Revision of the Procedures for Applications

Information for quality assurance agencies and review coordinators

(January 2013)

Introduction

The EQAR Procedures for Applications set out the process, eligibility requirements and criteria for inclusion on the Register. The main addressees are quality assurance agencies that might wish to apply for inclusion, coordinators of external reviews of these agencies, as well as the EQAR Register Committee itself.

The first version of the Procedures was adopted in 2008, when EQAR opened for applications by quality assurance agencies. Based on the experience gathered during these four years since and in order to implement certain recommendations[1] made by the external expert panel that evaluated EQAR in 2011, the Register Committee revised the Procedures in 2012.

This document explains the main changes made in the revision. In addition, various clarifications and editorial changes have been made.

> Applications that were prepared in line with the previous version of the Procedures will be fully compatible also with the revised Procedures, since there has been no change in substance of the eligibility requirements or criteria for inclusion.

The Guide for Applicants provides a full overview and explanation of what is set out in the Procedures. It has been revised accordingly and is available at:

> http://www.eqar.eu/fileadmin/documents/
> EQAR_GuideForApplicants_current-version.pdf

Main Changes

1. **The Register Committee's decisions on all eligible applications for inclusion on the Register will be published, including their reasons.**

    This has been decided in the interest of greater transparency and to avoid misinformation about the reasons for the Register Committee's decisions.

    Whereas currently only approval decisions are made public (i.e. by including the agency on the Register), both approval and rejection decisions will be published in the future. In both cases, the same account of the reasons that is transmitted to the agency concerned will be published.

    Only decisions on eligible applications (see also item 2.) will be published. That is, a refusal for reasons of the external review process not

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[1]   Read more at http://www.eqar.eu/about/external-evaluation.html

complying with EQAR's requirements or the applicant not being considered a quality assurance agency will not be published.

Rejections will only be published once they are final, i.e. when the deadline for appeal has passed or all appeals have been dealt with.

<div align="right">See § 5.1</div>

2. **A process has been introduced to confirm eligibility of a future application, before the external review process and actual application.**

The revised Procedures clarify the two steps to inclusion on the Register, (a) meeting the eligibility requirements and (b) fulfilling the (substantial) criteria for inclusion, i.e. substantially complying with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

The eligibility requirements address two sets of issues: firstly, the applicant must itself carry out direct external quality assurance activities, such as evaluation, accreditation or audit of higher education institutions or programmes.

Secondly, the applicant must provide an external review that evidences its compliance with the ESG, and this review process must meet certain requirements as regards the coordinator, the review team and the report.

Where the eligibility requirements are not met, the (substantial) criteria for inclusion are not considered at all.

Whereas eligibility was so far only officially verified once an application was made, a new process is now available to determine eligibility before actually undergoing an external review and making an actual application.

This will avoid situations where an agency undergoes an external review without being able to use that review in the end.

<div align="right">See §§ 1.1 – 1.4 & 1.18 – 1.23, new section 1 of the Guide</div>

3. **The rules regarding duration and renewal of inclusion have been clarified, and flexibility has been increased.**

There have been some misunderstandings around the duration of inclusion on the Register in the past. The revised Procedures clarify the duration of five years, counted from the date of the external review report.

A registered agency will have to submit its application of renewal <u>before</u> the expiry of its inclusion, and then has up to three months to submit a report of a new external review according to the ESG.

It has further been clarified that issues flagged when an agency is admitted are expected to be addressed specifically in that new review.

<div align="right">See §§ 4.2 & 4.4</div>

4. **The full Curricula Vitae of the panel members that carried out the external review have to be submitted.**

   This will allow the Register Committee to verify that the panel meets all requirements of the Procedures in terms of composition, knowledge, expertise and independence of the applicant. CVs frequently had to be requested in addition, creating unnecessary delays.

   The CVs should be submitted by the review coordinator together with the No-Conflict-Of-Interest Declaration. The coordinator is responsible for appointing the panel and is thus expected to have the authoritative CVs at its disposal.

   <div align="right">See § 3.3</div>

Further Information

The revised Procedures for Applications are available at:

> http://www.eqar.eu/fileadmin/documents/eqar/official/ RC_01_1_ProceduresForApplications_v2_0.pdf

Further information, including application forms, is available at:

> http://www.eqar.eu/application.html

For any questions, please contact the EQAR Secretariat at +32 2 234 39 11 or info@eqar.eu.