



ESG revision Steering Group report

Following the mandate by the Ministers responsible for Higher Education of the European Higher Education Area during the last Ministerial Conference of the Bologna Process, as it was agreed in the Bucharest Communiqué, the European Association of Higher Education Institutions (EURASHE), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), who form the so-called E4 group, called Education International (EI), BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) for a kick-off meeting of the revision process of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

At the first meeting in July 2013, the seven organizations discussed and agreed the process, timelines and structures for the preparation of the initial proposal for the revised ESG to the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG).

Structures

The cooperating stakeholders' organisations move forward by reaching consensus and as equal partners through a **Steering Group**, which is composed of one representative from each of the seven organisations. The proposals for revising the ESG are discussed and agreed upon in the Steering Group meetings. The Steering Group is also responsible for ensuring proper consultation. ENQA performs the secretarial function for the Steering Group meetings.

A smaller **Drafting Group** of four experts, involved previously in the MAP-ESG project, carries out the drafting of the ESG and preparation of the Steering Group meetings. The Drafting Group attends the Steering Group meetings in order to facilitate communication and fully understanding of the input and feedback of the Steering Group.

Process and Timeline

The Steering Group has had regular meetings since September 2012. The Drafting Group has met as often as needed between the Steering Group meetings for drafting revisions of the ESG based on the direction given by the Steering Group. Drafts are then submitted to the Steering Group for consideration.

Moreover, during March 2013 the Steering Group will launch an open call for contributions to the revision process, aiming to elicit concrete suggestions for revision. This open call especially addresses the members of the BFUG, but it also open to the public.

Additionally, the Steering Committee has issued a proposal for a thematic session at the November BFUG meeting about the revision of the ESG, where a first draft would already be presented.

The initial proposal will be presented to the BFUG in its meeting in early 2014.

Progress

For the initial meeting of the Steering Group each stakeholder organisation prepared a written input, setting out the main issues the organisations wishes to be addressed in the revision of the ESG. At this meeting the Steering Group agreed on the main structure of the document as following: a foreword, to be written once the rest of the document is drafted; an executive summary; an introduction, setting the context, defining the scope and concepts and setting out the principles of the ESG; and the Standards and Guidelines themselves organised in three parts, including a brief explanation of the interrelations of this three parts. As in the current ESG, the first part would address internal quality assurance within higher education institutions, the second part external quality assurance of higher education and the third part quality assurance agencies.

These broad discussions about the scope of the ESG and its purposes and principles and about the definition and relationship between standards and guidelines had great importance in setting the framework for revising the standards and guidelines.

The Steering Group is very mindful of the high importance of language and wording of the document, as this document will be used by a large and diverse range of people, most of whom do not use English as their mother tongue. This issue has been carefully addressed throughout the process, as it was also one of the points highlighted by the MAP-ESG project.

Detailed minutes of the meetings of the Steering Group are being taken in order to facilitate the work of the Drafting Group and the whole revision process. Based on the discussion and agreements of the first meeting, the Drafting Group provided a first draft of the introductory parts, addressing the context, scope, concepts and principles of the ESG. The

Steering Group considered and agreed this draft, which will form the basis of the open call (see below).

In order to increase awareness of the revision process and increase its transparency, a public website was created (<http://www.revisionesg.wordpress.com>), and also an official e-mail address for the secretariat and the Steering Group.

The Steering Group agreed to launch during March 2013 an open call for contributions to the revision process. The call especially addresses the members of the BFUG and will also be published on the website. The main aim is to take into account from the early stages the input that could be provided by BFUG members and other stakeholders, so as to prepare the best possible initial proposal to the BFUG.

A first look over the existing standards and guidelines is being undertaken in order to improve their clarity, applicability and usefulness. Nevertheless, the main exercise is going to be carried out once the input from the open call is collected.

The current draft of the context, scope, concepts, purposes and principles of the ESG can be found in the documentation annexed to this report, as well as with the open call.

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on behalf of the Steering Group