

External Quality Assurance of Research

Taking stock of the practices of European quality assurance agencies

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About the project

ENQA Working Group (14 agencies)
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Objectives

- To take stock of the agencies' procedures for the external quality assurance (EQA) of research in higher education institutions (HEIs).
- To inform agencies and their stakeholders and share practices.

Methodology and output

Literature review

Survey Interviews and a focus group

Workshops

Final report

Webinars

Conference presentations

**42 out of 59 agencies
engaged in EQA of research**



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Defining the of EQA of research

Broad and inclusive definition of research, encompassing all types of research including fundamental, applied, artistic, innovation and knowledge transfer, in line with the continuum defined by the EUA.

An all-embracing term that refers to a regular process of reviewing (monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining, and enhancing) the quality of the **research environment at HEIs**, including its interrelation with the education and societal impact missions of HEIs.

EQA of Research ≠ **Research assessment**

Why EQA of Research?

To improve the quality of research

Complement research assessment procedures, take a broader perspective and contribute to enhancing the quality of research

Endorse international and regional efforts regarding the quality of the research environment

To foster the link between learning and teaching and research

Train students who are able to face the challenges of the 21st century

To align with developments in QA of research across the HE sector

56% of HEIs consider education and research as two equally important missions and 11% consider research as more important than education (EUA, 2024)

93% of HEIs cover research in their IQA procedures (EUA, 2023)

To shed light on the activities of agencies

Following up on the QA-FIT study

Share practices to support the continuous enhancement of EQA



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The agencies' approach

- Research-based teaching and learning in programme reviews
- Research-based teaching and learning in institutional reviews
- Review of doctoral schools and/or doctoral education as a standalone procedure
- Review of research units as a standalone procedure



Focus in EQA of research

- Organisation and management of research
- Research policy and strategy
- Quality assurance policy
- Research infrastructure, libraries and archives
- Research-informed curricula and research-based teaching (links between teaching and research)



Challenges

- Lack of explicit **international standards** to use as guidance for the EQA of research
 - Lack of recognition and appreciation of **all forms of research** (applied, artistic) and not just fundamental research
- **Absence of national data** to inform on HEIs' research activities
 - **Lack of clear missions for the agencies** regarding EQA of research
 - **Reluctance by some HEIs** which may feel over-reviewed or already competent to ensure the quality of their research

Reflective questions

- What sources and tools has your agency consulted to develop and improve the EQA of research procedures?
- What challenges has your agency experienced?
- How is stakeholder participation in the development of those procedures best organised?
- How can we ensure a mutually supporting relationship between the HEIs' IQA and the agencies' EQA of research?



THANK YOU!



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