

ESG 2015

Clear, comprehensive and useful

Tove Blytt Holmen, NOKUT and ENQA. Kiev 7 - 8 April 2016: University QA internal systems and QA Agency

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- 2005: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG)
 - Proposed by the E4 Group: ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE = the stakeholders (*not* ministers)
- 2008: European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)
- 2015: The Bologna – Ministers approved ESG 2015
 - Stakeholders in the drafting this time also included EQAR, Education International and Business Europe

Main principles

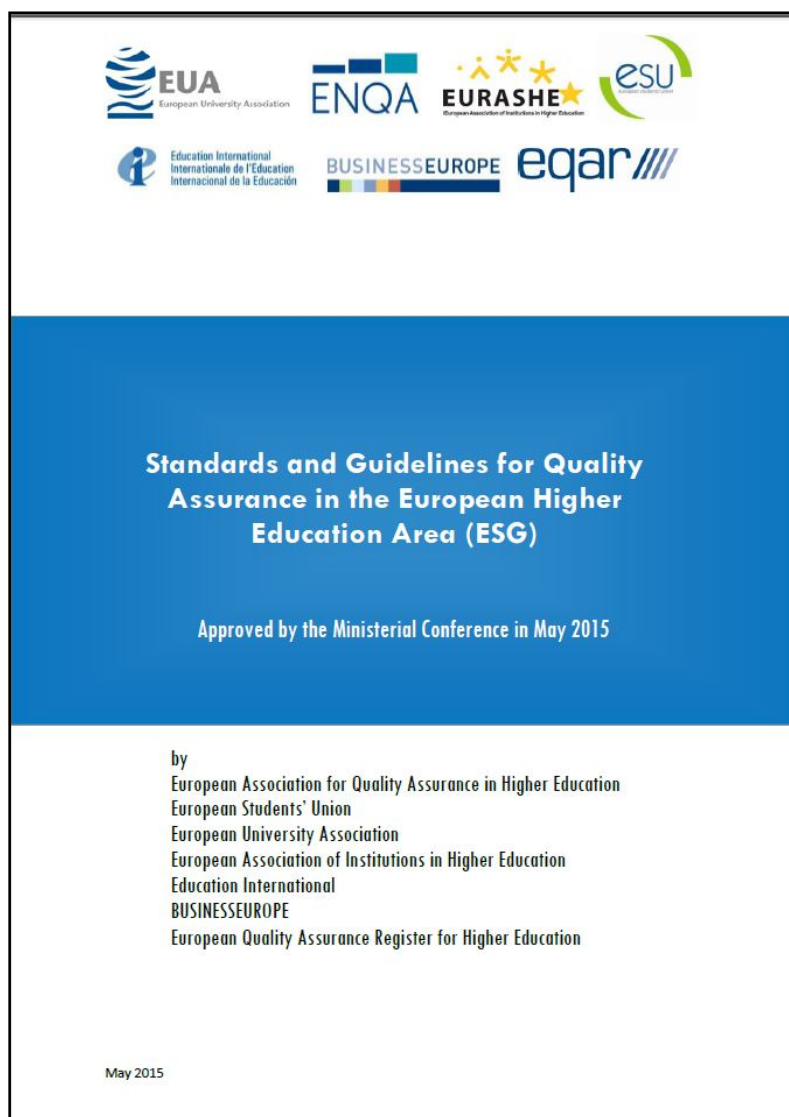
- The HEI itself has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution's provision and its quality assurance
- Standards and guidelines are for quality *assurance*, not quality as such
- ESG is generic and responds to the diversity of higher education systems, higher education institutions and programmes, as well as of agencies
- ESG is the framework and a common basis for national and institutional activities
- Quality assurance should support the development of a quality culture
- Quality assurance takes into account the experience and expectations of stakeholders such as students and working-life, by adequate involvement

Main principles cont.

- Independence of QA agencies (not parts of the ministry, neither the institutions)
- Transparent and professional information
- External and internal quality assurance build on each other, ref ESG 2015 Part 1 and 2 (one is not complete without the other)

Yerevan, May 2015- some outcomes

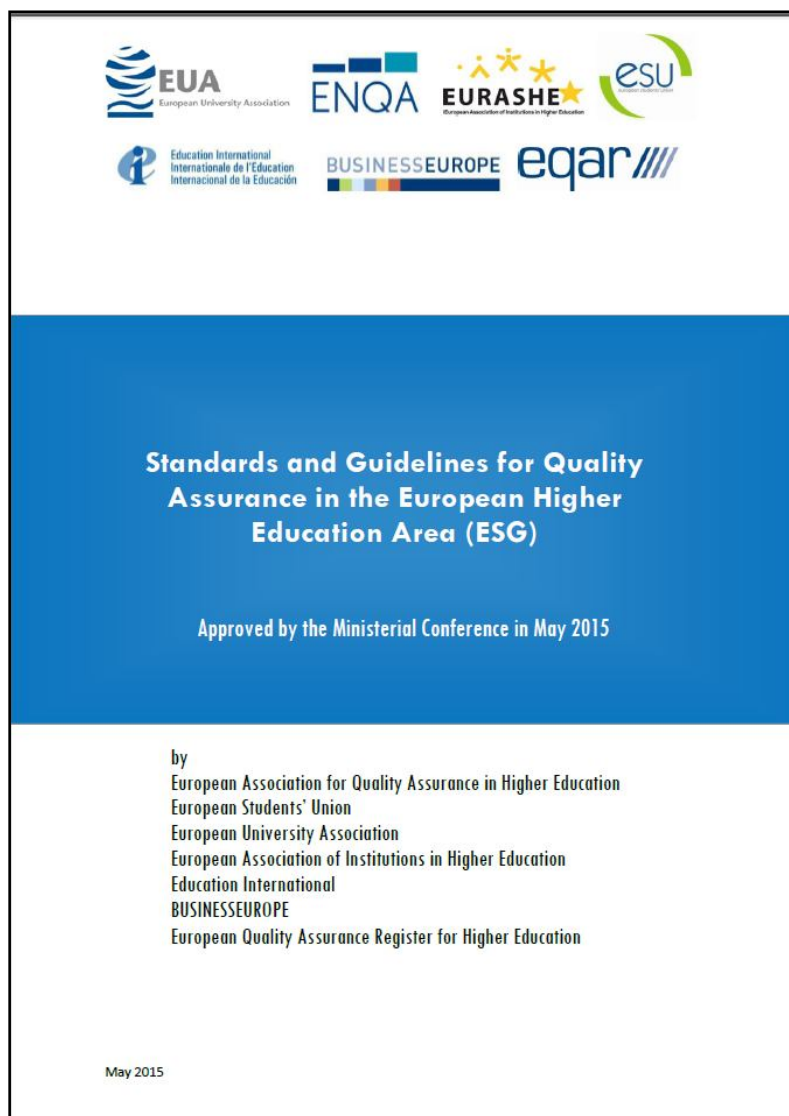
- Ministerial Communiqué
 - Strong importance given to the **conceptual shift to student-centered learning** (from teaching to learning and from inputs to outcomes; flexible learning paths; descriptions of learning outcomes; appropriate assessment and teaching methods...)
 - **Fostering employability** (labour market relevance of degrees through dialogue with labour market, combination of study and work placements etc.)
 - QA one of the success stories of Bologna – only reported shortcoming: lack of **progress in the involvement of students**
- Adoption of the following documents, central for QA:
 - the revised ESG
 - the European Approach to QA of Joint Programmes in the EHEA
 - the ECTS users' guide revised version, now as an official Bologna document



Scope and Concepts

Quality, whilst not easy to define, is mainly a result of the interaction between teachers, students and the institutional learning environment.

Quality should ensure learning environment in which the content of the programmes, learning opportunities and facilities are fit for purpose.



Part 1: Institutions' internal quality assurance

Part 2: External quality assurance

Part 3: Accountability of the quality assurance agencies

Main changes in Part 1

- **Flexible learning:** frequent reference to Life Long Learning (LLL), different delivery modes, a diverse student population etc. QA covers all kind of higher education
- **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; emphasis the diversity of the student population

A new standard focusing altogether on student centered learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3) → **requires a shift in thinking about “what is quality” in teaching and learning.**

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

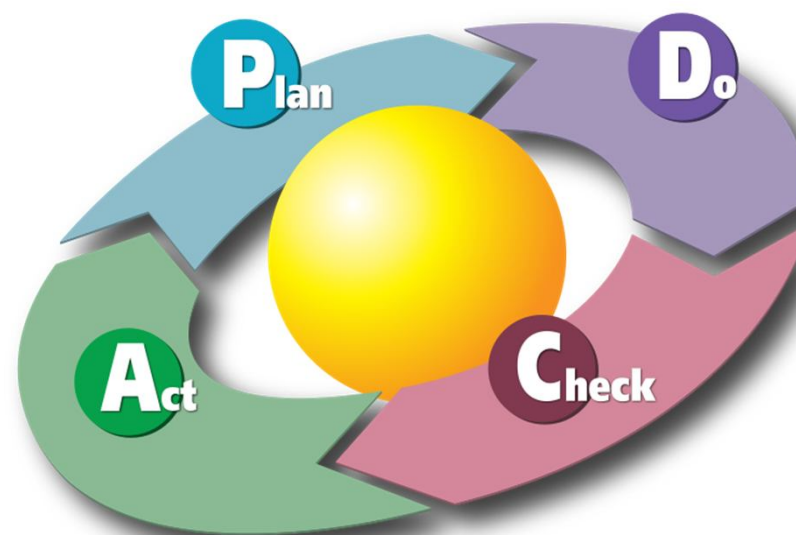
1. Do you want them to take an active role – which?
2. How do you encourage them to do so?
3. How may you document your activities and results in this field?

1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

The importance of getting feed-back both from the students and other stakeholders.

Documentation on the continuous improvement of programmes.



ESG 1.10:

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis

The responsibility for ensuring periodic review lies with the institution rather than the agency. In line with the expectation that the institutions should be able to choose a suitable agency from those listed in the EQAR.

Main changes in Part 2

- Rearrangement: moving some standards from and to part 3 and part 1 to make it more consistent and logical
- Regarding development of procedures, standards are slightly rearranged and singling out some crucial elements:
 - Standard 2.4: peer-review experts → **requires a student member**, recommends international experts (guidelines).
Notice also the detailed guidelines for Standard 2.4
 - Standard 2.6: reporting → required publication, easily accessible **full expert** report whether positive or negative.
 - Standard 2.7: complaints and appeals → emphasised (a standard of its own) and **now required for all procedures**

Previous version ESG – Part 2		Revised ESG – Part 2
2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures		2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance
2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes		2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose
2.3 Criteria for decisions		2.3 Implementing processes
2.4 Processes fit for purpose		2.4 Peer-review experts
2.5 Reporting		2.5 Criteria for outcomes
2.6 Follow-up procedures		2.6 Reporting
2.7 Periodic reviews		2.7 Complaints and appeals
2.8 System-wide analyses		

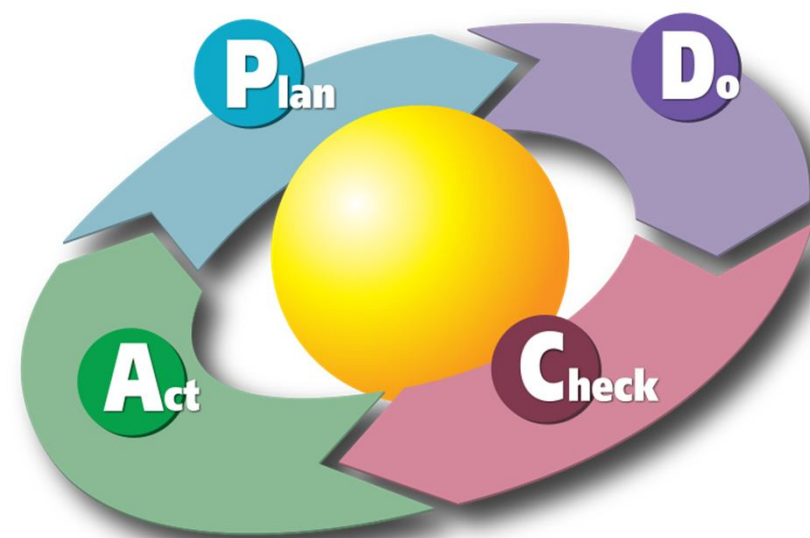
Main Changes in Part 3

- Rearranging to be more coherent and logical
- **3.3: Notion of independence explained better** (organisational, operational, and of outcomes).
- **3.4 thematic analysis:** 2005 “from time to time”, 2015: “regularly” → more strict
- **3.5: resources - now has guidelines that explain what is “adequate”** (also thematic analysis, information activities etc.)

In detail: 3.6 Internal quality assurance and **professional conduct**

Standard:

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



ENQA Agency Reviews

- **Fast changes required!** → some of them will require legislative change in some countries (publication of reports) qualification framework and learning outcome descriptors
- ... or a change in mentality as for involvement of students that in some countries is the “black spot” for QA

Remaining challenges in Europe

- Bridging the QA decisions and Recognition of foreign qualifications
- Identifying impact of QA
- QA's role in raising quality standards/levels, not only operating with minimum standards or minimum threshold values
- Meaningful involvement of all parties (challenge: employers)
- Information value and usability of QA reports
- QA of joint programmes

- QA of cross-border higher education

EQUIP: Comparative analysis of the ESG 2015 and ESG 2005
EU-funded project by EURASHE, ENQA, EUA, ESU, EI, EQAR, UiO, CCISP
<http://www.equip-project.eu/news/comparative-analysis-esg/>

EIQAS: Another ERASMUS+-project that might be interesting
<http://www.eiqas.com/>

