

Revision of the ESG: briefing note on process and structures

September 2024

Mandate for the ESG revision

The Tirana Ministerial Communiqué¹ of May 2024 includes a mandate for the authors of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) to revise the document. The Communiqué states:

The application of the ESG promotes trust and transparency within and between higher education systems and facilitates accountability and enhancement. To keep them in line with ongoing developments, challenges and expectations, we invite the authors of the ESG to propose a revised version by 2026 to the BFUG, to be adopted by us at our 2027 Ministerial conference, as well as an adjustment, where required, of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

The primary authors of the ESG are ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE (the E4 Group), in cooperation with Business Europe, EI and EQAR.

Structures for the ESG revision

The structures for the ESG revision continue the approach used for the 2012-15 revision process, which was largely considered fit-for-purpose.

Meetings are hosted in Brussels by the E4 organisations on a rotating basis. Costs of hosting and participating are self-funded by each organisation individually. Arrangements for online/hybrid meetings will be made as needed.

Steering Committee

The revision is coordinated by a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is composed of one representative from each of the seven primary and cooperating authors. Members of the Steering Committee are authorised to act in the name of their nominating organisation and have appropriate experience of quality assurance in the EHEA.

The Committee may appoint a permanent chair, or decide that meetings will be chaired on a rotating basis. The ENQA Director will serve as Secretary to the Committee, with responsibility for organising meetings, taking minutes and coordinating follow-up as needed.

Organisation	Name	Position
ENQA	Cristina Ghitulica	ENQA Vice-President / ARACIS Director
EUA	Amanda Crowfoot	EUA Secretary General
EURASHE	John Edwards	EURASHE Secretary General
ESU	Lana Par	ESU Vice-President
EQAR	Aleksandar Šušnjar	EQAR Director
Business Europe	Inga Lapina	Professor, Riga Technical University, Latvia
Education International	Petri Mantysaari	Professor, Hanken School of Economics, Vaasa, Finland

The role of the Steering Committee is to:

- Coordinate the overall revision process, including determining timelines;

¹ Available at <https://ehea2024tirane.al/2024-tirana-communique/>

- Discuss and agree on the key issues for the revision, including scope, structure and topics for the standards;
- Agree on and ensure arrangements (timing, modalities, topics/versions) for consultation on drafts of the revised ESG with all necessary stakeholders, including the BFUG;
- Discuss the feedback received and how to address it in subsequent drafts;
- Liaise (through a nominated member of the Committee) with the BFUG;
- Validate the final version to be tabled for approval by the BFUG.

The Committee will meet every 2-3 months, in line with a roadmap agreed in the first meeting.

Drafting Group

The actual writing of the new ESG is done by a smaller Drafting Group. The Drafting Group is composed of one expert nominated by each of the E4 organisations, and the Group answers directly to the Steering Committee. ENQA will provide secretarial support to the Drafting Group. The Group may appoint a Chair from among the members.

Organisation	Name	Position
ENQA	Doris Herrmann	ENQA Vice-President / AQAS Director
EUA	Maria Kelo	EUA Director of Institutional Development Unit
EURASHE	Jakub Grodecki	EURASHE Policy and Project Manager
ESU	Irina Duma	Former ESU QA Pool Steering Committee member

The role of the Drafting Group is to:

- Prepare each draft of the ESG, following the directions given by the Steering Committee and addressing feedback received during consultations, including from the BFUG;
- Propose points for further discussion by the Steering Committee.

The Drafting Group will meet at least once between each Steering Committee meeting and more often if required. Members of the Drafting Group will attend meetings of the Steering Committee in order to ensure two-way communication and accurate follow-up.

Timeline

A first meeting of the Steering Committee will take place at the end of September 2024, at which a concrete roadmap for the process will be agreed and a preliminary list of issues to be addressed will be discussed (drawing in part on outcomes of the QA-FIT project). The BFUG will be kept informed of progress throughout the revision process.

It is expected that the final text of the ESG should be approved by the BFUG in 2026 (spring or autumn meeting, to be determined), with no further changes to be made before adoption by EHEA Ministers at the Ministerial Conference in Romania/Moldova in spring 2027.

European Approach to the QA of Joint Programmes

As stated in the Tirana Communiqué, the European Approach should be revised in parallel to the ESG. This is intended to be a limited adjustment to ensure that the two documents are aligned, as the European Approach is based explicitly on the ESG.

The revision of the European Approach will be conducted by the same structures as for the revision of the ESG and will similarly involve consultation with appropriate stakeholders and experts. The revision should start in the second half of the period for drafting the new ESG, so that the main lines of the ESG revision are already clear and can be reflected in the European Approach.