation of these standards and monitor them? How can student-centeredness be translated into indicators? BUT: no longer an optional, but a "must do"!

Agencies need to be able show in their external review how they address all standards of Part 1 in their own procedures and through their own standards from autumn 2015 onwards!

Concluding remarks Revised Part 1

- A new focus on institutional capacity to take charge of quality
    - Are all HEIs and systems ready to respond to the challenge?
- A new focus on student involvement
    - How to make it meaningful?
- HE promoting employability
    - How to demonstrate the value added of HE?

Main changes in Part 2

- Rearrangement: moving some standards from and to part 3 (and part 1) to make it more consistent and logical
- Standard 1.10: cyclical review. In line with the idea of an open QA area, the responsibility of the cyclicity of the reviews is put to the HEI, from the agency (can change agency in-between)
- Content regarding development of procedures, standards for procedures and, criteria slightly rearranged and singling out some crucial elements:
  - Standard 2.4: peer-review experts → **requires a student member**, recommends international experts (guidelines). More focus on role of peer-reviewers (new standard)
  - Standard 2.6: reporting → required publication of **full expert** report (summaries and/or decision not enough!); whether positive or negative. "Intended readership" clarified
  - Standard 2.7 (from ex 3.7 guidelines): complaints and appeals → emphasised (a standard of its own) and **now required for all procedures** (whether formal outcomes or not)

Previous version ESG – Part 2		Revised ESG – Part 2
2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures		2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance
2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes		2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose
2.3 Criteria for decisions		2.3 Implementing processes
2.4 Processes fit for purpose		2.4 Peer-review experts
2.5 Reporting		2.5 Criteria for outcomes
2.6 Follow-up procedures		2.6 Reporting
2.7 Periodic reviews		2.7 Complaints and appeals
2.8 System-wide analyses		

Main Changes in Part 3

- Rearranging to be more coherent and logical (3.1. combines previous 3.1, 3.3, and 3.5)
- 3.2: Recognising public authority **does not have to be from an EHEA country/a country**.
- 3.3: **Notion of independence explained better** (organisational, operational, and of outcomes). Third party involved *in individual capacity* (to strike the balance between stakeholder involvement and independence)
- 3.4 **thematic analysis**: 2005 "from time to time", 2015: "regularly" → more strict
- 3.5: resources - now has **guidelines that explain what is "adequate"** (also thematic analysis, information activities etc.)
- 3.6: Professional conduct (see later)
- 3.7: **cyclical external review of agencies** (appeared before in guidelines to 3.8), to create a parallel with HEIs (see 1.10))

Previous version ESG – Part 3		Revised ESG – Part 3
3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education		3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance
3.2 Official status		3.2 Official status
3.3 Activities		3.3 Independence
3.4 Resources		3.4 Thematic analysis
3.5 Mission statement		3.5 Resources
3.6 Independence		3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct
3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies		3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies
3.8 Accountability procedures		

In detail: 3.6 Internal quality assurance and **professional conduct**
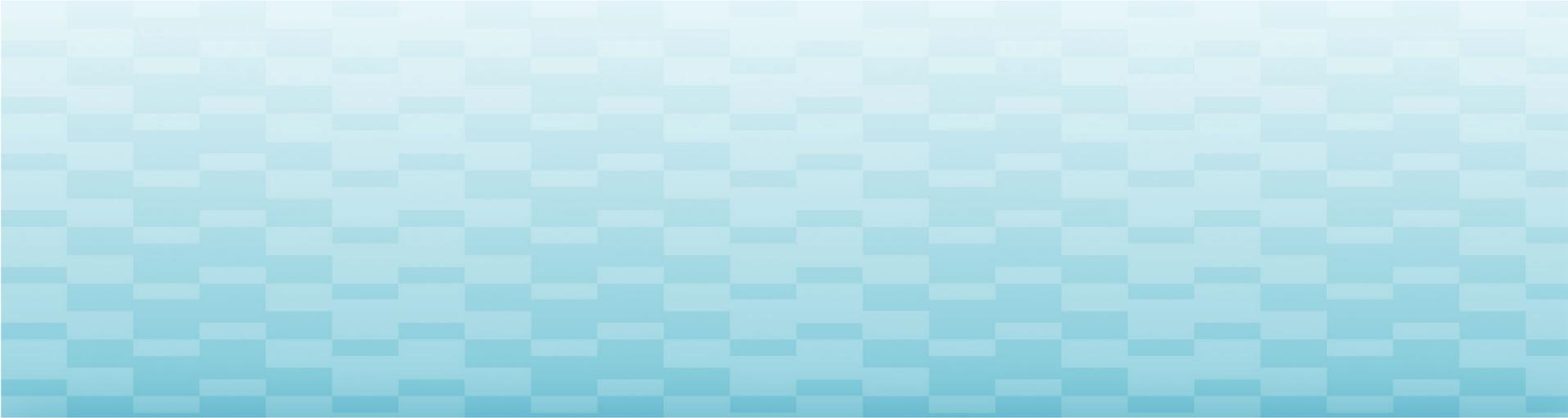
"Standard:

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities."

Guidelines mention that:

- "The agencies need to be accountable to their stakeholders. Therefore, **high professional standards and integrity** in the agency's work are indispensable"

- Agencies should have "processes to **establish the status and recognition of the institutions** with which it conducts external quality assurance"

- Agencies need to have a policy that "outlines the **appropriate communication with the relevant authorities of those jurisdictions where they operate**"

- Ensure that **any activities carried out and material produced** by subcontractors are **in line with the ESG**

→ takes seriously the fact that agencies have started to operate abroad, and how this can lead to issues regarding the (seriousness/ESG compliance) of activities carried out abroad. ENQA and in particular EQAR will check and monitor this!

→ Agencies need to create such policies and processes where these do not exist, yet.

ENQA Agency Reviews

- Fast changes required! → some of them will require legislative change in some countries (publication of reports) or change in mentality (involvement of students → the "black spot" for QA)

- **Engagement with ministries/public authorities**: need to try to change what cannot change independently (use the ESG!) → EQAR requirement

- **Evidence of compliance** with the revised version required by EQAR from the start (need to wait until the agency is really ready, in particular if substantial changes are required)

- Revised review process:
    - 4 experts and a coordinator from ENQA Secretariat
    - Coordinated process with EQAR for agencies wishing to apply for both
    - Look at each ESG of parts II and III in their own right → the ENQA membership criteria
    - Agencies need to be able to demonstrate that cover all part I in their own criteria (standard 2.1)

Thank you!

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