



European Association for
Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Mr. Andrei Chiciuc
President
National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC)
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Brussels, 6 November 2023

Subject: Statement on validation of the external review report of ANACEC

Dear Mr. Andrei Chiciuc,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting on 25 October 2023, the ENQA Agency Review Committee validated the external review report of ANACEC. The committee concluded that the report has been produced in accordance with the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews and can thus be used to apply for ENQA membership and EQAR registration, as well as for any other purposes. This is in line with article 26, paragraph 2 of ENQA's Rules of Procedure, which states that the review report can be further used only once this statement of validation has been issued. The purpose of this statement is to set out the committee's views on the quality of the final report and consistency of the panel's evaluation on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The committee examined the provided review report and asked the panel for minor revisions on the ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance, where the panel was asked to map the agency's standards for authorization procedures against Part 1 of the ESG. In addition, the panel should further clarify whether these standards are the same standards as for the accreditation/re-accreditation procedures of ANACEC.

Furthermore, on ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct, the committee noted the panel's critical findings on the standard. Since the agency does not fully implement the PDCA cycle, does not have a formal mechanism in place for induction and onboarding of the Governing Board and the Profile Committee in Higher Education, and very importantly, does not ensure the closing of the feedback loop in relation to internal quality assurance tools in order to confirm that surveys results are acted upon and actions of improvement are monitored, the committee found the agency to be partially compliant with the standard, and not compliant.



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The committee received the final review report that addressed the additional requirements on the ESG 2.1. The final review report can thus be further used to apply for ENQA membership and EQAR registration, as well as for any other purposes, as stipulated above.

This statement will be published on ENQA's website as an annex to the review report.

Thank you for your trust placed in ENQA to conduct this review. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the ENQA Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alastair Delaney', is positioned above the typed name.

Mr. Alastair Delaney
Chair of ENQA Agency Review Committee

Annex: Areas for development

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As outlined by the review panel and further discussed by the committee (where relevant), ANACEC is recommended to take appropriate action, in so far as it is empowered to do so, on the following issues:

ESG 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

The agency is recommended to add more structure, clarity, and capacity building in the processes relating to strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting.

The agency is recommended to revisit the methodology for the representation of stakeholders on the GB in order to ensure their nomination by legitimate and recognised national bodies representing the state sector, private sector and/or the civil society.

ESG 3.3 Independence

The agency is recommended to revisit the relevant regulations so as to allow the GB to elect the President, Vice-President, and Secretary General by the GB members.

The agency is recommended to reconsider the current organisation structure in the sense of adding a permanent administrative structure to safeguard institutional memory.

The agency is recommended to ensure its financial sustainability and adjust the relevant legislation accordingly; this would ensure a more autonomous financial management in order to enable the agency to act independently.

The agency is recommended to enhance the agency efforts to trigger the relevant changes that would enable it to organise its own structure and work, including organisation chart and allocation of human resources.

The agency is recommended to drive changes in the relevant legislative framework so as to remove decision-making interference from the Ministry and enable ANACEC to make accreditation decisions.

The agency is recommended to ensure that GB members are acting in an individual capacity and not based on a mandate from the institution they are coming from.

ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis

The agency is recommended to continue the practice of conducting and publishing thematic analysis, and give a strategic reconsideration of their scope and implementation.

The agency is recommended to formally define its commitment regarding the regularity of publication of thematic analysis.

ESG 3.5 Resources

The agency is recommended to reconsider and enlarge the human resource capacity to equip the agency for the upcoming work, including the institutional and doctoral school evaluations, as well as the developmental work in supporting quality culture at the HEI level.

The agency is recommended to ensure the funding to enable human resources that are stable and qualified to meet their roles, including language proficiency.

ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

The agency is recommended to revisit the internal quality assurance policy to align it with similar, best practice, documents of this kind and more clearly convey the commitment to implement the full PDCA cycle, while engaging with internal and external stakeholders.

The agency is recommended to formalise a mechanism for the training/induction/onboarding of the Governing Board, and the PCHE in order to ensure that they are equipped and act professionally in undertaking their roles.

The agency is recommended to remove conflicting distribution of powers between different roles and units, particularly on the individuals that sit both on the GB and EM.

The agency is recommended to conduct an evaluation process that addresses the effectiveness of the agency governance systems.

The agency is recommended to ensure the closing of the feedback loop in relation to internal quality assurance tools in order to confirm that surveys results are acted upon and actions of improvement are monitored.

ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

The agency is recommended to enhance the development of quality culture and support the institutional capacity and capability so that quality assurance at the HEI level is not an externally driven preoccupation, but an internally understood responsibility.

ESG 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

The agency is recommended to ensure that the scope of activities assigned to the agency and the methodologies designed for them are supported by the capacity of ANACEC to implement it.

The agency is recommended to safeguard the contextualisation aspect in the development of upcoming procedures and in the revision of the existing ones in order to ensure the fitness for purpose of the regulatory framework the agency operates under.

The agency is recommended to revisit the spectrum of decision possibilities available for the Governing Board in order to ensure that they reflect the real quality levels across the study programmes.

The agency is recommended to ensure consideration for proportionality and adaptation in the case of positive decisions, identifying ways of reducing the workload of the agency, where possible, to correspond to its resources.

ESG 2.3 Implementing processes

The agency is recommended to ensure the cycles of evaluations are implemented as per the designed methodologies for all types of activities assigned to ANACEC.

The agency is recommended to revisit the current provisions for follow-up to external evaluation processes in order to ensure their fitness for purpose.

ESG 2.4 Peer-review experts

The agency is recommended to remove any meritocracy in the selection criteria and demonstrate openness in co-opting student experts engaged in the external quality assurance processes.

ESG 2.5 Criteria for outcomes

The agency is recommended to revisit and eliminate the gap in the percentages that lead to a formal decision, which currently leaves an empty room where decision-makers are pushed to an end of the range that might be less connected to reality.

ESG 2.6 Reporting

The agency is recommended to revisit the applicable regulatory framework in order to clarify the scope of the comments a HEI can submit in relation to the review reports and ensure that this stage provides an opportunity for the institution to point out errors of fact before the report is finalised, but not introduce additional evidence.



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ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals

The agency is recommended to revisit the applicable regulations to avoid contradictions in terms of the object for appeals.

The agency is recommended to clarify and formally regulate the specific grounds based on which an appeal can be submitted so that these are more articulated and enable ANACEC to ensure the consistent implementation of the rights to appeal and complain.

The agency is recommended to revisit the division of responsibilities in terms of the channel of approval for appeals to avoid a position of conflict of interest on behalf of the President.