

ENQA statement on COVID-19 pandemic

5 May 2020

ENQA would like to thank all members and affiliates that attended our General Assembly, which took place on 29 April 2020. Together with the higher education sector and society as a whole, quality assurance agencies are facing unprecedented disruption to their normal activities, continued uncertainty as to the duration of the current lockdown measures, as well as speculation around the possible long term impact on our daily work. It is testament to the commitment of our members that so many of you took time to join the General Assembly and discuss matters important for the future of the Association, such as the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, the financial strategy and changes to the membership decision-making process. The opening words of the meeting delivered by ENQA President, Christoph Grolimund, on behalf of the ENQA Board, are available [here](#).

ENQA external reviews

In accordance with advice from the Belgian authorities, the ENQA secretariat continues to work from home. Despite this, we are fully operational and [secretariat members](#) can be reached as usual via email or by mobile phone. We are continuing to coordinate external reviews of agencies and agencies that are currently undergoing a review have been contacted in order to adapt the timelines where necessary, particularly in relation to the postponement of site visits. In case you have concerns about a forthcoming review of your agency, please do not hesitate to contact the Reviews Manager, [Goran Dakovic](#).

Agency activities and ESG compliance

In conjunction with EQAR, we would also like to reiterate the reassurance offered in our [first statement on COVID-19](#) (26 March 2020) that no agency will jeopardise their ESG compliance if they adapt their procedures due to the current circumstances. The postponement of review processes or transfer to online processes in this situation is fully permissible under the ESG and ENQA encourages its members to offer flexibility for higher education institutions in this regard. Further information on ESG compliance and EQAR registration in relation to the pandemic is available on a [dedicated information page on the EQAR website](#).

We are acutely aware that while some challenges are common across many agencies, others are unique and reflect the specific operating context of each individual agency. We therefore strongly encourage agencies to maintain a dialogue with institutions and national authorities in order to address any national level issues that may hinder this flexibility.

Learning from each other

Feedback from our members has reiterated the important role that ENQA has to play in the current circumstances by offering a forum to share experiences and learn from each other. To facilitate this, ENQA is taking the following actions:

- We are running a social media campaign across [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#) to encourage agencies to share their policies, practices and resources under the hashtag #QAfromHome. We encourage agencies to participate and also to make use of the information to help inform their own approaches where needed.
- We will organise a webinar exploring the strategic aspects of how to deal with the consequences of the pandemic, aimed at CEOs of ENQA member and affiliate agencies. This will take place on Wednesday 20 May and invitations will be sent soon.
- We are exploring the options for a more detailed survey and analysis of pandemic responses by agencies, to be conducted in the autumn. The aim of this will be to reflect on the short



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term changes that were made and the lessons learnt, as well as to explore perspectives on the possible long term impact.

Exceptional measures are needed in a time of crisis, however as the situation progresses there will certainly be a need for ongoing evaluation and reflection to ensure that any sustained changes to external quality assurance arrangements are appropriate and fit-for-purpose. ENQA will be working hard to support its members and facilitate a common discussion on both aspects.

ENQA thanks you again for your support, which demonstrates the huge value of our community across the European Higher Education Area. If you have questions, suggestions or feedback, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).