

European Quality Assurance Register now open for applications

Quality assurance agencies for higher education can now officially apply to join the new European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) which was founded in March this year.

EQAR will provide clear and objective information about trustworthy quality assurance agencies working in Europe. It will contribute to improving the quality of European higher education and to promoting greater student mobility by increasing transparency and trust between higher education systems and institutions.

The establishment of this voluntary register is a milestone in the Bologna Process reforms. It will list only those quality assurance agencies that have demonstrated their substantial compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines, the commonly agreed principles for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Before applying quality agencies must undergo an external review carried out by independent experts. The requirements and rules for applications are now published on the EQAR website. The first deadline for applications is 3 October 2008.

Lesley Wilson, President of the EQAR Executive Board said: "EQAR will provide essential information for Europe's higher education community: Students and employers can identify which higher education institutions and degree programmes have been reviewed by a credible and independent quality assurance agency. Higher education institutions may also acquire the information they need to choose between different agencies to fulfil their own external quality assurance requirements where national legislation allows."

The Register Committee, EQAR's independent body deciding on applications, is chaired by Mr Justice Bryan McMahon, Judge at the High Court of Ireland, and will convene in November 2008 to review the first applications. The first list of accepted agencies is due to be published subsequently.

EQAR has been established by the "E4 Group" – comprising the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) – under the mandate from the Education Ministers from the 46 Bologna countries.

More information is available on the EQAR website: <http://www.eqar.eu>

Contact: Colin Tück, Project Manager
Phone +32 2 2335 413, E-Mail colin.tueck@eqar.eu