



ESG 2015 – What has changed and what does it mean for QA practitioners?

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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

The ESG basics

- Three parts covering
 - ✓ Internal QA within HEIs
 - ✓ External QA carried by QAAs
 - ✓ Internal QA within QAAs
- Focus on learning and teaching in HE, including
 - ✓ Learning environment
 - ✓ Links to research and innovation
- The ESG are applicable to all types of HE; irrespective of mode of provision or place of delivery
- *The standards*: agreed and accepted practice – Should be taken account of and adhered to
- *The guidelines* explain why the standard is important and describe how standards might be implemented

A new standard in Part 1

1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

- Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Further links to learning and teaching

- Learning outcomes
 - ✓ Highly debated during the revision
 - ✓ Partial implementation
 - ✓ Division of roles between HEIs and QAAs
- National qualification frameworks
 - ✓ Not existing everywhere
 - ✓ Division of roles between HEIs and QAAs

Focus on institutional capacity to take charge of quality

- A strong link between quality assurance and the academic quality of learning and teaching
- Ensuring the quality of student experience and success
- Demonstrate that institutions have put in place robust measures to review their programmes
- The ability of the QA system to generate information that is valuable for both internal decision-making and external stakeholders
- The need to link quality assurance to institutional strategic management

The role of external QA?

2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

- External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance described in Part 1 of the ESG

Public information

2.6 Reporting

- Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

Appeals and complaints

2.7 Complaints and appeals

- Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions

Agencies...

- 3 dimensions of independence
 - ✓ Organisational independence
 - ✓ Operational independence
 - ✓ Independence of formal outcomes
- Cyclical external reviews as a new standard
- An established legal basis... formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities

... operating across borders

3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

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

Conclusions

- Mainstreaming QA
- National implementation and interpretation: impact of the context to the use and implementation
- Aim for improved quality levels in higher education, not mere compliance with the ESG