



SUMMARY REPORT ON SKVC'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENQA PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS IN RELATION TO MEETING MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA AND ESG

- **Implementation of the ENQA recommendations on ESG Part 2**

<p>ESG 2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures (ENQA Criterion 1)</p> <p>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.</p>		
<p>Panel Judgment</p> <p>Substantial Compliance</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>SKVC noted in its SER that "<i>The level of development of the internal quality assurance systems in colleges and universities is quite different.</i>" It is taking active steps to promote an increased awareness of the needs of IQA systems within HEIs; activities welcomed by the HEI representatives the Panel met. SKVC should continue in this work but will need to avoid any conflict-of-interest issues between their roles in supporting institutions that they subsequently evaluate. 'Networks' for senior staff concerned with IQA within HEIs, with good links to but separate from their QA agencies, have been established in a number of countries.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three seminars and discussions on internal quality assurance for HEIs representatives organized in 2012-2013 • Two presentations about the problems of internal quality assurance of HEIs made at two conferences • In 2013, a seminar for senior staff concerned with internal quality assurance (IQA) within HEIs organized with the participation of foreign speakers, who previously served as experts for SKVC • Analysis of problems of internal quality assurance in HEIs based on the reports from institutional review (2014) made, it was presented in the annual report of SKVC and published on the website in a pdf format. <p>Further actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular events for senior staff concerned with IQA within HEIs – at least one meeting every year is foreseen.

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.

<p>Panel Judgment</p> <p>Full Compliance</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>There is a stipulation that all methodologies must be reviewed by the Ministry and approved by the SKVC Council and the SKVC Director to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the production of documents relating to evaluation. However, SKVC note that this requirement has its downside in that the process takes a long time, which delays response to the situation in hand and hold up changes in the methodologies according to the requirements of the time. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is outside the control of SKVC, but noting the constructive manner in which the Agency is able to work with the Ministry, it is recommended that consideration is given to streamlining consultation processes to facilitate more timely responses.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular contacts with the political staff from the Ministry of Science and Education are established • During the post-evaluation period, there were no essential changes in the methodologies approved by the Centre. Small amendments were promptly harmonized with the SKVC Council and successfully applied. • SKVC submitted some proposals of changes for the Procedure for External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. These proposals were immediately involved in the above mentioned legal act. <p>Further actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the new Law on Higher Education and Research, to be discussed in the Parliament in autumn 2014, further changes to the external quality assurance arrangements are expected. Some of our proposals were already discussed with SKVC Council. We will engage in additional consultations with stakeholders as necessary.
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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.

<p>Panel Judgment</p> <p>Full Compliance</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>none</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>None required</p>
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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.

Panel Judgment	Recommendation	Actions
Substantial Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- SKVC should find ways to overcome perceived barriers to student involvement which prevents their full involvement in all activities. This may include a review of the current criteria for student involvement to widen the available pool.- SKVC should engage with stakeholders to ensure that guidelines for preparing SERs maintain an acceptable balance between reflection and appropriate factual information to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Since the second half of 2011, <u>every team</u> of experts evaluating study programmes or reviewing HEI's in its composition has a student representative on board. SKVC collaborates with single HEIS, the National Students' Union as well as with European Students' Union in attracting students as candidates to review panels. Students are now involved in all three advisory bodies of SKVC and the Council of SKVC. During site-visits experts' teams always meet students of the programme/institution in question.• The Methodology for Study Programme Evaluation states what required information <u>must be provided</u> in SER and what additional information <u>could be useful</u> to analyse. But the latter is up to HEI's to decide which additional information to provide, so the issue is discussed at trainings provided to HEI staff.• SKVC carries anonymous surveys after each evaluation and collects feedback from both HEIs and experts. This feedback shows that institutions do not have any complaints regarding unnecessary bureaucracy. Yet, experts indicate, that some institutions provide too much supplementary information which is not required by SKVC methodology. Therefore, SKVC limits the length of SER to 35 pages and asks to provide only those annexes that are required and not more. <p>Further actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The issue of quality of SERs will be constantly addressed both in trainings for HEI staff involved in internal QA, and in consultations for senior staff members of HEI in preparation for their institutional review.

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.

Panel Judgment	Recommendation	Actions
Substantial Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The SKVC website should be reviewed so that reports are easily accessible to interested parties.• Translation services should be used to ensure that reports are understandable to non-English speakers.• The panel noted the recent appointment of a member of staff to address PR issues and the intention of SKVC to make the results of the agency's work more 'accessible to the different relevant audiences through different forms of communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a clear link from the front page of SKVC to evaluation reports:<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ regarding institutional review reports http://www.skvc.lt/content.asp?id=619 (LT) and http://www.skvc.lt/en/content.asp?id=323 (ENG)✓ regarding study programme evaluations http://www.skvc.lt/content.asp?id=378 (LT) and http://www.skvc.lt/en/content.asp?id=452 (EN)• Since autumn of 2011, summaries of all study programme evaluation reports are being translated into Lithuanian language and sent to HEIs. All HEIs also have a possibility to receive full reports in the language they have been originally written (Lithuanian or English). All institutional review reports (full length) are translated into Lithuanian and sent to HEI.• For the common admission to HEIs in 2014, visibility of external review reports is improved by the way of including external review reports for study programmes in the State register of institutions, programmes and qualifications. This added to the greater accessibility of the external review results and user friendliness of access to the reports (notwithstanding the remaining possibility to download them from SKVC website).• A communication plan was composed, discussed with relevant divisions within SKVC, and presented to the SKVC Council. Ideas regarding it's improvement gathered in the joint seminar of Nordic network of quality assurance agencies and Baltic agencies in mid-June 2014. <p>Further actions</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new user-friendly SKVC website is being prepared so that information in it would be published in a more attractive way. The website should be ready by the end of 2014. • It is being planned that a new data base for publication of evaluation reports will be created by the end of 2015. The data base will be integrated into the new website.
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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.

<p>Panel Judgment</p> <p>partial compliance</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>SKVC has identified approaches and activities that could improve follow-up but have been constrained both by financial and staffing issues and the rapid pace of change in which other matters had to be prioritised. With the prospect of a more 'stable' environment SKVC is encouraged to consider the most 'cost-effective' ways in which follow-up can be developed, both at the level of individual evaluations and in the cross-evaluation analyses that they are intending to initiate. The 'language issue' could remain a problem whilst there continues to be an expectation by some for the need for extensive 'bureaucratic' monitoring; identification of the most important/critical aspects and a focus on these should be considered as a means of improving impact of evaluations and support SKVC in its aim that The experts' proposals and recommendations are first and foremost intended for HEIs to help them improve quality.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The models of the follow-up procedures after study programme evaluations and institutional reviews have been created. They were presented to and endorsed by the SKVC Council in December of 2012. • The first follow-up visit after the institutional review procedure was conducted in December of 2012. The first link to improvement plan of activities of HEI according to recommendations of external review panels was publish on SKVC and HEIS websites in December of 2012. The follow-up procedure was further discussed in the administration meeting in June of 2013. Till the end of June 2014, 18 follow-up visits to HEI have taken place. • The first follow-up seminar in relation to study programme assessments was organized on 28th November of 2013. <p>Further actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-scale implementation of the follow-up model for the study programmes evaluation procedure has yet to be enforced. After 1,5 year of experts site-visit, HEI shall prepare progress report on implementation of experts recommendations and submit to SKVC. These progress reports will be published on SKVC and HEI's websites.
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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.		
Panel Judgment Full Compliance	Recommendation none	Actions None required
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.		
Panel Judgment Substantial Compliance	Recommendation Consultation with stakeholders should be undertaken to develop a more systematic production of summary reports based on stakeholder needs and with a clear focus rather than as part of the annual reporting cycle.	Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Communication plan was composed by Public Relations Officer, in consultation with staff members and SKVC Council. Special newsletters for target audiences launched in 2013: one for prospective students, disseminated to high schools and one for prospective students who gained foreign qualifications was spread for Lithuanian communities abroad. Similar newsletters repeated in 2014. Analysis of internal quality assurance systems within HEI was prepared. Analysis of how HEI publish study programme evaluation results was made and published in the newsletter in 2013. Analysis of applications to open new study programmes was done and presented to the Ministry of Education and Science in 2013. In 2014, overview reports under six study areas encompassing study programme assessments, carried out during the period of

		<p>2010-2013, were published in a pdf format.</p> <p>Further actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the plan, we aim at collecting feedback from different stakeholders about the new website. • We will further work to compile information about the needs of stakeholders regarding publication of evaluation reports. From 2014 on, early work plans will contain more detailed information regarding system-wide analysis planned. • As mentioned earlier, we will start a project of the development of the new data base for publishing study programme evaluation reports.
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• **Implementation of the ENQA recommendations on ESG Part 3**

<p>ESG 3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education (ENQA Criterion 1 cont.)</p> <p>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.</p>		
<p>Panel Judgment</p> <p>Substantial compliance</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>See table above</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>See table above</p>
<p>ESG 3.2 Official status (ENQA Criterion 2)</p> <p>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.</p>		
<p>Panel Judgment</p> <p>Full Compliance</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>none</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>None required</p>

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.

Panel Judgment	Recommendation	Actions
Full Compliance	none	None required

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)

Panel Judgment	Recommendation	Actions
Fully Compliant	none	None required

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.

Panel Judgment	Recommendation	Actions
Full Compliance	none	None required

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.

Panel Judgment	Recommendation	Actions
Full Compliance	The performance of the Council should be evaluated against their standing orders and steps taken to ensure that these are appropriate and that the Council members have the capacity to fulfil them. This would reinforce the Councils position as the body ensuring SKVCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council was invited to consider whether the current functions of the Council are sufficient to carry out their activities effectively. During the meeting, the Council came to a view that all the current functions remain valid and did not propose to fix the new ones. The Council actively discussed current changes in the legal acts

	independence.	<p>of Lithuanian education system and strongly supported SKVC's independence as indicated in the amendments of the Law of Higher Education and Research.</p> <p>Further actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any strategic issues pertaining to the work or reform of SKVC will be discussed in the Council meeting and with the leadership of the Ministry.
<p>ESG 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies (ENQA Criterion 6)</p> <p>Standard:</p> <p>The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 		
<p>Panel Judgment</p> <p>Substantial Compliance</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>The lack of clarity regarding the role of MOSTA clouds the overall criteria and process. Whilst acknowledging that SKVC have worked hard to develop these, and that resolution of the issue is not in their control the panel concluded that in this regard SKVC is substantially compliant.</p>	<p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A revision of the Governmental Resolution on the Procedure of Institutional Review was started at the end of 2013. The role of MOSTA was revised. Following suggestions from SKVC and representatives of HEIs, and as also agreed by the Ministry of Education and Science, MOSTA will produce the data that will be used as an additional source of information both for HEIs and experts, but not as single decisive factor towards the final review outcome. The final decision of evaluation and accreditation will rest only with SKVC. A relevant amendment on the Governmental Resolution regarding institutional review procedure was made and entered into force on June 20, 2014. <p>Further actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the new cycle of institutional review starting from 2015, a shift from compliance based approach to enhancement led evaluation will be implemented (as agreed with the Ministry and discussed with HEIs).

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

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

Panel Judgment

Substantial Compliance

The panel found that whilst a number of mechanisms were in place to ensure accountability, the overall process could be more coherent. Much of the internal feedback is informal and does not contribute to the “collective memory” of SKVC meaning that if staff left employment their knowledge would not be institutionalised. Additionally, collection of external feedback has not been systematic and whilst it is acknowledged that plans are in place, the panel concluded that SKVC is Substantially Compliant.

Actions

- In February of 2012, the electronic versions of questionnaires were developed to get the feed-back both from HEIs and experts in relation to institutional reviews, as well as for study programme evaluations. The data was analysed at the beginning of 2013 and 2014 and overview was produced and presented to administration of SKVC.
- Leadership of SKVC is meeting every group of experts of institutional review for feed-back session at the last day of the visit. The feed-back is used for improvement of the processes of institutional review – for example, a mapping tool was compiled and being used for the reviews, a list of mandatory annexes was provided upon the recommendations from the experts, etc.
- In summer of each year, information on the institutional review process and its updates are being sent to all the expert groups of institutional review, thus, to provide them with the feed-back on actions taken according to their recommendations.
- In order to institutionalise staff knowledge, the minutes of weekly meetings of department staff started to be kept with the main points and decisions reached.
- The whole system of internal quality assurance of SKVC is being reviewed in order to make it more simple and user friendly. Some of the processes were merged, reducing the total number from 18 processes to 14.

Further actions

- To finish the consolidation of internal quality assurance system by the end of 2014.

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.

Panel Judgment
Full Compliance

Recommendation
none

Actions
None required

June 2014