



AGENCIA NACIONAL DE EVALUACIÓN
DE LA CALIDAD Y ACREDITACIÓN

***TAM Seminar: "European Guidelines for
quality assurance in higher education: Theory
and practice"***

Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 11-12 October, 2017

***The European Standards and Guidelines:
consistency of procedures and decision
making***

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The QA framework in Europe

Quality assurance in the EHEA:

- **At the higher education institution level:**

Higher Education Institutions develop its own QA systems

- **At the national level:**

Quality Assurance agencies in most of the European countries

- **At the European level**

ENQA and the European Quality Assurance Register



ENQA



eqar
European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education

Principles of IQA in the EHEA



Part 3

European standards for
external quality assurance agencies

Part 2

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

Part 1

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

External quality assurance agencies

Part 3



3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

3.2 Official status

3.3 Independence

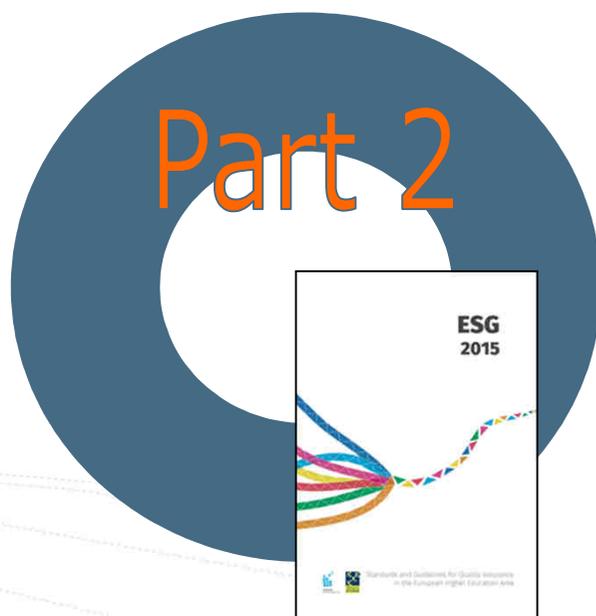
3.4 Thematic analysis

3.5 Resources

3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies

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



2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

2.3 Implementing processes

2.4 Peer-review experts

2.5 Criteria for outcomes

2.6 Reporting

2.7 Complaints and appeals

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

Part 1



- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
- 1.2 Design and approval of programmes⁸
- 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
- 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
- 1.5 Teaching staff
- 1.6 Learning resources and student support
- 1.7 Information management
- 1.8 Public information
- 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
- 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

What the ESG are

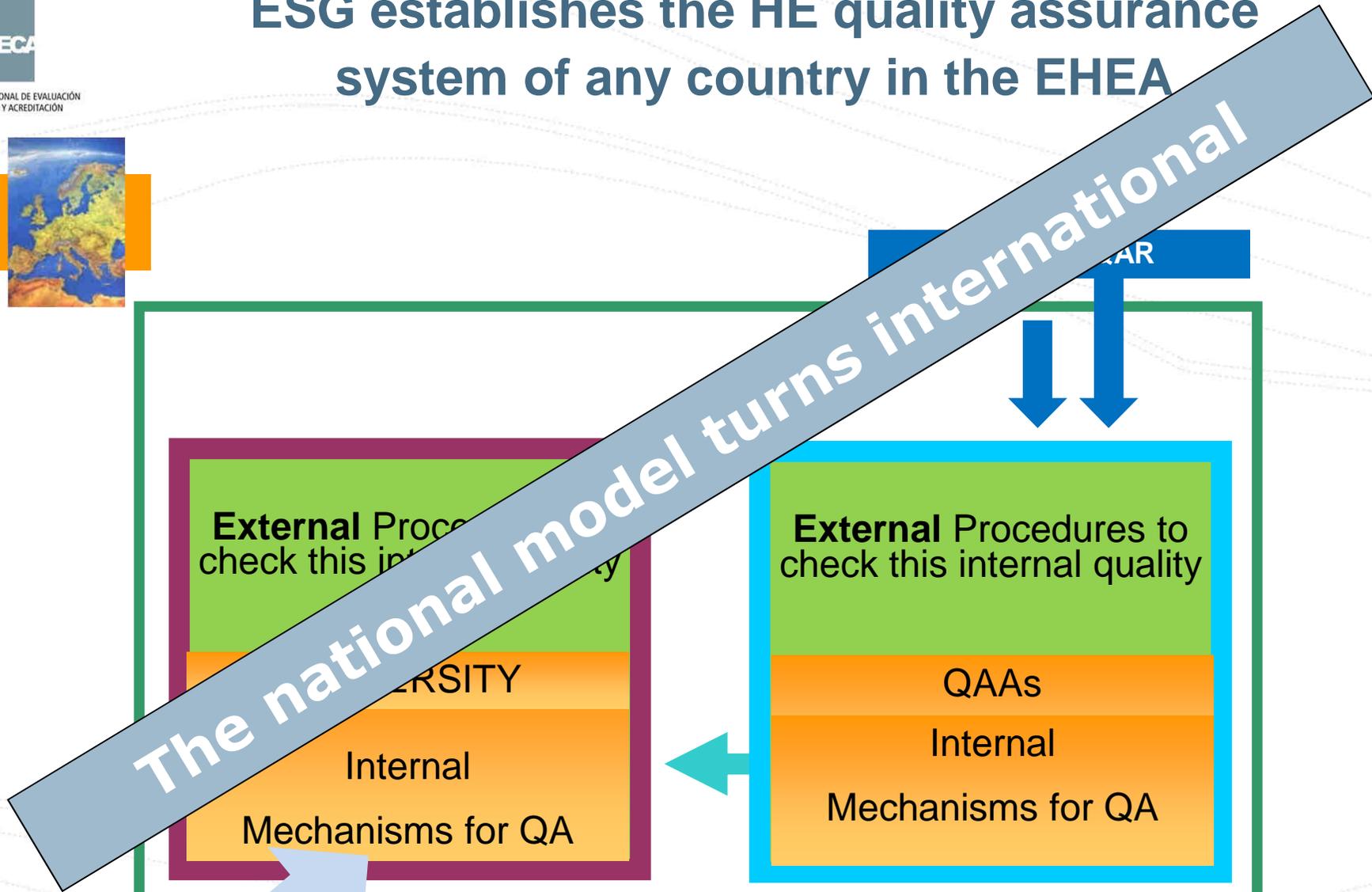
- ✓ Common frame of reference, generic principles -> common understanding of QA
- ✓ Support the **creation of trust** between agencies and HEIs and thus facilitate international cooperation and mobility
- ✓ A view of what should be done, not how it should be done
- ✓ A source of assistance and guidance to HEIs and agencies
- ✓ Central values (diversity, subsidiarity, autonomy)

What the ESG are NOT

- ✗ Specific requirements
- ✗ Do not dictate practice
- ✗ A checklist
- ✗ Prescriptive or unchangeable
- ✗ A compendium of detailed procedures
- ✗ A European quality assurance system



ESG establishes the HE quality assurance system of any country in the EHEA



AUDIT

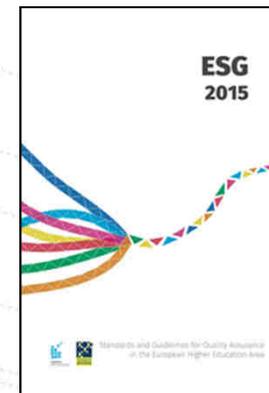


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The national QA model turns international

1. External review by ENQA against ESG

QAAs have achieved significant improvements in their evaluation procedures and in terms of efficiency



2. Networking at the European level: ENQA, ECA



3. Networking at the global level: APQN, ANQAHE, INQAAHE





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Importance of QA at international level

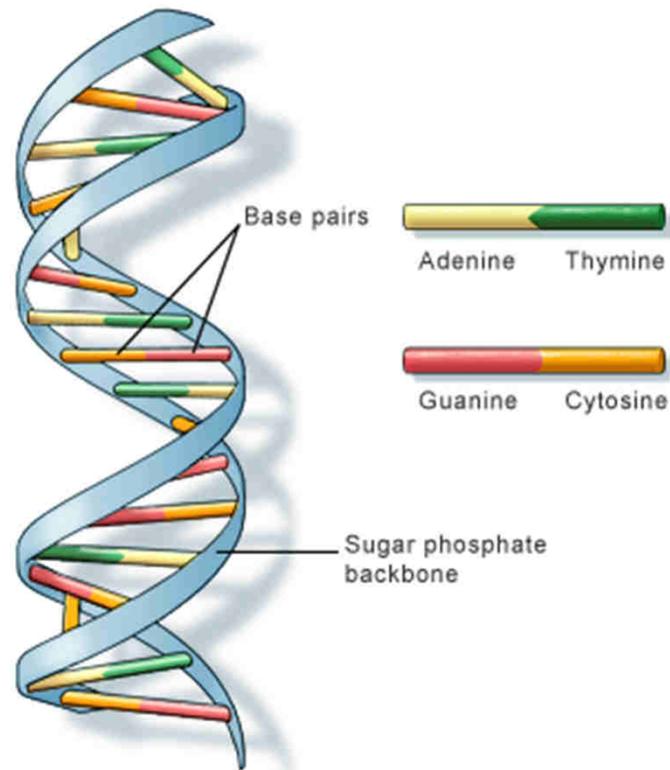
**Development of common standards, guidelines
and principles
(such as the ESG)**



Comparability and compatibility of QA processes

- Facilitate comparison and understanding between national QA systems
- Facilitate comparison and recognition of degrees and results of external QA activities
- Build and promote mutual trust
- Improve mobility
- Increase transparency for students, employers and the society as a whole

External evaluation of QAAs: the DNA for mutual trust



U.S. National Library of Medicine

Purposes of the accreditation procedures

- To promote student mobility
- To increase transparency- and accountability-oriented processes
- To define an academic standard which all the programmes or institutions in a system must comply with

Type of accreditation in Europe

- Accreditation awarded by an official body
- Professional accreditation
- Accreditation run by international associations

The European shared accreditation framework

- Accreditation is made by an agency
 - which complies with the European Standards and Guidelines for QA concerning the organisation of the agency and its evaluation procedures
 - which implements and share its accreditation criteria with other agencies: trust-building process.
- The shared accreditation framework is based upon:
 - a qualifications framework that defines the descriptors for each cycle: bachelor, master, doctorate
 - in the academic standards by programme or set of programmes
 - in a set of common standards on the institution's internal quality assurance

The common European accreditation framework

- The accreditation agency must comply with the ESG through an external review:
 - The evaluation process is based on a self-evaluation report and a site-visit made by an international expert panel.
 - Both process and procedure are public.
 - The process is respectful with the internal QA system of the institution
 - The expert panel is appointed according to a procedure, it acts independently within the accreditation framework and it shows no conflict of interest.

Principles of IQA in the EHEA

“European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance on the EHEA” approved in Bergen, 2005



In 2012 in Bucharest the ministers asked **E4 (ENQA+EUA+EURASHE+ESU) + Business Europe, Education International and EQAR** a revision of the ESG, which has been approved in Yerevan in May 2014



Revised ESG: Four principles

- **Higher education institutions** have primary **responsibility** for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
- Quality assurance processes respond to the **diversity** of HE systems, institutions and programmes;
- Quality assurance supports the **development of a quality culture**;
- Quality assurance processes **involve stakeholders** and take into account the expectations of all stakeholders and society.

Revised ESG: Four purposes

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

Main features in Part 1

- **Flexible learning central:** frequent reference to LLL, RPL, different delivery modes, diverse student body etc.
- **LOs and SCL have a strong focus,** and are mentioned in 5 out of the 10 standards!
 - 1.2: design of programmes, explicit reference to LOs, national QFs and QF-EHEA
 - 1.4: student admission and progression have a stronger focus than before and refer throughout to LOs based approach
 - 1.6: student support standard emphasis the diversity of the student population

ESG: the Agency perspective

Interpreting ESG within the national context vs "adapting" ESG to the national context

- Academic and legal traditions are important to interpret ESG but they are not an *alibi* to try "another way of telling" our own story
- **Issue:** What is driven by national specificities and what is "re-read" for the sake of contextual reasons?

Balance: *A need to maintain the (bio)diversity of European HE systems assuring a common understanding of QA processes...*

from outside

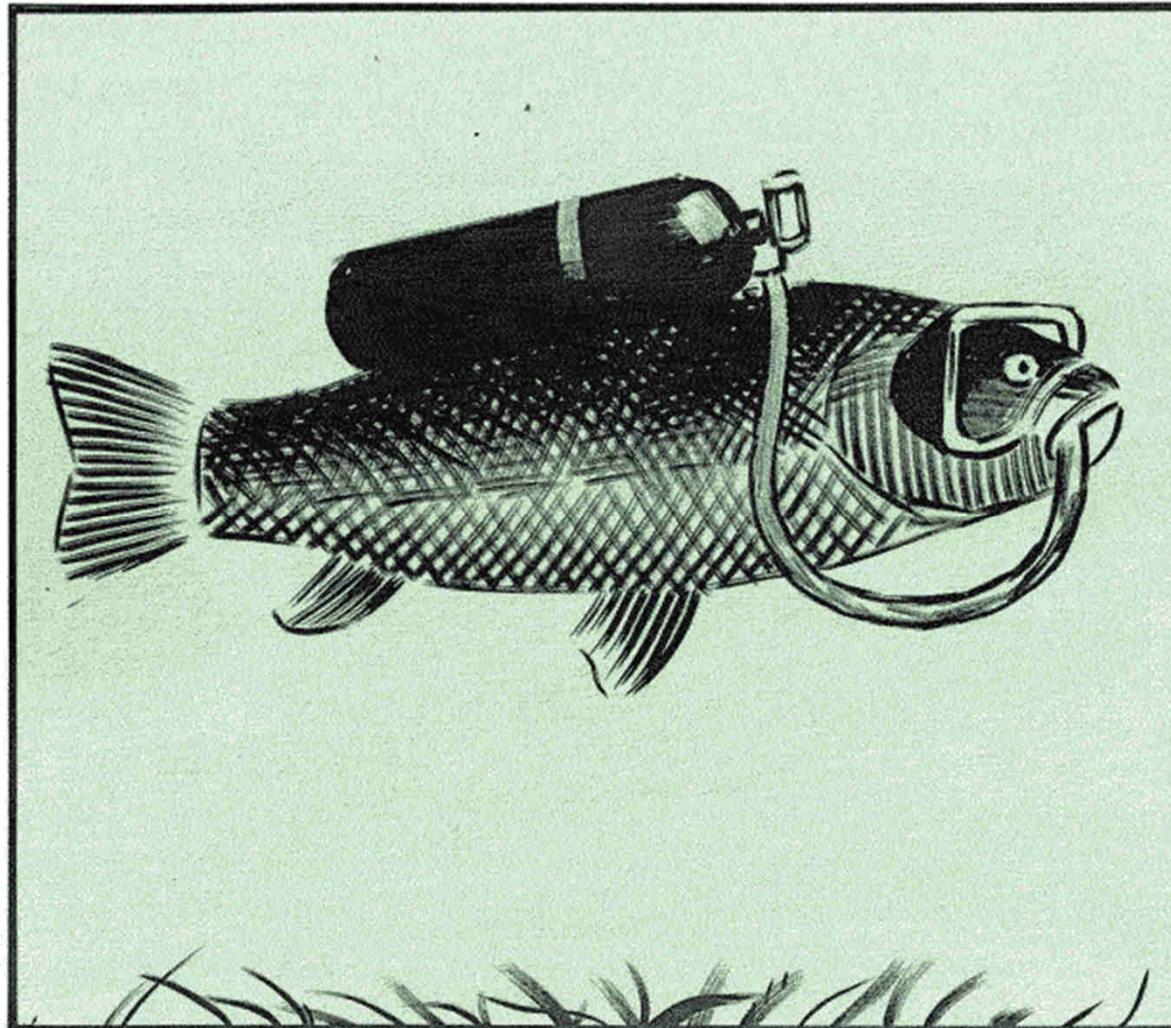
Translating the ESG to the national context

- Importance of the regional approach: advantages vs disadvantages:
 - HE policies are not the same as politics as such. QA policies: more room for consensus on technical issues
 - Can your national context be understood without bearing in mind the regional one?
 - But the context by itself is not self-explanatory at all

Translating the ESG to the national context

- Translating does not mean a new interpretation according to particular region but:
 - A need to take the academic particularities into account to inform review panel members (diversity at the regional and national contexts)
 - Identify context-led problems for the completion of a certain(s) standards or guidelines at the regional context (regional reinforcing approach): system-led analysis, selection of experts, PhD studies, student involvement, independence, appeal procedure...

Fitness for purpose?



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Thank you very much

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