

**Approval of the Application  
by the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP)  
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register**

Register Committee

Ref. RC13/2014/11

**Application of:** 25/04/2014

**Agency registered since:** 15/12/2011

**External review report of:** 14 January 2014

**Review coordinated by:** ENQA

**Review panel members:** Barry O'Connor (Chair), Karmela Barišić, Nieves Pascual, Guy Aelterman, Allan Päll

**Decision of:** 29 November 2014

**Registration until:** 31 January 2019

**Absented themselves from decision-making:** Freddy Coignoul (member), Eric Froment (chair), Julio Pedrosa (member)

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1. The application of 25/4/2014 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee considered the external review report of 14/01/2014 on the compliance of IEP with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The Register Committee found that the report provides clear evidence and analysis of how IEP complies with ESG.
3. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from IEP.

**Analysis:**

4. With regard to the specific European Standards and Guidelines, the Register Committee considered the following:
5. **ESG 2.1:** When IEP was admitted to the Register in 2011 it was flagged for future attention whether its evaluations analyse in greater detail the institution's internal quality assurance along Part 1 of the ESG.

The Register Committee noted the steps taken by IEP in that regard, as analysed by the review report, including Part 1 of the ESG being annexed to the IEP Guidelines and receiving specific attention in the annual expert training sessions.

The review report did, however, not analyse to what extent the different elements of Part 1 of the ESG are actually reflected in IEP evaluation

reports. The Register Committee therefore considered the issue only partially addressed, while the actual impact on evaluation reports requires further attention. The issue thus remains flagged.

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6. **ESG 2.3:** The issue of consistency – in the light of IEP's broad criteria – was flagged when IEP was initially admitted to the Register.

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The Register Committee noted that the review panel specifically addressed the issue of consistency and found that IEP had in place appropriate mechanisms to ensure consistency of its reports.

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7. **ESG 2.4:** The Register Committee noted the review panel's discussion of the current limitation of the IEP pool of regular experts to current and former rectors and vice-rectors, as well as the corresponding recommendation to extend the pool of experts to other qualified and experienced individuals.

8. **ESG 2.6:** The lack of follow-up procedures implemented consistently across all evaluations was flagged when IEP was admitted to the Register.

The Register Committee noted that IEP addressed the issue through progress reports and promoting follow-up evaluations. However, the number of institutions taking part in a follow-up evaluation remains relatively small.

In its clarification provided, IEP announced the upcoming launch of a “package offer” including initial and follow-up evaluation. The impact of this new offer cannot yet be analysed. The issue thus remains flagged.

The Register Committee acknowledged the voluntary nature of IEP, but at the same time underlined that IEP is free to design the contractual conditions and requirements for institutions that seek to be evaluated.

9. **ESG 2.7:** The issue of periodic reviews was flagged when IEP was admitted to the Register.

The Register Committee noted the review panel's conclusion that due to its voluntary nature IEP was not compliant with the standard. The Committee further noted that the new “evaluated by IEP” logo was not discussed in relation to the standard.

From clarification provided by IEP the Register Committee learned that the logo is awarded for a 5-year period.

The Register Committee found that this approach emphasised the principle that quality assurance is not a once-in-a-lifetime exercise and

that an institution can only use the “status” of being IEP-evaluated for a limited period of time.

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Due to IEP's voluntary nature there is obviously no obligation to renew that status; the same is, however, true for voluntary accreditations. The Register Committee therefore considered that IEP addressed the flag.

10. **ESG 3.6:** When admitting IEP to the Register the Committee flagged the development and impact of its position within the European University Association (EUA) in terms of resources and independence.

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The Register Committee noted the review panel's conclusion that IEP possessed sufficient resources and operated on a separate budget and staff, though formally being part of EUA in terms of accounting and payroll. The Committee noted the conclusion that IEP, while not having separate legal personality of its own, operates independently.

The Register Committee acknowledged that some measures have been implemented to consolidate IEP's independence, especially from EUA. These include more specific terms of reference for its operation, separate budgets and clear separations at the level of some support infrastructure.

While the Register Committee appreciated the detailed and thorough analysis of the panel in that regard, it found that IEP's independence remains an issue for continuing attention, since IEP remains closely integrated within and dependent on EUA, at least at the formal level. Furthermore, the current profile of IEP's expert pool (see ESG 2.4) limits the stakeholder perspectives present in IEP reviews. The issue thus remains flagged.

#### Conclusion:

11. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that IEP complies substantially with the ESG and therefore approved the application for inclusion on the Register.
12. IEP's inclusion shall be valid until 31/01/2019<sup>1</sup>.
13. The following issues have been flagged for particular attention when considering a potential application for renewal of inclusion. IEP is expected to address these issues specifically in its next self-evaluation report, setting out whether the issue has been resolved or indicating

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<sup>1</sup> Inclusion is valid for five years from the date of the external review report, see §4.1 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

what progress has been made. IEP is further responsible for informing the coordinator of the next external review and the review panel of the need to address these issues in the external review report.

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**ESG 2.1: Use of ESG Part 1**

It should be addressed to what extent the different elements of Part 1 of the ESG are actually reflected in IEP evaluation reports.

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**ESG 2.6: Follow-up procedures**

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It should receive attention whether the new “package offer” and any other steps taken have contributed to implementing a consistent follow-up procedure as part of IEP's evaluations.

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**ESG 3.6: Independence**

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It should be thoroughly analysed how IEP's integration within and dependence on EUA have developed, and what impact that had on its independence.