

# How will external QA change as a result of the adoption of ESG 2015?

- key challenges identified by QA agencies

## **Dr. Padraig Walsh**

President, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and Chief Executive, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

*EQUIP Webinar, 17 February 2016*

# Challenges for ENQA agencies

- There are 48 ENQA members who have successfully undergone a review against ESG 2005 since 2010
- 5 members was last reviewed in 2010 and 4 in 2011 so these 9 must undertake a review against ESG 2015 sometime in 2016
- There are also 12 agencies that are affiliates of ENQA since before 2014 (from countries that do not have an ENQA member agency) that would be eligible to apply for a review against ESG 2015
- Challenge is how to adapt (where that is necessary) to ESG 2015

# Main challenges in ESG 2005 reviews

- **Independence** (usually from government/ministry)
- **Resources** (human and/or financial)
- **Publication** of reports
- **Student** involvement in panels
- **International** involvement (panels/agency governance)
- **Follow-up** (particularly in the case of 'voluntary' reviews)

# (Old) challenges and how they have been addressed in ESG 2015?

- **Independence** (definition has been clarified in the guideline of ESG 3.3: organisational independence, operational independence, independence of formal outcomes)
- **Resources** (human and/or financial, guidelines of ESG 3.5 recommends that resources are sufficient to enable agencies to improve and to inform public about their activities)
- **Publication** of Reports (standard 2.6 requires that full reports and any formal decision must be published ) – no more equivocation
- **Student** involvement in panels (student involvement now contained in standard of ESG 2.4) – no more equivocation
- **International** involvement (is stated as being ‘desirable’ in the guideline of ESG 2.4)
- **Follow-up** (the guideline in ESG 2.3 states that an agency must have a consistent follow-up process for considering the actions taken by an institution)

# (New) Challenges in ESG 2015?

- **Student-centred learning** (standard in ESG 2.1 has been made more explicit)
  - This impacts primarily on HEIs but ESG 2.1 requires that an agency's external QA process includes consideration of the Part 1 standards, including the requirement in ESG 1.3 for HEIs to deliver programmes in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process'

As the introduction of student-centred learning takes a considerable time, one of the challenges to HEIs and ultimately also to external QA agencies relates to how long is a reasonable timeframe for this to be put in place and for an institution's internal QA processes to reflect this and when therefore is it reasonable for the external QA process to be in a position to evaluate how the institution is implementing this standard.

# (New) Challenges in ESG 2015?

- **Internal Quality Assurance and Professional Conduct** (standard of ESG 3.6 has been expanded to highlight professional conduct)
  - All persons involved in an agency's activities are competent and act professionally and ethically
  - An agency must establish the status and recognition of the institutions with which it conducts QA

Introduced to ensure that agencies apply the same standards everywhere they work and whether they are acting in a compulsory or voluntary manner