

Report of the Panel appointed to undertake a review of the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) for the purposes of the granting of full membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

v.8FIN
7 March, 2015

Foreword

1. The Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) was established formally in 2005 by Greek Law 3374/2005. It is the supervisory and coordinating agency for the quality assurance framework applied to Hellenic Higher Education Institutions. Its stated mission is to assure high quality in higher education.

2. HQA has been an affiliate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since September 2007 and has now applied for full ENQA membership. This is the report of a review of HQA undertaken in January, 2015, for the purpose of determining whether HQA meets the criteria for full membership of ENQA.

3. The report describes:

- the background and context for the review
- how the review was carried out
- the place of the Agency in the national quality assurance structure for HE and the Agency's main functions
- the Panel's assessment of the engagement of the Agency with the ENQA membership provisions/European Standards and Guidelines and its conclusions
- the Panel's general observations and recommendations for development.

Glossary of terms	
AC	Administrative Council
ADA	Independent Administrative Authorities/Agencies
ADAE	Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy
ADIPPDE	Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education
ASEP	Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection
ASPETE	School of Pedagogical and Technological Education
COP	Ombudsman
CPS	Commission for the Protection of Competition
DEP	Teaching and Research Staff/Academic and Research Staff/Faculty Staff of Universities
EAP/HOU	Hellenic Open University
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EOPPEP	National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance
EP	Educational Staff of TEIs/Faculty Staff of TEIs
EPAL	Vocational Lyceum
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
ESPA/NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
ESR	Hellenic National Radio and Television
ESU	European Students' Union
ESYP/NCE	National Council of Education
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
EURASHE	European Association of Higher Education Institutions
FEK	Government Gazette
HDPA	Hellenic Data Protection Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HQA/ADIP	Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency
IHU	International Hellenic University
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
MIS	Management Information System
MODIP/QAU	Quality Assurance Unit
NOF	National Qualifications Framework
OMEA/IEG	Internal Evaluation Group
OSEP	Federation of Educational Staff of TEIs
PMS	Postgraduate Programme of Studies/Study Programme
POSDEP	Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Association
PS	Programme of Studies/ Study Programme
QAS	Quality Assurance System
RAE	Regulatory Authority for Energy
RBS	Regular Budget from the State
SAPE	Council for Higher University Education

SATE	Council for Higher Technological Education
SPDE	Council for Primary and Secondary Education
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
TEI	Technological Educational Institution
HQA website:	http://www.hqa.gr/en/index.php

Background and outline of the review process

4. The Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) was established in 2005 by Greek Law 3374/2005. HQA is the supervisory and coordinating agency for the quality assurance framework applied in Greek Higher Education institutions. Its stated mission is to assure high quality in higher education. It is stated to be an independent institutional body with the role of establishing and implementing a uniform quality assurance system to be used as a reference system for the work and achievements of HEIs. Law 4009/2011 has given the HQA additional responsibilities, primarily in relation to the accreditation of the quality of institutions' internal quality assurance systems and also of their programmes of study. Although Law 4009/2011 requiring accreditation of internal quality assurance systems of the HEIs and programmes of study came into law in 2011, its implementation has been delayed. HQA activity up to now has operated under its founding Law 3374/2005, and has focused on the evaluation of the academic Units of HEIs. The HQA has now started planning for the implementation of the provisions of Law 4009/2011.

5. HQA has been an affiliate of ENQA since September 2007 and is applying for full ENQA membership.

6. In November 2004, the General Assembly of ENQA agreed that the third part of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) should be incorporated into the membership provisions of its (then) Regulations (now Statutes). Substantial compliance with the ESG thus became the principal criterion for membership of ENQA. The ESG were subsequently adopted at the Bergen ministerial meeting of the Bologna Process in 2005. External reviews mainly focus on how far agencies meet the ENQA criteria for full membership; these criteria primarily reflect the European Standards and Guidelines in Quality Assurance (ESG) in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

7. The third part of the ESG covers the approach to be taken for the cyclical external reviews of quality assurance and accreditation agencies themselves. This external review of HQA was conducted in line with the process described in the ESG (third edition) and in the accompanying ENQA Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area and in accordance with the timeline set out in the Terms of Reference determined for this particular review.

8. Following HQA's application to ENQA to initiate the review process, ENQA established an evaluation Panel, the composition of which met the prescribed ENQA guidelines.

Membership of the Panel

9. The members of the Panel appointed by ENQA to undertake the review were:
- Karmela Barišić, (*Chair of the Panel*), Professor at the Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry, University of Zagreb, (*Croatia*)
 - Bernard Coulie, (*EUA nomination*), Professor and Honorary Rector at the University of Louvain, (*Belgium*)
 - Alexander Kohler, Austrian Ministry for Science, Research and Economy; Quality Assurance Council for Teacher Education, (*Austria*)
 - Paul Mitchell, (*Secretary to the Panel*), independent higher education consultant and Director of Mega Mitchell Consulting Ltd., (*UK*)
 - Rok Primožic, (*ESU nomination*), former Chairperson of ESU and currently student on the Master's in Educational Sciences programme, Vrije Universiteit, Brussels, (*Slovenia*)

Terms of Reference for the Review

10. ENQA has identified two types of external review which may be undertaken for the purpose of seeking membership:

- Type A - the sole purpose of which is to fulfil the periodic external review requirement for ENQA membership
- Type B - a review which has a number of purposes, only one of which is to fulfil the periodic external review requirement of ENQA membership.

This is a type A review. The review was co-ordinated by ENQA itself at the invitation of HQA.

Approach and Procedure

11. The review was carried out using a process designed and managed by the Panel following established ENQA practice, independently of HQA. The Panel sought to conduct the review in a courteous but professionally challenging manner. HQA produced a self-evaluation report and the Panel also sought further supporting documentation following its initial analysis of the self-evaluation. The Panel conducted a site visit to explore further the content of the self-evaluation and to clarify points at issue. Finally, the review panel produced the present final report on the basis of the self-evaluation report, the additional documentation provided and the site visit and its findings. As part of the process, the Panel has provided an opportunity for HQA to comment on the factual accuracy of the draft report.

12. In fulfilling the purposes of the review, the Panel has:

- considered the broad professional and political contexts within which HQA operates
- considered a self-evaluation document prepared by HQA, a range of supporting documents and web-based materials submitted in advance of the site visit (Appendix 2)
- considered additional documentation relevant to the Panel's lines of enquiry submitted both before and during the site visit (Appendix 2)
- conducted a two-day visit to HQA (12 – 14 January 2015), at HQA's headquarters in Athens (Appendix 1)
- met a range of stakeholders (from categories selected by the Panel) (Appendix 1), and representative of HQA's operations, including:
 - HQA President, two Vice-Presidents and the author of the SER
 - President and members of HQA Council
 - Representatives of the University Rectors Synod and Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs) Presidents Synod

- Meeting with MODIP (Quality Assurance Unit) Presidents and administrative staff from both TEIs and Universities
- Meeting with Representatives of POSDEP (Hellenic Federation of University Teachers Association) and OSEP (Federation of Educational Staff of TEIs)
- Meeting with stakeholders (from Chambers etc)
- A sample of external experts (members of review panels)
- HQA staff
- Meeting with undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Meeting with General Secretary of the Ministry of Education

Self-evaluation document

13. The self-evaluation document submitted by HQA (September 2014) comprised an account of the following principal areas:

- Foreword
- Introduction
- Structure of the Greek educational system
- The HQA and quality assurance procedures
- The HQA's work
- A review of HQA's compliance with the ESG criteria (Part 1, 2 and 3)
- Annexes

14. The document had been circulated widely in draft form and stakeholders confirmed that they had been able to make inputs during its preparation. Overall, the Panel considered that the SER was sufficiently rigorous to allow the Panel to operate effectively; it also contained a SWOT analysis. The SER revealed a capacity for self-reflection, for meaningful analysis of the organisation's current position and an understanding of current challenges which will help the Agency to shape its future direction and strategy in a rapidly changing environment.

The Greek educational system

15. The Greek educational system falls under the general jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. It is divided into three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary education. Primary education includes nursery schools (4-6 years) and elementary schools (6-12 years). Secondary education is divided into two stages. The first stage is Gymnasium (age 12-15). The second stage (age 15-18) comprises two different types of schools: the Geniko Lykeio (General Lyceum) with a general orientation, and the Epaggelmatiko Lykeio (Vocational Lyceum) with a vocational orientation. There also exist various specialized and other schools (Gymnasia, sports, music, religious, experimental, special education, evening schools, etc). The education provided by the completion of secondary education is part of the first four levels (1-4) of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which maps in turn to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

16. Tertiary education corresponds to NQF levels 5-8. Levels 6-8 are those for higher education, which is further divided into Universities and Technological Educational Institutions (TEIs). Under current national legislation, HQA is responsible for the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions (Universities and TEIs) at EQF levels 6-8.

Higher education in Greece

17. Higher education is delivered by higher education institutions (Universities and TEIs). Higher education institutions are self-governing legal entities, regulated by public law. The ultimate supervision of the State is exercised by the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs (Article 1 and 2 of L. 4009/2011). Higher education constitutes the last level of the national education system, and comprises the University and Technological sectors (a binary higher education system). The University sector includes Universities, Technical Universities, and the School of Fine Arts. The Technological sector includes the Technological Educational Institutions (TEIs), and the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE). Collective bodies, established and acting in compliance with special legislation, administer each institution. In Greece, according to the Constitution, there exists only public higher education (Article 16 of the Greek Constitution), although there was currently some national debate about the creation of a regulated and recognised private sector in higher education.

Access to higher education

18. Students wishing to enter the first cycle of Greek higher education (levels 6, 7 and 8) are required to hold a Lyceum Certificate. General secondary school graduates (General Lyceum) have the full right of access, whereas graduates of the Vocational Lyceums (EPAL) have access only to courses in TEIs. Lyceum Certificate holders must also take national-level examinations (Pan-Hellenic Examinations), which are different for the graduates of General Lyceum and those of EPAL. An exception is made for the two special Universities (Hellenic Open University and International Hellenic University), which have their own rules on access. In Greece there is no alternative mode of access (e.g., by recognition of prior learning).

19. The success rate in the Pan-Hellenic examinations is currently around 80%. Up to 1970, it did not exceed 25%. The spectacular increase is due both to the great expansion of the network of higher education institutions and also to the study programmes offered and funded by national funds (state/municipality) and/or with the contribution of European funds. It should be noted that access to a specific study programme depends on the candidate's examination grade, in combination with his/her order of preference for the particular programme. Consequently, there is a sort of competition not only of candidates, but also among the different study programmes offered by the institutions. The number of admitted students per study programme is determined centrally by the Ministry of Education and higher education institutions do not have the right to determine the number of admitted students. The latter issue is a source of tension between the Ministry and the institutions. Admission to the second and third higher education cycles (Master and PhD) is a decentralized procedure, with admission numbers managed locally by the higher education institutions themselves.

HEIs

20. In 2012, Greece had 24 Universities and 16 TEIs, a total of 40 higher education institutions. With a reorganization implemented by the Ministry of Education in 2012 (known as project "Athena"), the number of Universities decreased to 22 and the number of TEIs (with ASPETE) to 14, thus reducing the total number to 36.

21. The study programmes offered by the HEIs are divided into three cycles:

- first cycle — Undergraduate (requiring 4, 5 or 6 years of study, depending on the subject)
- second cycle – Postgraduate /Master studies (1 to 2 years)
- third cycle — Doctoral studies (at least 3 years)

The TEIs offer undergraduate courses (4 years of study), and Masters' programmes only.

22. Undergraduate courses are free of charge, with the exception of those in two specialist Universities, the Hellenic Open University (EAP), and the International Hellenic University (IHU). Study programmes at all levels may also be interdisciplinary, inter-institutional, and/or international. In the latter case, study programmes can be delivered in a foreign language.

Internal structure of study programmes

23. Greece has sought to follow the provisions of the Bologna Process and of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Study programmes follow a semester-based structure. The academic year has two semesters; winter and spring. Programmes are structured so as to be consistent with the provisions of the Bologna Process. Thus, each semester's courses are equivalent to 30 ECTS. The ECTS are generally connected with the student work load, but they are not yet correctly applied by all institutions, and not always associated with learning outcomes. The use of learning outcomes, although adopted by Legislation in 2007, has not yet been fully implemented. A mandatory system for the connection of ECTS credits with learning outcomes for all programmes of higher education study was introduced in 2011 (Law 4009/2011). One of the objectives of the new national process for the accreditation of study programmes, just launched by HQA, is to secure the full implementation of the ECTS system, including the association of work load with learning outcomes.

National bodies relevant to higher education

24. The **National Council of Education (ESYP)** is an advisory body to the State; it comprises a Council and three advisory sub-Councils. The Council is chaired by the President of the ESYP. The three advisory sub-Councils of ESYP are: the **Council for Higher University Education (SAPE)**; the **Council for Higher Technological Education (SATE)**; and the **Council for Primary and Secondary Education (SPDE)**. Each body has its own President. The current structure of ESYP became operational in 2003. ESYP is a consultative body to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs for advice on questions of educational planning and policy.

25. The **Hellenic Universities Rectors' Synod** is a non-governmental body, established in 1987, which operates as a forum for the heads of the Universities for exchanging views and ideas. The Synod's members are the Rectors and Vice-Rectors of all Hellenic Universities. It has a permanent secretariat, and operates across a broad spectrum of activity. The Synod's objective is to coordinate the Universities' activity, and to act in a representative capacity. The Synod plays a significant role in the area of University education.

26. A corresponding body also exists for the Technological Educational Institutions with equivalent objectives, known as the **Hellenic TEIs Presidents' Synod**.

27. The **Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Association (POSDEP)** is the Union body for academic and research staff (DEP) of Greek Universities.

The corresponding body for the TEIs is called the **Federation of Educational Staff of TEIs** (OSEP).

Quality assurance for education in Greece

28. The **Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education** (*ADIPPDE*) has responsibility for the quality assurance of primary and secondary education. The **National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance** (EOPPEP) has responsibility for vocational education and for non-formal education. Higher Education quality assurance is regulated by **HQA**, legally established in 2005.

29. Before the establishment of HQA, several Greek higher education institutions and study programmes had gone through evaluation in the 1990s, either through external evaluation by the European University Association (EUA) or through special programmes supported by European funds. In total, 14 out of the then 18, Universities, and 11 out of the then 14 TEIs had experienced external evaluation between 1994 and 1999. In particular, eight (8) Universities had participated in the Institutional Evaluation Programme of the EUA.

Quality assurance in HE

30. The new Law in 2005 (3374/2005), determined the initial framework and the specific processes for internal and external evaluation in Greek HEIs and established an independent administrative Agency, known as the "Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency" (HQA) with administrative autonomy and under the ultimate legal supervision of the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs. HQA was deemed responsible for the evaluation of the academic units (Faculties or School) and, through these, for the institutions as a whole. The quality assurance system within the higher education system, comprised 3 distinct instruments regulated by HQA - two (OMEA and MODIP) were located inside the institutions themselves and one delivered externally at national level.

The internal mechanisms comprise:

- A suite of Internal Evaluation Groups (OMEA), which are individually responsible for the internal evaluation of one academic discipline or unit. The OMEA monitors the completion and analysis of feedback questionnaires, informs the governing bodies and the members of the academic unit of the results, and interprets the outcomes of the consultative mechanisms across the discipline area and reviews all relevant documentation. Faculty staff of Universities (DEP) or of Technological Educational Institutions (EP), as well as student representatives participate in the OMEA for their academic unit.
- The institutional Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) is the responsible body for quality assurance at the institutional level. The MODIP is established in each institution by the institution's Council, and consists of the Rector or one of his/her deputies as Chair, five Professors, one representative from each category of staff, a representative of the undergraduate student body, and a representative of postgraduate students and doctoral candidates. The MODIP itself is reviewed by the HQA. The MODIP is responsible for the following:
 - Development of the strategy of the institution, as well as its specific policies and necessary procedures for the continuous improvement of the quality of the work and services performed by the institution;
 - Organization, functioning, operation, and continual improvement of the internal quality control system of the institution;

- Coordination and support of the evaluation procedures followed by the academic units and by other services of the institution
- Support of external evaluation and accreditation procedures of the study programmes and the internal quality control system of the institution, in the framework of the principles, guidelines and directives given by HQA.

The MODIPs cooperate with HQA, and are responsible for the regular monitoring and publication of the evaluation of all relevant procedures and their results on the institution's website. Internal evaluation is the responsibility of the MODIP. It must meet the criteria and indicators for evaluation as specified in standards provided by the HQA.

- The third (and external) instrument comprises external evaluation of the institution itself by HQA itself.

31. In 2011 a new law placed additional responsibilities on HQA in relation to the accreditation of the internal quality assurance systems of institutions and the accreditation of study programmes. HQA's changing programme of work is summarised below:

HQA's work through the changes of its concerned legislative framework		
Legislative Framework	Main Task	Implementation Process
1. Founding Law 3374/2005	1a. External Evaluation of academic units of HEI's (Faculties or Schools)	Completed
	1b. Institutional External Evaluation	Final submission of the Self-Evaluation Reports of all HEIs at the end of 2014
2. Law 4009/2011	Accreditation of Study Programmes	a. Completion of all necessary documents and supporting material of the consultation and information of the HEIs
		b. Beginning of installation of first delegates for the accreditation of study programmes
	Accreditation of Internal Quality Assurance System of HEIs	

32. The start-up period for HQA from 2005 was accompanied by strong negative reactions from parts of the academic community. Consequently, HQA had to try hard to reverse this negative climate, by developing collaboration with higher education institutions, and also by creating a more positive climate of confidence. Much attention was also given to securing the necessary infrastructure, such as the Agency's information systems, and the creation of an Experts Register, along with the diffusion of the aims of HQA to stakeholders and HEIs. Frequent parliamentary elections in Greece (2007, 2009, two in 2012) did not help to facilitate the smooth development of HQA. Stability was fully restored with the appointment of a new HQA President in autumn 2012, and of new members of the new Council in April 2013. More recently, under the new

legislative provisions, the Plenary has been replaced by the first Council of HQA and a new President was appointed in 2014. The members of the Council were elected through a public call and an open selection process. The national student bodies and other stakeholder groups have yet to agree on their nominations for membership (see para.35). Despite the difficulties, the HQA has managed to complete during 2013–2014 the external evaluation of all Schools/Faculties in higher education institutions and is on track to complete all institutional evaluations during 2015.

Current position on HQA's programme of work.

33. The completion of the external evaluation of the academic units is now to be followed by the external evaluation of the institutions themselves. In June 2014, the HQA completed the programme (initiated in 2008) for the external evaluation of 397 academic units. The internal evaluation process of the institutions is currently in progress and HQA continues to support the MODIPs of the institutions in their task of the internal evaluation of their institutions. The external evaluation of institutions is expected to be completed during 2015.

34. HQA is now at the stage of detailed planning for its new tasks under the 2011 legislation, namely the accreditation of the institutional internal quality assurance systems, and the accreditation of study programmes. In regard to the accreditation of study programmes, preparatory consultative meetings have already taken place and HQA has organised information meetings, conferences and interactions with stakeholders (MODIP, Chairs of academic units etc.). HQA has already designed the different steps of the accreditation process, as follows:

- The establishment of a Committee to prepare the subject-specific benchmark statements. The composition of each Committee is the responsibility of the member of the Council who will chair the Committee. These Committees will include chairs of academic unit, representatives of other stakeholders, students, and two international experts.
- Preparation of the arrangements for the internal evaluation of each study programme.
- Control of the quality of each internal evaluation report by the MODIP of the institution.
- Monitoring of the quality of each internal evaluation report by HQA.
- Final review of the internal evaluation report.
- Establishment of the panel of experts for external evaluation.
- External evaluation procedure.
- Final report.
- Decision by HQA about accreditation.

As regards accreditation of the internal quality assurance system of the institutions, this has been planned as a series of steps:

- Planning and development of the institution's internal quality assurance system
- Self-evaluation of the institution and its quality assurance system
- External evaluation of the institution and its quality assurance system by a Panel of independent external experts
- Adoption of the accreditation decision by the HQA Council.

HQA Governance

35. HQA's Governing body is now the Council. It comprises 15 members and its members are appointed after public call, followed by a selection process

prescribed by law. The HQA President is selected by the Ministry of Education after Parliamentary approval. Membership of the Council is drawn from the Universities, TEIs and the research institutions. The constitution also provides for membership of one member from the Central Union of Chambers of Greece, one member of the Student Union of Greek Universities, and one member of the Student Union of the Greek Technological Educational Institutions. Student representatives from Universities and TEIs have not yet been appointed for reasons of disagreement between the different Student Unions, which have failed for some time to provide a nomination. The Central Union of Chambers has also failed to agree a nomination.

HQA Resources

36. The Agency comprises 13 professional staff. Its President and Council members also devote the majority of their time to HQA activity and HQA maintains a large pool of reviewers. It also maintains a pool of 'occasional' staff who are called upon to assist at peak periods. The Secretariat Division consists of three Departments: (a) Department of Administration, IT and Finance, (b) Quality Assurance Department, and (c) Research and Documentation Department. In common with other branches of Greek public service, a number of the staff are seconded from various organizations, such as higher educational institutions, the Ministry of Education, or other public services. HQA has drawn up ambitious plans for an expansion of its staffing infrastructure to reflect future work load, although it is recognised that the current economic situation in Greece will pre-empt rapid progress with its realisation. The post of Director General has recently fallen vacant and urgent steps are being taken to fill this key vacancy. The Director General is appointed by the President of the Agency, after public announcement of the position.

HQA Financing

37. HQA has two prime sources of funding: a regular budget from the State and European project funding. The regular budget from the state (RBS) covers personnel costs for the post of President, members of the Council, the Director General and administrative staff. The regular state budget provides limited financial support (~2% on average of the total budget) for property and equipment supplies. Despite serious financial cuts by the Greek Government in the last five years, including in the Ministry of Education, the RBS of HQA has remained relatively constant in the period 2012 - 2014. Significant EU funding for HQA's programme of work has also been obtained from the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) through the inclusion of the HEIs evaluation process in the operational programme "Education and Life Long Learning" of NSRF (ESPA) 2007 - 2013 (extended to the end of 2015). Project funding has amounted to some €7.47m over 2010-2015.

In the period 2010 – 2014, the total amount of financial support for HQA through the regular budget from the State was €2.79m, which corresponds to €0.56m on average per year. In the period 2010 – 2014, the total amount of financial support for HQA from the National Strategic Reference Framework (European Grants with a limited National contribution) was €3.58m, which corresponds to €0.72m on average per year. Therefore, the percentage contributions of the two types of budgets to organize and run the quality assurance and accreditation process in the period 2010 – 2014, was 56% from NSRF and 44% from RBS funds. The Panel was informed that a continuation of the source (and volume) of EU funding had been secured up to 2020, in the sum of €7M EUR for the period 2015-2020). This would suggest a

strong commitment to HQA by the Greek Parliament in terms of both RBS and NSRF funding.

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

ESG Part 2: European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education

ESG 2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures (ENQA Criterion 1)

Standard:

External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

Guidelines:

The standards for internal quality assurance contained in Part 1 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. It is important that the institutions' own internal policies and procedures are carefully evaluated in the course of external procedures, to determine the extent to which the standards are being met. If higher education institutions are to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance processes, and if those processes properly assure quality and standards, then external processes might be less intensive than otherwise.

HQA compliance

38. The current external quality assurance system is based on the principle that the institutions themselves are responsible for – and permanently monitor – the quality of their educational activities. External assessment by HQA builds on the self-evaluation carried out by the HEIs and their academic units. Internal monitoring and periodic review is explicitly evaluated within the HQA assessment framework. HQA itself is responsible for shaping, in consultation with HEIs, the framework of principles, guidelines and instructions to the MODIPs of the higher education institutions.

39. The Panel has examined and explored HQA's institutional review processes, mapped against the ESG, and confirms that these are effective in testing and challenging institutions' internal quality assurance policies and their procedures for managing quality and standards. The Panel therefore confirms that the external quality assurance procedures that HQA uses, take into account fully the effectiveness of the internal processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

Panel judgement:

Fully compliant.

Panel Recommendations

None.

ESG 2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes

(ENQA Criterion 1 cont.)

Standard:

The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

Guidelines:

In order to ensure clarity of purpose and transparency of procedures, external quality assurance methods should be designed and developed through a process involving key stakeholders, including higher education institutions. The procedures that are finally agreed should be published and should contain explicit statements of the aims and objectives of the processes as well as a description of the procedures to be used.

As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of higher education institutions.

HQA compliance

40. The general aims and objectives of quality assurance processes are set out in law by the Greek Government. HQA has further developed the system within this legal framework, focusing on the design of procedures which are fit for purpose for Greek institutions.

The quality assurance procedures, which HQA operates, have been established by Law 3374/2005 and Law 4009/2011. The draft detailing the standards was sent for consultation to the Greek higher education institutions. The observations and comments that were received were taken into account by HQA in drafting the final version. HQA held consultative events and workshops. The criteria are common and known to all. The direct involvement of employers and students was less marked due to constitutional issues, but there is evidence particularly of student input at academic unit level. The criteria and the indicators were standardized and supplemented by guidelines.

41. The establishment of trust between HQA and the institutions over time was confirmed to the Panel. Despite the initial less positive reactions emanating from a segment of the academic community, very good cooperation has now been achieved. The procedures for evaluation include clear descriptions of the different activities associated with each procedure and of the various participants involved at each stage. Whenever replacement or a significant revision of a procedure is proposed, this is first discussed with the higher education institutions, relevant sector organizations and experts in the field. Any significant adjustments to the criteria and procedures are normally discussed with the HQA Council. The procedures for external quality assurance developed by HQA are publicly available on the Agency's website. Whenever changes are formally agreed, users are notified - by letter and copies of the relevant documents, so they can be aware of any changes. Officers of the Agency are expected to act in an advisory role to staff in higher education institutions, regarding all aspects of external evaluation and accreditation.

Panel judgement:

Fully compliant.

Panel Recommendations
None

**ESG 2.3 Criteria for decisions
(ENQA Criterion 1 cont.)**

Standard:

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

Guidelines:

Formal decisions made by quality assurance agencies have a significant impact on the institutions and programmes that are judged. In the interests of equity and reliability, decisions should be based on published criteria and interpreted in a consistent manner. Conclusions should be based on recorded evidence and agencies should have in place ways of moderating conclusions, if necessary.

HQA compliance

42. Evaluation activities are carried out in accordance with uniform criteria, which are published on the Agency's website. For each generic quality standard, evaluation criteria have been defined, but with some capacity for panels to identify within the reporting structure any special features of individual programmes. All external evaluation reports undertaken by HQA are based on the standard HQA External Evaluation template, along with guidelines which are given by HQA to the experts and are made available to the academic unit undergoing evaluation. This standard Guide and the template are based on the ESGs.

The evaluation report includes analyses, findings, recommendations, and suggestions of the independent experts regarding measures to improve the quality of teaching, research or other work, to address any deficiencies and discrepancies which were identified in relation with the profile, the objectives, and the tasks of each academic unit. At the end of each report, the strengths, the weaknesses, as well as the other particular characteristics of each academic unit undergoing evaluation are stated. In addition, the experts make recommendations for the improvement of the delivery of quality.

The academic units have the right to express their comments and observations on the content of the draft external evaluation report. The panel of experts reserves the right to accept or reject these comments.

Consistency in the interpretation and application of the criteria is sought through:

- The training of expert groups
- Professional support and oversight of expert groups by Council members
- Availability of clear guidance and rules, according to which the procedures for assessment and accreditation are carried out
- A validated discipline-specific learning outcomes framework is established by field of study programme.
- The panel evaluates each study programme against this framework.

43. The draft report is sent to the study programme for comment. The panel decides whether or not to take into account the study programme's remarks, but the panel has to explain the reasons for its response and justify any changes.

HQA is very aware of the issue of consistency in the work of the various expert panels. For this reason, HQA forwards to the experts all the relevant material (i.e., instructions for completing their report, explanatory documents and code of conduct, and evaluation timetable instructions) before their arrival in Greece. During their first day on site, HQA organizes a mandatory briefing with each panel. This briefing is attended by at least one member of the Agency's Council. After a general presentation, members of the panel are encouraged to ask about the aims and procedures of the external evaluation, and to clarify issues. After the completion of the evaluation of an academic unit, HQA asks for feedback through a questionnaire, which is sent to the experts; their response shows a high degree of satisfaction with HQA's support. All academic units in each field have the same officer from HQA's Council, which also helps to support consistency across Panels. Nevertheless, HQA has undertaken a detailed and systematic analysis of these reports, which revealed that there existed some differences in quality across some of the reports. The Agency, in order to ensure the independence of the work of the Panels, but also to achieve greater consistency across the reports in its next programme (accreditation), has now decided to include in its Standard Guide a series of benchmark requirements, which will need to be addressed by all Panels.

44. The Panel believes that HQA generally maintains an effective overview of its operations but would recommend that it further strengthens its arrangements for ensuring consistency of reporting.

Panel judgement:

Substantially compliant.

Panel Recommendations

That HQA continue its work designed to further strengthen its arrangements for ensuring consistency of reporting.

ESG 2.4 Processes fit for purpose (ENQA Criterion 1 cont.)

Standard:

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

Guidelines:

Quality assurance agencies within the EHEA undertake different external processes for different purposes and in different ways. It is of the first importance that agencies should operate procedures which are fit for their own defined and published purposes. Experience has shown, however, that there are some widely-used elements of external review processes which not only help to ensure their validity, reliability and usefulness, but also provide a basis for the European dimension to quality assurance.

Amongst these elements the following are particularly noteworthy:

- insistence that the experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task
- the exercise of care in the selection of experts
- the provision of appropriate briefing or training for experts
- the use of international experts
- participation of students
- ensuring that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached
- the use of the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/follow-up model of review
- recognition of the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

HQA compliance

45. HQA maintains a register of experts, who are appointed by open competition and an interview process. One of the key actions of HQA was the creation and enrichment of the register of external experts. This was based on the provisions of existing legislation (Law 3374/2005, Article 8). HQA has determined that in future all experts will come from foreign institutions. However the ability to be able to operate in Greek means that they are likely to be Greek citizens, foreign citizens of Greek origin, Cypriots, as well as international scientists. This is designed to achieve complete transparency, objectivity and independence.

Before arrival each external expert receives timely and relevant briefing material. During the first day of their stay in Greece, the members of the Panel participate in a briefing seminar organized by one or more members of the Council in HQA headquarters. The briefing procedure is obligatory for all experts. The seminar consists of a presentation by HQA; the objective of this presentation is to create

a dialogue with members of the Panel. The main purpose is to offer clarifications and to provide detailed answers to all the questions posed by the members of the Panel. At the same time, HQA has the opportunity to state clearly what is expected from the Panel. Following up on the end of the evaluations of academic units, HQA has developed a questionnaire addressed to the experts in order to test their satisfaction from the HQA's work. Based on the responses so far received by the experts they seemed to be satisfied from the information HQA provided.

A central concern of HQA is to ensure the absence of conflict of interest in the composition of Panels. Experts have to sign an appropriate form confirming they have no conflict of interest with the academic unit under evaluation during the last 5 years.

46. As regards the external evaluation of institutions, the Agency intends to use experts with experience in University governance. Hence, this will be a key factor in selecting future experts from the Register. HQA also has contact with the EUA, requesting a list of experts with the appropriate profiles.

A recent survey of reviewers confirmed the view that arrangements for the on-site visit in the academic unit undergoing evaluation, and the completion of the external evaluation report, were considered satisfactory. Similarly the overall performance of HQA was considered at least adequate and to a great extent excellent for all the services provided in supporting the external evaluation process.

47. A problematic issue is that there is no provision in the two basic laws governing the operation of HQA for student participation in the external evaluation Panels. By contrast, student membership is expected for internal evaluations (such as OMEA and MODIP), as well as representation on the Council of the HQA itself. Recognizing the importance of this deficiency, especially as regards the participation of students in the external evaluation Panels, HQA has been trying to find ways that would allow students to get involved, without infringing the applicable legislation. An example might be the decision of HQA to create a register of interested students (those having acquired experience mainly through OMEA or MODIP), in cooperation with ESU, in the setting up Panels for determining the subject-specific benchmark statements for the new process of accrediting programmes of studies. In setting up a committee to develop specific criteria for the accreditation of the first study programmes, the Agency issued a public invitation for members and has already received the participation of a student from ESU. The ENQA Panel was informed that student participation at the subject level within institutions was very strong.

48. The model of review adopted by HQA includes a self-evaluation report, an on-site visit, a report from the expert group (a draft of which is shared with the institution), an agreed Panel recommendation to the HQA Council and the identification of follow-up issues and recommendations, and publication of the report. In the Greek system, oversight of any follow-up to the report is delegated to the institutional MODIP, and subsequently included as part of an annual report which it makes to HQA.

The evaluation report highlights the good and the weaker aspects of each unit's provision. HQA centrally, both through its Annual Reports to the Parliament, and through the setting up of the MIS database, plans to develop more focussed reporting aimed at identifying sector-wide overall trends and conclusions with a

view to further supporting a general culture of evaluation and quality assurance. The accreditation process will result in a 3-tier evaluation outcome: Positive, Conditional positive, Negative. It is evident that in the case of the last two outcomes, a series of recommendations will be made for achieving them. A recommendations section will be included in the HQA's standard form that will be given to the Panels.

Panel judgement:

Substantially compliant.

Panel Recommendations

That HQA continue to explore alternative mechanisms for ensuring a stronger student voice in its external review procedures and for the inclusion of a larger number of experts from outside the Greek speaking communities.

**ESG 2.5 Reporting
(ENQA Criterion 1 cont.)**

Standard:

Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

Guidelines:

In order to ensure maximum benefit from external quality assurance processes, it is important that reports should meet the identified needs of the intended readership. Reports are sometimes intended for different readership groups and this will require careful attention to structure, content, style and tone.

In general, reports should be structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations, and recommendations.

There should be sufficient preliminary explanation to enable a lay reader to understand the purposes of the review, its form, and the criteria used in making decisions. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by readers.

Reports should be published in a readily accessible form and there should be opportunities for readers and users of the reports (both within the relevant institution and outside it) to comment on their usefulness.

HQA compliance

49. HQA has created a standard template with instructions for the preparation of the external evaluation reports. It is divided into the following sections: curriculum; teaching; research; other services; strategic planning, perspectives for improvement, and dealing with potential inhibiting factors; final conclusions and recommendations. The first four sections are each divided into four subsections: approach; implementation; results; and improvement. Strengths and weaknesses and the Panel's recommendations are usually found in the conclusions of the reports. This enables the reader to easily identify the key findings of a report. The authors are required to deliver reports which are written in plain, intelligible language, and which are in accordance to the proper academic standards, as well as with academic ethics.

The external evaluation reports are made public without payment, both on the HQA's website and on the website of the academic units. The text of the report is published in the language in which it was written. For better dissemination of the results of the reports throughout Greek society, HQA also intends to translate the reports into Greek and to upload them onto its website.

Panel judgement:

Fully compliant.

Panel Recommendations:

None.

**ESG 2.6 Follow up-procedures
(ENQA Criterion 1 cont.)**

Standard:

Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

Guidelines:

Quality assurance is not principally about individual external scrutiny events: it should be about continuously trying to do a better job. External quality assurance does not end with the publication of the report and should include a structured follow-up procedure to ensure that recommendations are dealt with appropriately and any required action plans drawn up and implemented. This may involve further meetings with institutional or programme representatives. The objective is to ensure that areas identified for improvement are dealt with speedily and that further enhancement is encouraged.

HQA compliance

50. Accreditation Panels evaluate programmes of study according to the appropriate subject benchmark statements. At the end of the process, a rating is given. Taking into account this rating, the HQA will make its final decision on each particular programme of studies, as follows:

- Positive (valid up to 8 years);
- Positive, subject to stated conditions (with listing of the criteria that are not met, and a specific timetable to be set for their satisfaction);
- Negative.

(In the case of a negative evaluation, the Ministry of Education may take the decision to reduce the funding of the institution, as well as the admission of new students to the particular study programme or to the institution, depending on the subject matter of the accreditation (study programmes or an institution's internal quality assurance system). By the same decision, the students of those study programmes or institutions will have the possibility to continue their studies in another accredited programme of studies or institution, with all relevant issues to be regulated in accordance with the law)

Existing procedures (as determined by the law) do not in general provide for direct follow-up procedures. The legislation is based on the assumption that this would be best achieved through successive rounds of formal evaluations. In practice, the unit under review is required to report to the institutional MODIP on progress made with any recommendations. The MODIP is in turn required to make an annual report to HQA on all aspects of its operation, including its oversight of the follow-up on assessments. Within the framework of this convoluted legal context, HQA has developed several measures to facilitate the process:

- it summarises all suggestions for improvement at the end of each study programme report
- study programmes get the opportunity to comment on the report. They usually outline in their response to the report the improvement measures which they propose to implement
- each study programme is formally required to report to its institutional MODIP in detail about the follow-up on all suggestions for improvement.

Panel judgement:

Substantially compliant

Panel Recommendations

That the responsible Greek bodies consider whether full responsibility for consideration of follow-up reports should rest more directly with HOA as part of a more structured and transparent follow up process.

**ESG 2.7 Periodic reviews
(ENQA Criterion 1 cont.)**

Standard:

External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

Guidelines:

Quality assurance is not a static but a dynamic process. It should be continuous and not 'once in a lifetime'. It does not end with the first review or with the completion of the formal follow-up procedure. It has to be periodically renewed. Subsequent external reviews should take into account progress that has been made since the previous event. The process to be used in all external reviews should be clearly defined by the external quality assurance agency and its demands on institutions should not be greater than are necessary for the achievement of its objectives.

HQA compliance

51. The role of HQA as a supervisory and coordinating agency for the quality assurance system in Greece involves specific and formalized procedures, designed to achieve its objectives. The quality assurance system to date has been composed of three procedures:

- Annual evaluation and recording of the work undertaken by the academic units (annual internal reports)
- Periodic (every four years) critical evaluation of the academic units (internal evaluation or self-evaluation);
- Aggregation of results of internal evaluation, with additional and independent judgment by independent experts coming from outside the academic unit, through an on-site visit (external evaluation).

52. The Panel has noted that this programme of work linked to the 2005 legislation has overrun considerably. 2015 also sees the commencement of two new programmes of work relating to the accreditation of the institutional internal quality assurance systems, and the accreditation of study programmes respectively. The Panel recommends that the new programme of work be carefully planned, so as to ensure its timely delivery.

Panel judgement:

Substantially compliant.

Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that HQA's new programme of work be carefully planned, phased and monitored, so as to ensure its timely delivery.

**ESG 2.8 System-wide analysis
(ENQA Criterion 1 cont.)**

Standard:

Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc.

Guidelines:

All external quality assurance agencies collect a wealth of information about individual programmes and/or institutions and this provides material for structured analyses across whole higher education systems. Such analyses can provide very useful information about developments, trends, emerging good practice and areas of persistent difficulty or weakness and can become useful tools for policy development and quality enhancement. Agencies should consider including a research and development function within their activities, to help them extract maximum benefit from their work.

HQA compliance

53. HQA is currently undertaking a number of activities in support of system-wide analysis, including:

- an annual report (in paper and electronic format) on the quality of higher education. This report is based on data derived from the evaluation reports, the specific studies undertaken by the HQA, and from its other activities, such as:
 - statistical data on the state of the evaluation process in higher education institutions
 - operating data about the institutions and, in particular, a reference to their strengths and weaknesses, as contained in the reports of the external evaluators
 - comparison with good practices in other countries
 - sector-wide conclusions, suggestions and comments on strategies for improving the quality of higher education.
- investment in its MIS database. It is hoped that the MIS will become in the future the basis for conducting a series of specialized studies on the system of higher education in Greece
- Providing advice on policy options to Government
- HQA has also produced occasional papers for the Ministry and other purposes.

The panel recognises that, given the intensity of the workload required to support its current assessment activities, HQA's human capacity for system-wide analysis is severely constrained. Nevertheless this area of its activity was found to be currently underdeveloped.

Panel judgement:

Substantially compliant.

Panel Recommendations

- That HQA consider how the outputs from its review activities can be further focused to support system-wide analysis and institutional quality improvement and enhancement.
- The Panel recognises the constraints currently faced by the Agency through significant financial pressures and the volume of procedure-driven activity. However, it is recommended that, to fully realise its potential, the Agency discuss with its stakeholders options to increase its resources for this purpose. The additional resource thus gained could then be directed to increase the volume of system-wide analysis and quality enhancement activity which HQA can undertake.

ESG Part 3: European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies

ESG 3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education (ENQA Criterion 1 cont.)

Standard:

The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

Guidelines:

The standards for external quality assurance contained in Part 2 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experiences gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education institutions. The standards for external quality assurance should together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies constitute the basis for professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

HQA compliance

54. The Panel's assessment of HQA's compliance with Part 2 of the ESG is described in detail in the preceding part of the report.

In making an overall evaluation it can confirm that HQA's processes and procedures are based on, and are substantially compliant with Part 2 of the ESG.

Panel judgement:

Substantially compliant.

Panel Recommendations

As listed in previous section.

**ESG 3.2 Official status
(ENQA Criterion 2)**

Standard: Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate

HQA compliance

55. The Greek laws that govern the operation, roles and responsibilities of HQA are: 3374/2005, 3577/2007, 3794/2009, 3848/2010, 4009/2011 and 4115/2013.

HQA is an independent administrative agency (ADA), which has administrative autonomy, and is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs to control the legality of its actions. HQA has been renamed by Law 4009/2011 (GG I 195), to HQA (Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency).

The independent administrative authorities/agencies (ADA) in Greece were established with the 2001 revision of the Constitution, and have the following main characteristics:

- They are State bodies, but are beyond the hierarchical control or supervision of the central Government, and are subject only to judicial review of their legality. To this end, they are under no obligation of obedience to the institutions with executive function.
- Their members have personal and functional independence, similar to that of judges. Personal independence means that they do not take orders, but are bound by the law. Functional independence means that other functional bodies of the state, particularly those of executive function, cannot intervene in the way in which they exercise their functions.
- They have wide-ranging decision-making powers (particularly, regulations and sanctions) in order to regulate critical and sensitive sectors of the political, economic and social life in general. Moreover, their decisions are binding on the other bodies of the State.
- According to the Greek Constitution, members of Independent Administrative Authorities are appointed for a specific term; the Constitution also guarantees that they enjoy personal and operational independence.

Panel judgement:

Fully compliant.

Panel Recommendations

None.

**ESG 3.3 Activities
(ENQA Criterion 1 cont.)**

Standard:

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

Guidelines:

These may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the agency.

HQA compliance

56. The main activity of HQA is the delivery of a range of study programme and institutional assessments. The legislative framework requires HQA to undertake external quality assurance activities, both at institutional and at study-programme level.

The above activities are undertaken on a regular basis and involve evaluation, review and accreditation; they constitute the core functions of the Agency.

All review activities are undertaken on a regular and cyclical basis. Criteria and methodologies for the operation of all procedures have been developed, tested and implemented. They are applied consistently across all higher education institutions.

For the new programme accreditation process, the following priorities have been set:

- New study programmes resulting from the project "ATHENA";
- Study programmes which have not completed their evaluation process under previous arrangements;
- Study programmes where four years have elapsed since their last external evaluation.

All relevant documentation, standards, directives etc. have been posted on the Agency's website and have been sent to MODIPs.

Finally, the accreditation of the internal quality assurance system of institutions will be conducted after the completion of the internal and external evaluation of the institutions

Panel judgement:

Fully compliant.

Panel Recommendation

None.

ESG 3.4 Resources
(ENQA Criterion 3)

Standard:

Agencies should have adequate and proportionate resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process (es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures (*and staff*) (*Addition by ENQA for ENQA criterion*)

HQA compliance

57. HQA's core staff comprises: the President; 11 Council members; 13 members of administrative staff, and 1 scientific staff member. In order to strengthen its administrative capacity, HQA has recently issued a call for administrative and scientific fixed-term staff positions, through the NSRF. From September 2013 to March 2014, 27 freelance experts were recruited, following a public announcement, in order to assist in the implementation of the external evaluations. In the near future, 15 external experts will similarly be recruited, following another public announcement, for supporting the work on accreditation. Despite the periodic engagement of seasonal staff, the workload of full-time staff remains a major issue. This problem has increased since the establishment of the Council, as Council members cannot now technically act as full-time members of HQA. The Council members are now considered full time members of their home institutions. As discussed, HQA is mainly funded by the Greek Government and by EU funding. The available budget is sufficient to deliver the basic programme of work. This has been achieved against a backdrop of national austerity. The Agency has been allocated adequate financial resources in order to organize and run the external quality assurance and accreditation processes within the time period up to 2014. This has been achieved so far through two sources of funding: the regular budget from the State (RBS), and European Funding (NSRF).

58. Despite serious economic difficulties in the State budget, there exists a preliminary agreement with the Leadership of the Finance Ministry that HQA could submit a budget for 2015 of the same amount as that of 2014. Once again, nearly 98% of the RBS is allocated to cover the salaries of the HQA staff, with only limited financial support (~2%) for property expenses and equipment supplies. The Panel heard that NSRF (EU) programme funding for 2015-2020 (for implementing a national evaluation system for assessment and accreditation) had recently been re-confirmed. The majority of the total budget (€7.67m) would be allocated to the implementation of the external assessment and accreditation scheme for HEIs, including travel costs for experts and database software.

59. The Panel can confirm that HQA staff are highly skilled, have experience and expertise. The Panel heard that they provide strong support and guidance to the review panels, which is strongly appreciated. There is an attitude of professionalism, flexibility and mutual support. Funding is budgeted for the professional development of staff. The Panel was informed of the new database under development which would enhance the Agency's capacity in quality enhancement.

60. The Agency rents appropriate and accessible accommodation in Athens, which is well-serviced and appropriately fitted out.

61. HQA undertakes a full programme of reviews which presents it with a heavy workload. The Panel concurs in the view that it has just sufficient resources to support its current operations in their current format. The Panel can also confirm HQA's commitment to the ongoing personal and professional development of its staff. The Panel however suggests that the pressure on resources may limit the capacity of HQA as an engine for quality enhancement as evidenced by the lack of any significant sector-wide analysis. Further investment could allow it to make a significantly greater contribution to quality enhancement.

Panel judgement:

Substantially compliant.

Panel Recommendation:

That HQA be encouraged to develop and pursue its strategy for maintaining and increasing its resources (including those for staffing, finance, hardware and software), in order both to maintain its programme of work and also to develop its capacity for sector-wide analysis.

**ESG 3.5 Mission statement
(ENQA Criterion 4)**

Standard:

Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

Guidelines:

These statements should describe the goals and objectives of agencies' quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of their work. The statements should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the agency and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statements are translated into a clear policy and management plan.

HQA compliance

62. HQA has published its mission statement which is promoted on its website. The stated Mission of the Agency is:

To ensure high quality in higher education.

As part of its mission, the Agency supports the state and institutions of higher education in the formulation and implementation of the national strategy for higher education and certifies the quality of the operations of institutions of higher education.

The Agency guarantees the transparency of all of its actions in the area of the evaluation and accreditation of the quality of institutions of higher education.

As part of its mission, the Agency exercises, in particular, the following functions:

- *It periodically accredits the quality:*
 - *of internal quality assurance systems of institutions of higher education as provided for in Article 14, and*
 - *the programmes of study of higher education, including both short-cycle programs, lifelong learning, distance learning, and collaboration with other domestic or foreign educational or research institutions.*
- *It recommends to the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, and the governing bodies of institutions of higher education, ways and means to ensure continued high quality in higher education.*

Panel judgement:

Fully compliant.

Panel Recommendation

None

ESG 3.6 Independence (ENQA Criterion 5)

Standard:

Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

Guidelines:

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- its operational independence from higher education institutions and Governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts)
- the definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and independently from Governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence
- while relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

HQA compliance

63. HQA was established as an independent administrative agency (ADA) in accordance with Article 10 of Law 3374/2005. The President of the Agency is appointed by the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, after consulting with the Parliament's Committee of Educational Affairs; this is in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Parliament's Rules of Procedure. In accordance with Law 4009/4011, the HQA President "is a scientist with a high, internationally recognized scientific work and proven international academic experience, preferably with experience in management and quality assurance in higher education, and appointed by the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs".

The Council of the HQA is formally established by the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, on the proposal of the President of the HQA.

The selection process for appointing members of the Council of HQA is carried out in accordance with the provisions of Law 4009/2011, according to which:

"The evaluation of candidates, delegated by the President of the Council, with the agreement of the body, to three-member committees, composed of full professors from domestic or foreign HEIs, of relevant expertise, who prepare evaluative rankings of the candidates who have the competences and the qualifications, based on their scientific, research and educational work. The classification takes into account experience in matters of quality assurance and accreditation in higher education, resulting from participation in quality assurance bodies of HEIs and relevant scientific and research works, and administrative experience, especially in universities. The President of the HQA communicates these assessed lists of candidates to: (a) the Rectors of all Universities for applicants concerning Universities; (b) to the Presidents of all TEIs for applicants concerning TEIs;

and (c) to the synod of the Directors of research centres, supervised by the General Secretariat of Research and Technology for applicants concerning the research centres. If for a particular candidate, three quarters of the Rectors or the Presidents of TEIs or the members of the synod of the Directors of research centres, respectively, express objections, the candidate is excluded from the ranking list.

HQA has a separate hypothecated budget, in order to keep finances clearly separated and ensure full accountability.

HQA has sole responsibility for the outcome of its assessments. Panels of independent peers are responsible for their judgements. The ENQA Panel noted that great care is exercised by HQA in its procedures to ensure their independence of operation. To ensure the independence of the assessment panels, safeguards are built into the entire appointment procedure relating to avoidance of conflicts of interest. The existing legislation gives utmost importance to the independence of experts, and sets clear and strict criteria for determining conflict of interest. Panel members before confirmation are asked to sign a declaration that they have no conflict of interest with the academic unit for evaluation covering the preceding 5 years.

Panel judgement:

Fully compliant.

Panel Recommendation

None.

ESG 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies (ENQA Criterion 6)

Standard:

The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

Guidelines:

Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes.

Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people.

Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

HQA compliance

64. All procedures and criteria used by HQA are predetermined and available to the public through the Agency's website. Detailed guidance is available for each process, supported by FAQs. HEIs' internal self-evaluations and the corresponding external evaluations by HQA are published on HQA's website.

HQA's procedures involve:

- A subject self-evaluation prepared in response to pre-defined criteria, which are publicly available.
- An external evaluation by an expert group which includes a site visit.
- Assessment/external assessment by a group of experts
- An evaluation report
- The report is submitted to the HEI for factual corrections
- The HEI draws up a response
- Subsequent monitoring is carried out through annual reporting of the assessed unit to the HEI's MODIP, which in turn submits an annual progress report to HQA.
- Reports are published on the HQA website

65. HQA does not however fully meet two aspects of this Standard:

Firstly as previously discussed, Greek law does not permit the inclusion of students as members of the review panels.

Secondly, current legislation does not provide for an Appeals system against panel decisions.

The Panel recognises that in these circumstances HQA itself has little room for manoeuvre on these two aspects, but recommends that discussions be pursued with the Ministry of Education so as to permit student representation on HQA

review panels and to facilitate a review mechanism for panel decisions in line with best practice set out in the ESG.

Panel judgement:

Substantially compliant.

Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that discussions be pursued with the Ministry of Education so as to permit student representation on HOA review panels and to facilitate a review mechanism for panel decisions in line with best practice set out in the ESG.

**ESG 3.8 Accountability procedures
(ENQA Criterion 7)**

Standard:

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

Guidelines:

These procedures are expected to include the following:

- 1 A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website.
- 2 Documentation which demonstrates that:
 - the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance
 - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts
 - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties
 - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and Council); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
- 3 A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years.

HQA compliance

66. HQA has put a number of measures in place to secure its own accountability, which are discussed below. It has recently renewed its website as a bilingual user-friendly site.

It publishes an annual activity report, presenting both the results of the year's work and overall progress made since 2006. The report describes both the principles and the framework actions of the Agency, and includes the results of evaluations, complete with strengths and weaknesses (especially in the 2014 report). The results are presented and addressed at three levels: academic units, institutions, and State. The Agency's reports have a strong impact, both in influencing the public debate on higher education and also the dialogue between HQA, the Ministry and the HEIs. Recent reports have had a direct impact for example on the planning nationally of postgraduate programmes and on the determination of student numbers for the academic year 2014-15 in certain HEIs.

One of the initial tasks of the first administration of HQA in 2006 was to develop a quality assurance system (QAS) according to ISO 9001: 2000. This has been through subsequent renewals and the HQA has been preparing during 2014-15 for a further renewal of its ISO certification which would be valid until 2017. This is seen as an important proxy for the Agency's ability to properly and systematically manage European Commission funds.

HQA maintains reliable training and updating mechanisms to ensure the quality of all activities performed by external experts. HQA staff felt supported in their personal training and staff development needs. HQA use a number of seasonal administrative staff to help at peak times; the Panel heard that the majority were regular helpers and that arrangements were made as necessary for their induction and updating. As already discussed, HQA follows a clear policy for non-conflict of interest as regards to the experts, supplemented by a Code of Conduct.

As regards internal feedback procedures, HQA is a relatively small agency and relies mainly on informal feedback mechanisms. The primary forum for discussion, processing, and formulation are the Council meetings, (2 per month). Much of the detailed preparatory work is carried out by small, thematic working groups, consisting of Council members or both Council members and administrative staff.

As regards external feedback, HQA issues questionnaires to experts and chairpersons of academic units. These questionnaires have so far functioned as an external feedback mechanism for evaluation of the external evaluation process applied by HQA. The results are considered by the Council and taken account of in its forward planning.

67. HQA has been an affiliate member of ENQA since 2006 and now feels prepared and sufficiently confident to submit itself to external evaluation as part of ENQA's five year cycle

Panel judgement:

Partially compliant.

Panel Recommendation

Given the growth in HQA activity it may now be timely to formalise aspects of HQA's internal feedback arrangements; the Council should consider this in consultation with the Director General.

ENQA Criterion 8

- i. The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgments and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups;
- ii. If the agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of the agency;
- iii. The agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.

HQA compliance

68. As already discussed, the Agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and seeks to ensure that both its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgments and decisions are in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups. This is confirmed by feedback on the satisfaction of experts and the chairpersons of the evaluated units, and by the ISO certification, which confirms the professionalism and the reliability of HQA.

69. As discussed, the Greek QA system has not provided for an appeal mechanism. HQA points out that this has not prevented the evaluated academic units from expressing their opinion about the content of the draft report of their external evaluation, with this type of feedback acting as a type of substitute appeal mechanism. HQA, conscious of the absence, will inform the Ministry, and it is hopeful that a proper appeal system will be adopted.

HQA wishes to join ENQA and is willing to actively contribute to the attainment of its objectives.

Panel judgement:

Substantially compliant.

Panel Recommendation

None.

Aspects of good practice

70. In addition to examining HQA's compliance with the ESG, this review has also identified a number of commendable features of the Agency's work.

- Overall the Panel believes that the Agency has engaged purposefully and made realistic progress with the agenda legally assigned to it, given the financial constraints under which it operates.
- The Panel was impressed by the energy and commitment of HQA's staff.

Summary of recommendations

71. The Panel makes a number of specific recommendations to HQA. These are:

- That HQA continue its work designed to further strengthen its arrangements for ensuring consistency of reporting.
- That HQA continue to explore alternative mechanisms for ensuring a stronger student voice in its external review procedures and for the inclusion of a larger number of experts from outside the Greek speaking communities.
- That the responsible Greek bodies consider whether full responsibility for consideration of follow-up reports should rest more directly with HQA as part of a more structured and transparent follow up process.
- The Panel recommends that the new programme of work be carefully planned, phased and monitored, so as to ensure its timely delivery.
- That HQA consider how the outputs from its review activities can be further focused to support system-wide analysis and institutional quality improvement and enhancement
- The Panel recognises the constraints currently faced by the Agency through significant financial pressures and the volume of procedure-driven activity. However, it is recommended that, to fully realise its potential, the Agency discuss with its stakeholders options to increase its resources for this purpose. The additional resource thus gained could then be directed to increase the volume of system-wide analysis and quality enhancement activity which HQA can undertake.
- That HQA be encouraged to develop and pursue its strategy for maintaining and increasing its resources (including those for staffing, finance, hardware and software), in order both to maintain its programme of work and also to develop its capacity for sector-wide analysis.
- The Panel recommends that discussions be pursued with the Ministry of Education so as to permit student representation on HQA review panels and to facilitate a review mechanism for panel decisions in line with best practice set out in the ESG.
- Given the growth in HQA activity it may now be timely to formalise aspects of HQA's internal feedback arrangements; the Council should consider this in consultation with the Director General.

Summary of HQA's performance against the ENQA membership criteria

72. The criteria where **full compliance** has been achieved are:

- ENQA criterion 1, sub-criterion (ESG 2.1): Use of internal quality assurance procedures
- ENQA criterion 1, sub-criterion (ESG 2.2): Development of external quality assurance processes
- ENQA criterion 1, sub-criterion (ESG 2.5): Reporting
- ENQA criterion 2, (ESG 3.2): Official status
- ENQA criterion 1, sub-criterion (ESG 3.3): Activities

- ENQA criterion 4 (ESG 3.5): Mission statement
- ENQA criterion 5 (ESG 3.6): Independence

The criteria where **substantial compliance** has been achieved are:

- ENQA criterion 1, sub-criterion (ESG 2.3): Criteria for decisions
- ENQA criterion 1, sub-criterion (ESG 2.4): Processes fit for purpose
- ENQA criterion 1, sub-criterion (ESG 2.6): Follow-up procedures
- ENQA criterion 1, sub-criterion (ESG 2.7): Periodic reviews
- ENQA Criterion 1, sub-criterion (ESG 2.8): System-wide analyses
- ENQA criterion 1 (overall) (ESG 3.1): Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education
- ENQA criterion 3 (ESG 3.4): Resources
- ENQA criterion 6 (ESG 3.7): External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies
- ENQA criterion 8 (miscellaneous)

The criterion where **partial compliance** has been achieved is:

- ENQA criterion 7 (ESG 3.8): Accountability procedures

Conclusion

73. In the light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the Review Panel is satisfied that, in the performance of its functions, HOA is in **substantial compliance** with the ENQA Membership Provisions.

The Panel therefore recommends to the Board of ENQA that HOA should be granted Full Membership of ENQA for a period of five years. The Panel would also recommend that HOA be asked to submit a progress report after either one or two years following consideration of this report.

APPENDIX 1

Site visit to HQA 13-14 January 2015		
Schedule of meetings		
Venue: HQA 44th Syngrou Avenue 117 42 Athens		
Monday 12 January 2015		
17:00-20:00	Private meeting of the review panel	
Tuesday 13 January 2015		
8:45	Transfer from hotel to HQA's premises	
9.00 – 9.15	Welcome from HQA President	• Nikoletta Paisidou , HQA President
9.15 – 10.15	Meeting with the HQA President, the two Vice Presidents and the writer of the SER	• Nikoletta Paisidou President • Ioannis Gerotheranassis , Vice President • Kleomenis Oikonomou , Vice President • George Stamelos , Writer of the SER
10:15-10:30	Private break-Coffee Break	Review Panel only
10:30-11:30	Meeting with members of the HQA Council	• Prodromos Yannas • Vasileios Tsiantos • Maria Lazaridou • Ioannis Kapolos • Dimitris Niarchos • George Stamelos • Emmanuel Koukios
11:30-11:45	Private break	Review Panel only
11:45-12:45	Meetings with Representatives of the University Rectors Synod and Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs) Presidents Synod	• Nikos Georgopoulos Rector of the University of Piraeus • Dimosthenis Anagnostopoulos Rector of the Harokopeio University of Athens

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Konstantinos Gatsios, Rector of Athens University of Economics & Business & President of the Hellenic University Rectors Synod • Michalis Bratakos, President of TEI of Athens • Vassilis Panagou, Deputy President of TEI of Piraeus • Evangelos Kapetanakis, President of TEI of Crete
12.45 - 13.00	Private break	Review Panel only
13.00- 14.15	Meeting with MODIP (Quality Assurance Unit) Presidents and administrative staff from both TEIs and Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helen Papadaki, Vice Rector-President of QAU/MODIP University of Crete • Theodoros Laopoulos Vice Rector-President of QAU/MODIP Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Via Skype) • Dimitris Tseles, Vice President – President of QAU/MODIP TEI of Piraeus • Administrative staff from both TEIs and Universities • Maria Sigala Administrative Staff from QAU/Modip, TEI OF PIRAEUS • Kyriaki-Manessi Dafni Administrative Staff from QAU/Modip TEI OF ATHENS • Aggeliki Kitsiou Administrative Staff from QAU/Modip University of Aegean • Helen Tsironi Administrative Staff from QAU/Modip University of Thessaly
14.15-15:15	lunch (including brief walk through of premises)	Review Panel only
15.15 – 16.15	Meeting with Representatives of POSDEP (Hellenic Federation of University Teachers Association) and OSEP (Federation of Educational Staff of TEIs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stathis Efstathopoulos, Chair of the Hellenic Federation of Universities' Teacher Associations (POSDEP) • Christos Kourouniotis, Member of the Hellenic Federation of Universities' Teacher Associations (POSDEP)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xenia Chrysochoou, Member of the Hellenic Federation of Universities' Teacher Associations (POSDEP) • Nikolaos Stavrakakis, Member of the Hellenic Federation of Universities' Teacher Associations (POSDEP) • Sokratis Katsikas, Member of the Hellenic Federation of Universities' Teacher Associations (POSDEP) • Apostolos Kokkosis, Chair of Federation of Educational Staff of TEIs (OSEP) • Stamatis Angelopoulos, General Secretary of Federation of Educational Staff of TEIs (OSEP) • Victoria Vivilaki, Member of of Federation of Educational Staff of TEIs (OSEP)
16.15 – 16.30	Private break	Review Panel only
16.30- 17.30	Meeting with stakeholders (from Chambers etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manolis Stratakis-Head of the Innovation Department of Forthnet SA (Greek Company of Telecommunications and Telematic Applications) • Lambros-Farmakis Vice President of the Greek Chemist Association • Antonia Moropoulou-Vice President of the Technical Chamber of Greece • Vasilios Korkidis-President of the Hellenic Confederation of Commerce & Entrepreneurship • Nikolaos Paizis, Scientific Consultant of the Greek General Confederation of Labour in the area of Education and Lifelong learning
17.30 – 18.00	Private break	Review Panel only

Wednesday 14 January 2015		
08:00-08:30	Transfer from hotel " Herodion "	
08.30-09.30	Meeting with HQA staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yolanda Tsakni , HQA Secretary

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katerina Tsaliki External Evaluation Coordinator • Dimitra Dargenidou External Evaluation Coordinator • Nikolas Georgiadis, Head of Department of IT • Ioanna Leraki, Office of Research and Analysis • Theoni Petropoulou , Software Development • Vasiliki Kyriakousi, HOA Register • Theodoros Kostis, Chartered Electrical Engineer •
09.30-09.45	Private break	Review Panel Only
09.45-10.45	Meeting with External Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moshos Morfakidis, Centro de Estudios Bizantinos, Neogriegos y Chipriotas de Granada"/ C.E.B.N.Ch.), Spain • Fivos Andritsos, Joint Research Centre (JRC). Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen. Digital Citizen's Security Unit • Bill Baltzopoulos, Professor of Biomechanics, School of Sport and Education, Centre for Sports Medicine and Human Performance, Brunel University London • Panayotta Lakkis, Professor, Law, Julius- Maximilians- Universitat Wurzburg, Germany • George Stylios, Professor, School of Textiles, Heriot Watt, University, UK
10.45-11.00	Private break	Review Panel Only
11.00-12.00	Meeting with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athanasios Raptis, Undergraduate student –National & Kapodistrian University of Athens • Dimitris Panou, PHD candidate- National & Kapodistrian University of Athens • Paraskevi Sifoniou, Undergraduate Student –TEI of Piraeus

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleni Spirou, Postgraduate Student, University of Patras • Kosta Papadas, Undergraduate Student, Athens University of Economics & Business • Alexandros Panagiotopoulos, Undergraduate Student, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens
12.00-12.15	Private break	Review Panel Only
12.15-13.15	Meeting with Representative of the Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athanassios Kyriazis, General Secretary of the Ministry of Education
13.15-14.15	Lunch	Review Panel Only
14.15-14.45	Review (if required) with President and the two Vice Presidents of any remaining issues for clarification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nikoletta Paisidou HQA President
14:45-16:00	Private Panel meeting to determine preliminary findings	Review Panel Only
16.00-16.15	Feedback preliminary findings to HQA	
16.15	Close and departure	

APPENDIX 2

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE
1. Documents submitted in advance
Self Evaluation Report (SER) dated September, 2014
Annexes/hyperlinks to:
DOC. 1: The "ATHENA " Project: Short Report
DOC. 2: List of Accreditation Workshops during the period 2013/14
DOC. 3: List of Participation in International Conferences
DOC. 4a: Example of HOA Communications with the Academic Units
DOC. 4b: Letter to MODIPs on Internal Evaluation Report Audits
DOC. 5a: Questionnaire for Experts on external evaluation process
DOC. 5b: Questionnaire for Heads of Department on external evaluation process
DOC. 6a: Feedback from Experts - analysis of questionnaires
DOC. 6b: Feedback from Dept. Heads - analysis of questionnaires
DOC. 7: Sample Letter - communication with ESU
DOC. 8: Invitation Letter & Code of Conduct
Doc. 9: Nomination from ESU for the accreditation procedure
Doc. 10a: Press
Doc. 10b: Determination of the proposed number of new students by academic unit
2. Further documents/information requested and provided in advance:
Number of institutions and students in HE
Accessibility of HE in Greece
Student tuition fees, student support and planned reforms
Roles of HOA staff during review procedures
Information on internal processes for the development of QA procedures and preparation of reviews
Information on reasons for the implementation of the accreditation scheme
Information about the formal and operational relations between HOA and the MoE
Information on follow-up activities of HOA in practice including improvement planning
3. Further documents made available during visit:
Description of the national Strategic Reference Framework and the role of HE
HOA organisational chart
HOA mission statement and supporting documents
Breakdown of HOA's state budget for 2015

Briefing documentation for external experts
Code of Conduct for external experts
Description of the selection procedure for panel experts
Description of the database of external experts
Examples of formation of external evaluation Panels
Four sample external evaluation reports
HQA Quality Management Manual
HQA's internal quality policy
4. Website

APPENDIX 3

Athens, 6/3/2015

Ref. Number 3 6 9

To:

The Secretary of the ENQA Panel Review
Mr. Paul Mitchell

Copy to:

The ENQA Panel Review

Re: Response of the HQA to the draft report

Dear Mr. Mitchell,

We thank the ENQA Panel for their thorough external evaluation report. We consider most of the points raised by the Panel as a fair account of the strengths and weaknesses of our Agency, and we acknowledge in particular their constructive criticism.

We have a few typing errors on page 3 of the report regarding some abbreviations which need to be corrected:

"ADIPP" should be changed to "ADIPPDE"

"ASPET" should be changed to "ASPETE"

"EAP/H" should be changed to "EAP/HOU"

Once again, we thank the ENQA Panel for their time and studious effort and we feel that their findings and recommendations will be of great help to us in the future.

On behalf of HQA, (signature)

*Professor Nikoletta Paisidou, President

**The original signature was placed on the archive copy of the HQA.*

ΛΕΩΦΟΡΟΣ ΣΥΓΓΡΟΥ 44-117 42 ΑΘΗΝΑ

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