

Annexes of the Self-evaluation Report Spring 2016

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ANNEX 1 – RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE ENQA EXPERTS AND BOARD FOLLOWING THE REVIEW IN 2011, AND THEIR FOLLOW-UP

During the initial review, the experts appointed by the ENQA attributed the following levels of ESG compliance to AEQES:

ESG (previous version)	Level of compliance assigned in 2011
ESG 2.1: Use of internal quality assurance processes	<i>substantially compliant</i>
ESG 2.2: Development of external quality assurance processes	<i>substantially compliant</i>
ESG 2.3: Criteria for Decisions	<i>fully compliant</i>
ESG 2.4: Processes fit for purpose	<i>fully compliant</i>
ESG 2.5: Reporting	<i>fully compliant</i>
ESG 2.6: Follow-up procedures	<i>partially compliant</i>
ESG 2.7: Periodic reviews	<i>fully compliant</i>
ESG 2.8: System-wide analyses	<i>fully compliant</i>

ENQA criteria	Level of compliance assigned in 2011
1 ESG 3.1, 3.3: Activities	<i>fully compliant</i>
2 ESG 3.2: Official status	<i>fully compliant</i>
3 ESG 3.4: Resources	<i>partially compliant</i>
4 ESG 3.5: Mission statement	<i>fully compliant</i>
5 ESG 3.6: Independence	<i>substantially compliant</i>
6 ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by members	<i>substantially compliant</i>
7 ESG 3.8: Accountability procedures	<i>fully compliant</i>
8 Miscellaneous	<i>fully compliant</i>

Furthermore, different recommendations were made by the experts.

Recommendations made by the ENQA experts (2011)	Actions undertaken
1 <i>The panel recommends to AEQES, in its revision of the performance indicators, that it must address in detail ESG Part 1 in the future and take a proactive role in examining the effectiveness of internal quality assurance mechanisms of programmes and higher education institutions. To this end it should initiate a discussion with the government, which is ultimately responsible for the indicators.</i>	In 2012, adoption of a new reference framework (see Annex 3), which was subject to a Governmental Decree in 2013. Total coverage of ESG Part I.

<p>2 <i>The review panel recommends that AEQES publish its manuals also in English in order to expand the possibility of recruiting from a broader pool of experts in the future and, more importantly, to ensure greater transparency of its processes.</i></p>	<p>A section of the website was put online in English¹, and the main documents were translated.</p>
<p>3 <i>The review panel noted that AEQES is aware that experts would welcome a more structured toolkit and framework for their evaluations and encourages the Agency to proceed with these discussions.</i></p>	<p>Several improvements to the training seminar for experts. The seminar was extended time-wise, and external speakers were invited. An accompanying guide was drafted to support the reference framework (for the institutions and experts).</p>
<p>4 <i>The review panel also noted that AEQES is receptive to the issue of including student members in its expert pools. It takes time for students to gain awareness of the possibility and its importance, to recognise that their voices are being heard. To this end, the review panel recommends AEQES to intensify its communication toward the students about quality assurance.</i></p>	<p>Systematic involvement of students in expert panels since September 2013.</p>
<p>5 <i>The review panel recommends that, in concordance with its stepped up communication toward students, AEQES consider producing separate, perhaps summary, reports addressed to students.</i></p>	<p>AEQES has up to now wanted to preserve the publication of a single, full report and to not offer executive summary reports.</p>
<p>6 <i>The panel strongly recommends that AEQES develop a follow-up system in its quality assurance structure that ensures that it is an ongoing process in which weaknesses are identified and acted upon. To this end AEQES may need to initiate discussions with the Ministry to recommend changing the legal framework.</i></p>	<p>Introduction of mandatory mid-term follow-up evaluations, which give place to the publication of follow-up evaluation reports.</p>
<p>7 <i>The review panel recommends that AEQES start discussions with institutions and the government about shortening the ten-year cycle of evaluations in order to ensure that quality assurance is ongoing in the higher education system.</i></p>	<p>In connection with the previous recommendation, mandatory follow-up evaluations at mid-term between two evaluations were introduced in 2015, thus reducing the intervals of evaluations. Henceforth, the clusters of programmes are evaluated on a five-year basis (the first time by a “full” evaluation and the second time by a follow-up evaluation).</p>

¹ See: http://www.aeqes.be/english_about_us.cfm

<p>8 <i>While the review panel also recognises that AEQES does not feel any threat from the Ministry link but enjoys its advantages, it recommends that AEQES discuss how it can enhance its image as a fully independent entity in the eyes of higher education institutions and the public.</i></p>	<p>Amendments made to the AEQES decree to allow hiring staff by using own funds (outside the Civil Service budget). Other amendments are to be covered by a new AEQES decree. They will take into account the results of the review of the Agency by ENQA and EQAR.</p>
<p>9 <i>It recommends, moreover, that AEQES initiate discussions with the Ministry on the possibilities of separating its staff recruitment and hiring procedures and of full budgetary independence beyond the annual budget allocation and financial reporting to ensure accountability of public funds.</i></p>	<p>Since April 2014, it has been possible to hire staff using own funds. Three staff members could thus be recruited in 2015.</p>
<p>10 <i>The review panel recommends that, taking the ESG as its basis, AEQES must arrive at setting standards for quality, against which evaluations could take place. This would aid experts in their judgments, and make them more transparent and consistent by defining what it considers quality, without necessarily having to draw conclusions of non-compliance that it, and the external community, could see as a threat to the quality enhancement approach.</i></p>	<p>In 2012, approval of a new reference framework (see Annex 3) including criteria and dimensions, which is completed by an accompanying guide for experts and for the institutions.</p>
<p>11 <i>The panel recommends that AEQES, in consultation with the councils and Ministry, develop a more substantial follow-up process in order to assure ongoing quality assurance in the system.</i></p>	<p>Introduction of mandatory follow-up evaluations halfway between two evaluations in 2015.</p>

The following recommendations were made by the ENQA Board for AEQES.

Recommendations made by the ENQA Board (2011)	Actions undertaken
<p>1 <i>Cyclical reviews: a 10 year-evaluation cycle is too long and should be shortened to five or six years;</i></p>	<p>Introduction of mandatory follow-up evaluation halfway between two evaluations in 2015, thus reducing the intervals between evaluations. The clusters of the programmes are therefore evaluated on a five-year basis.</p>
<p>2 <i>Resources: the financial resources are considered by the panel sufficient for AEQES to fulfil its core tasks with effectiveness. Nevertheless, the panel considers that the human resources are</i></p>	<p>Since April 2014, staff could be hired using own funds. Three staff members were thus recruited in 2015. This recruitment not only enables AEQES to cover the workload for organising and supporting external evaluations, but also to</p>

<p><i>insufficient for the evaluations foreseen. The Board strongly recommends to improve the flexibility of staff enrolment in order to be able to accomplish collateral activities important for its mission such as developmental activities addressed to training activities or another quality analysis, as well as to face a more demanding situation in the future;</i></p>	<p>achieve other missions (such as the organisation of an annual seminar).</p>
<p>3 <i>AEQES should initiate discussions with the Ministry on the possibilities of separating its staff recruitment and hiring procedures and full budgetary independence beyond the annual budget allocation and financial reporting to ensure accountability of public funds;</i></p>	<p>Since April 2014, staff could be hired using own funds.</p>
<p>4 <i>AEQES should develop a more substantial follow-up process in coordination with stakeholders; include students in the evaluation committees; and translate the quality handbook and the instructions to experts into English;</i></p>	<p>Introduction of mandatory follow-up evaluations halfway between two evaluations. Students systematically involved in evaluation panels since September 2013. Translation of main reference documents into English.²</p>
<p>5 <i>Part one of the ESG could be more apparent if the Agency was to set standards for quality, against which evaluations could take place.</i></p>	<p>In 2012, approval of a new reference framework (Annex 3).</p>

Finally, EQAR indicated different areas that could stand improvement.

Area of improvement identified by EQAR (2012)	Actions undertaken
<p>1 <i>ESG 2.2: Development of quality assurance processes</i></p> <p><i>The entire process of developing and implementing the new Reference Framework should be addressed in a comprehensive manner, to analyse whether AEQES has been empowered to develop its own quality assurance criteria, in consultation with higher education institutions and stakeholders.</i></p>	<p>In 2012, approval of a new reference framework (Annex 3).</p>
<p>2 <i>ESG 2.6: Follow-up procedures</i></p> <p><i>Issues related to the systematic</i></p>	<p>Introduction of mandatory follow-up evaluations halfway between two evaluations in 2015.</p>

² See http://www.aeqes.be/english_about_us.cfm.

<p><i>implementation and further development of AEQES follow-up procedures towards becoming a fully embedded feature of AEQES' procedures should be addressed.</i></p>	
<p>3 <i>ESG 3.4: Resources</i></p> <p><i>It should be addressed whether AEQES has been equipped with sufficient resources to enable it to discharge its core activities fully and to extend its activities in terms of training, workshops and good practice sharing and dissemination. In that respect, also issues related to AEQES' autonomy in staff appointments should be addressed.</i></p>	<p>Since April 2014, staff could be hired using own funds. Three staff members were thus recruited in 2015. This recruitment not only enables AEQES to cover the workload for organising and supporting external evaluations, but also to achieve other missions (such as the organisation of an annual seminar).</p>
<p>4 <i>ESG 3.6: Independence and perceived independence</i></p> <p><i>The implementation of changes to the organisational status and structure of AEQES, in order to underline its independence and to improve the perception by HEIs and stakeholders of its independence, should be addressed.</i></p>	<p>Amendments made to the AEQES decree to allow hiring staff by using own funds (outside the Civil Service budget). Other amendments are to be covered by a new AEQES decree. They will take into account the results of the review of the Agency by ENQA and EQAR.</p>
<p>5 <i>ESG 3.7: Participation of students on panels</i></p> <p><i>It should be addressed whether AEQES has fully implemented its firm commitment to involve students on all evaluation panels.</i></p>	<p>Students systematically involved in the evaluation panels since September 2013.</p>

ANNEX 2 – METHODOLOGY FOR ELABORATING THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

AEQES entrusted the preparation of its strategic plan 2016-2020 to the “Strategy and Methodology WG,” which called on the services of Mr Alain Piekarek, an organisation consultant from Joassart and Goffin Consulting, and expert for AEQES on an ad hoc basis.

The methodology proposed by the consultant and approved by the Strategy and Methodology WG comprises 5 stages, which were carried out over one year, from January to December 2015. The work of the WG was punctuated by consultations and surveys.

1st stage: Identifying the stakeholders and addressing expectations

The Strategy and Methodology WG identified the internal and external stakeholders of the Agency. It then drafted questionnaires to:

- The academic authorities and the persons in charge of the administration or management of the quality of the programmes within the institutions;
- Experts who had participated in evaluations of programmes for AEQES in the past two years.

The questionnaires were composed of two prospective questions: on the one hand, to gauge important trends in higher education as the stakeholders saw them, and, on the other hand, their expectations towards AEQES.

The results of the two surveys were presented to the Agency’s Steering Committee (on 5 May 2015). A detailed report was also disseminated among the respondents of the survey, the members of the AEQES Steering Committee (in particular the members of the “Methodological developments,” “Strategy and Methodology,” and “Self-evaluation” working groups), as well as among policy makers and the authorities of ARES. This report was also published on the AEQES website.³

2nd stage: Strategic diagnosis (SWOT)

For the strategic diagnosis, the Strategy and Methodology WG relied on information accumulated through a sample of satisfaction surveys conducted between 2011 and 2014 among staff of institutions and experts following each evaluation. Six evaluations, conducted in different types of higher education, were thus taken into account, which, in terms of respondents, represent 72 experts and 352 members of institutions.

The table below summarises the responses per category of respondents.

Programme	Year	Experts		Institutions	
		Respondents	Replies	Respondents	Replies
Visual plastic arts and arts of space	2013-2014	6	17 strengths 12 points for improvement	25	56 strengths 35 points for improvement
Primary school	2013-2014	8	25 strengths	136	334 strengths

³ See http://www.aeqes.be/rapports_details.cfm?documents_id=456.

teacher			14 points for improvement		209 points for improvement
Languages and Literature	2013-2014	10	28 strengths 14 points for improvement	34	65 strengths 42 points for improvement
Economics and management	2013-2014	13	33 strengths 19 points for improvement	91	211 strengths 118 points for improvement
Civil engineering and bio-engineering	2012-2013	7	20 strengths 10 points for improvement	/	/
Computer science	2011-2012	28	84 strengths 63 points for improvement	66	143 strengths 96 points for improvement
Total		72	207 strengths 132 points for improvement	352	809 strengths 500 points for improvement

The analysis is based on the answers to two recurrent questions in these surveys:

- What, in your view, are the Agency's three main strengths?
- What, in your view, are the Agency's three main points for improvement?

These answers were processed in the form of "word clouds" that yielded some tension lines:

- LOCALLY ROOTED / INTERNATIONALISATION
- DEEPENING/ WIDENING / REDUCING WORKLOAD
- FORMATIVE EVALUATION / IMPACT / "TANGIBLE" RESULTS
- AUTONOMY OF INSTITUTIONS / NEED OF AGENCY'S SUPPORT
- REFLECTIVE FEEDBACK / LEGAL OBLIGATION.

3rd stage: Values

The values are a core stable element in an institution. The ways they are defined and represented are essential.

The WG relied on existing codes of ethics (for the members of the Steering Committee, the Executive Unit and experts) to identify AEQES' own values. In addition to some values already present in these codes of ethics, the WG deemed it useful to define two "new" values (in grey below):

Dialogue and co-construction	The Agency promotes dialogue and co-construction practices with/among all the stakeholders.
Independence	The Agency conducts its missions independently and acts autonomously. It is responsible for its own functioning. It assures the impartiality of the results of the evaluations, without any external influence.
Fairness	The Agency deals with all the institutions with consistency, professionalism, objectivity and integrity, with respect for the diversity of the multiple stakeholders in higher education.
Transparency	The Agency's operating rules, evaluation procedures and results are public.
Respect for diversity	The Agency respects the diversity of the projects conducted by institutions as well as the diversity of the objectives of the programmes, in the framework of the general aims of higher education and of quality assurance.
Reflexivity and continuous improvement	The Agency is attentive and reflexive towards the needs of higher education; it keeps a watchful eye on international practices, and is open to participate in a continuous improvement process and to be a proposal force in that regard.

4th stage: Strategic orientations

The strategic orientations give the vision and the main lines to be considered for the future and for driving the organisation.

For this stage, the WG was expanded to include members of the Steering Committee who wanted to take a more active part in the work. This "enlarged" group defined four directions which were approved by the Steering Committee at its session of 1 September 2015:

- 1/ Become a recognised reference and **preferred** partner for quality in higher education in the WBF, through the professional nature of our actions and the experience acquired.
- 2/ Support the development of quality cultures in institutions, through a formative approach with respect for their autonomy, diversity and responsibilities, for the benefit – and with the participation – of students and other stakeholders.
- 3/ Develop, through dialogue with key players in higher education, methodological approaches in accordance with the changing contexts, and implement them.
- 4/ Promote its positioning at Belgian, European and international levels, to keep pace with trends in the sector whilst contributing to its development.

The strategic plan translates the directions in terms of fundamental objectives.

The Strategic Plan 2016-2020 was devised by the “enlarged” group, with the support of the Executive Unit. It was presented to the Steering Committee during the plenary session of 10 November 2015, and a consultation period of two weeks was offered to the members of the Steering Committee. The strategic plan 2016-2020 was approved by the Steering Committee during the plenary session of 1 December 2015.

Strategic orientation 1

Endeavour at all times to be a recognised reference and the preferred partner when it comes to the quality of higher education in the Wallonia Brussels Federation, through the professional and reflective nature of its actions and the experience acquired.

- 1.1. Information line: Continue to provide information (reports, studies and analyses) on the quality and quality assurance of higher education to citizens, higher education stakeholders, and policy makers.
- 1.2. Expertise line: Continue to develop its expertise as a learning organisation and contribute to the development of scientific expertise on quality assurance.
- 1.3. Partnership line: Continue to play an active role as a partner in working on issues relating to quality assurance and the quality of higher education in the WBF.
- 1.4. Internal quality assurance line: Consolidate the internal quality assurance system and professional attitude.
- 1.5. Communication line: Intensify and improve the visibility of actions through external communication.

Strategic orientation 2

Support the development of quality cultures in the institutions, through a formative evaluation approach, with respect for their autonomy, diversity and responsibilities, for the benefit – and with the participation – of the students and other stakeholders.

- 2.1. Methodological support line: Continue to support the institutions of the WBF to develop a quality approach that can assure the achievement of their missions and objectives.
- 2.2. Monitoring and follow-up line: Devise monitoring mechanism and compare the follow-up evaluations to support continuing improvement in the quality of higher education for the benefit of the students and society, at the level of the institutions and the WBF; encourage the heads of institutions and entities to use data and indicators to monitor the quality of the programmes.
- 2.3. Training and involvement line: encourage training in quality management; support people working on quality assurance in the WBF, especially at the level of institutional leadership, by engaging them and stimulating their reflection, and by underlining the federating effect of the quality approach.

Strategic orientation 3

Develop, through dialogue with key players in higher education, methodological approaches, in accordance with the changing contexts, and implement them.

- 3.1. Watch and benchlearning line: Continue a methodological watch by analysing European and international quality assurance practices; disseminate this information (see also Line 1.5).
- 3.2. Consultation line: Define procedures for consultation of, and communication with key players in higher education in the WBF, in order to take into account their needs and expectations related to the possibilities of methodological approaches for external evaluation.
- 3.3. Innovation and changing context line: Gain more insight into the teaching innovations (joint programmes, dual education, eLearning, MOOC...) and adapt the evaluation methodology accordingly.
- 3.4. Methodological developments line: Devise new evaluation models that take into account the needs of the higher education sector in the WBF, by exploring institutional, programmatic and thematic approaches; define the concept of “transversality” (scope, benefits and drawbacks, impact, implementing procedures, etc.); examine the possibilities of recognition of evaluations conducted by other organisations; make sure that the AEQES legal framework is amended accordingly.

Strategic orientation 4

Promote its positioning at Belgian, European and international levels to keep pace with trends in the sector whilst contributing to its development.

- 4.1. Partnerships line: Continue to be engaged in the work and events carried out by Belgian, European and international partners, so to ensure visibility, share and enrich experience and expertise, and play a role in evolving trends in external quality assurance.
- 4.2. French-speaking quality assurance line: Engage in active cooperation with the French-speaking quality assurance partners, in particular the French-speaking network of quality agencies for higher education (FrAQ-Sup)

6th stage: Annual action plans

The annual action plans are the translation of the strategic plan into operational actions.

These actions are rooted in the priorities and objectives as set by the Board for its mandate. The Board presented its action plan 2016 to the Steering committee at the plenary sessions of 1 December 2015 and 6 January 2016 (section 14 of the self-evaluation report).

Strategic plan and 2016 action plan: timeline

The Strategy and Methodology WG carried out this work from January to December 2015. The schedule of the meetings is given below:

Date	Who?	Object
6/1/2015	Strategy WG	Taking the expectations of the stakeholders into account: Preparing a questionnaire Summarising the satisfaction surveys
11/3/2015	Strategy WG	Giving feedback on the processing of the satisfaction surveys Meeting the external consultant who sets out a work methodology Disseminating the questionnaire
31/3/2015	Strategy WG + consultant	Conducting a strategic diagnosis (based on the surveys)
21/4/2015	Steering Committee	Presenting and discussing the SWOT diagnosis and the list of stakeholders identified by the Strategy and Methodology WG
27/4/2015	Strategy WG + consultant	Determining how to present the results of the questionnaire to the Steering Committee Identifying elements that are specific to the Agency
5/5/2015	Steering Committee	Validating the SWOT diagnosis and the list of identified stakeholders
21/5/2015	Strategy WG + consultant	Giving feedback on the differentiation elements Defining the Agency's values
30/6/2015	"Enlarged" Strategy WG	Work on the Agency's values Work on the strategic orientations
1/9/2015	Steering Committee	Approving the values and strategic orientations
28/9/2015	"Enlarged" Strategy WG	Operationalising the strategic orientations into a strategic plan
30/10/2015	"Enlarged" Strategy WG	Operationalising the strategic orientations into a strategic plan (continuation and conclusion)
1/12/2015	Steering Committee	Approval of the strategic plan 2016-2020
5/1/2016	Steering Committee	Presenting the action plan 2016 set by the Board

ANNEX 3 – AEQES REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

Criterion 1: The institution/the entity has defined, implements and keeps up-to-date a policy for supporting the quality of its study programmes.

The Belgian French-speaking Community's legislation clearly refers to this criterion. As stipulated by the Article 9 in the Decree of 7 November 2013: "The higher education institutions [HEIs] are bound to follow up and assure the quality of all their activities, and to take all measures needed for carrying out and ensuring the follow-up of an effective internal evaluation."

This criterion aims to analyse the existence and effectiveness of a quality management policy and associated processes, which need to include an active role for students and other stakeholders.

Dimension 1.1: The HEI's governance policy

The HEI has defined a governance policy in line with its missions and values. In this context, it develops and implements an organisation and processes designed to ensure that its governance is efficient. The institutional governance facilitates the articulation between quality management at institutional level and at programme level, thereby contributing to the quality of the assessed programme.

Dimension 1.2: Quality management at HEI, entity and programme levels

The HEI/entity develops and implements a quality management policy and associated processes at HEI, entity and programme levels. These foresee an active role for students and other stakeholders. In doing so, the HEI explicitly commits to establish a culture recognising the importance of quality and its management through appropriate processes.

Dimension 1.3: Programme development, strategic planning and periodical review

The HEI/entity develops and implements processes and mechanisms for designing, monitoring and periodically reviewing its study programme. These processes and mechanisms are effective, participatory, and contribute to improving the quality of the programme. The strategic planning takes into account the results of all the quality assessments of the programme.

In the case of a joint programme, the HEIs/entities develop and implement processes and mechanisms for designing, monitoring and periodically reviewing the joint study programme(s), in collaboration with their partner(s).

Dimension 1.4: Internal information and communication

The HEI/entity has defined and implements a communication policy as well as effective procedures for disseminating information on the assessed programme to internal stakeholders.

Criterion 2: The HEI/entity has developed and implements a policy for ensuring the relevance of its study programme.

This criterion aims to examine to what extent the programme's intended learning outcomes meet current or foreseeable societal needs in terms of training and personal development. It also aims to explore how the objectives and content of the programme support the social and professional integration of graduates and/or their integration into a flexible learning path.

Dimension 2.1: Assessment of the study programme's relevance

The HEI/entity develops and implements processes and mechanisms to ensure that the study programme complies with legal requirements and takes into account the stakeholders' needs and expectations. The study programme is regularly updated (with inputs from business practices, research results, link with research, link with professional contexts, scientific and technological knowledge, etc.). It contributes to the social and professional integration of graduates and/or their integration into a flexible learning path.

Dimension 2.2: External information and communication

The HEI/entity regularly publishes up-to-date, impartial, objective, quantitative and qualitative information on the study programmes and diplomas offered.

Criterion 3: The HEI/entity has developed and implements a policy for ensuring the internal coherence of its study programme

This criterion aims to assess the coherence between the following aspects: the intended learning outcomes as stated by the study programme, the programme contents that are actually carried out, the learning provisions and activities, the overall design of the programme, the sequencing of learning activities or provisions, the time foreseen for achieving the intended learning outcomes; the assessed learning outcomes, and the criteria and modalities for assessing them.

Dimension 3.1: Learning outcomes of the study programme

The HEI/entity selects, formulates and publishes the programme's intended learning outcomes. These are realistic, fit for purpose and communicated in an appropriate way.

Dimension 3.2: Study programme content, learning activities and provision (including internships, projects, and final dissertations)

The HEI/entity develops and implements learning provisions and activities designed so that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved.

Dimension 3.3: Study programme's overall design and time foreseen for achieving the intended learning outcomes

The study programme is designed and implemented in a way that is appropriate for achieving the intended learning outcomes, within a reasonable period of time.

Dimension 3.4: Assessment of the achievement level for the intended learning outcomes

The assessment criteria and modalities are designed in accordance with the intended learning outcomes and are applied in a systematic and consistent way. Moreover, the requirements are clearly formulated and communicated to students in due time.

Criterion 4: The HEI/entity has developed and implements a policy for ensuring the efficiency and equity of its study programme

The efficiency criterion relates to the extent the objectives of the programme are achieved, when considering the resources to carry them out. The criterion intends to check whether the study programme produces the expected results, i.e. whether students indeed achieve the intended learning outcomes at the end of their studies.

With this criterion, the HEI/entity is invited to track student paths, from the moment a student registers to the programme, and with attention to the learning outcomes achievement levels and completion rates. Assessment of a programme's effectiveness relates not only to the graduates' characteristics, but also to the HEI's ability to support the students admitted to the programme in completing their studies. The criterion also involves assessing effectiveness factors, such as resource allocation, teaching practices and organisational arrangements undertaken to support the quality of the programme.

The equity criterion relates to the provisions that the programme has set up so that the students, independently of their previous academic background or their personal, social or financial situation, are able to acquire, update and develop throughout their life the programme's intended learning outcomes, as well as the professional skills required for ensuring their employability, supporting their personal development, pursuing lifelong learning, and fostering active citizenship and intercultural dialogue.

Dimension 4.1: Human resources

The HEI/entity ensures that the human resources are adequate and appropriate to the programme and to the students – including to different audiences of students. The HEI/entity makes available the means needed to ensure staff quality and skills, with a particular focus on teaching staff.

Dimension 4.2: Material resources

The HEI/entity ensures that the resources allocated to learning environment ? teaching infrastructures and tools are adequate and appropriate for achieving the intended learning outcomes.

Dimension 4.3: Equity in terms of student welcome, progress monitoring and support

The HEI/entity ensures that the arrangements set up for providing students with guidance, orientation and support in their learning paths are fair, adequate and appropriate for achieving the study programme's objectives.

Dimension 4.4: Analysis of data required for the programme's strategic planning

The HEI/entity ensures that it gathers/collects ?, analyses and makes an appropriate use of data required for the programme's strategic planning.

Criterion 5: The HEI/entity has completed the analysis of its study programme and has developed an action plan for continuous improvement.

Dimension 5.1: Self-evaluation methodology

The HEI/entity has carried out a self-evaluation of the study programme, in a participatory, in-depth and validated manner.

Dimension 5.2: SWOT analysis

The self-evaluation carried out by the HEI/entity includes an analysis identifying the programme's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats in its environment.

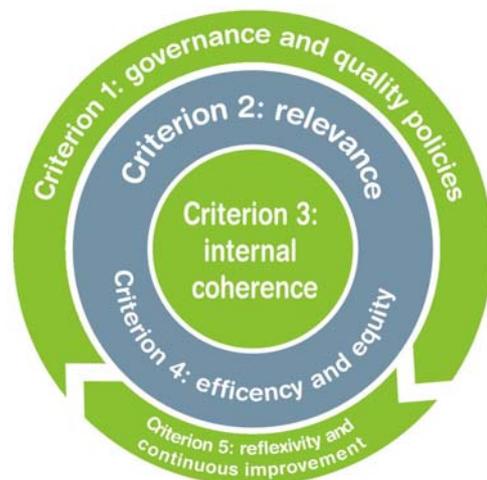
Dimension 5.3: Action plan and follow-up

On the basis of the self-evaluation, the HEI/entity has taken appropriate and considered decisions. It has drawn up an action plan defining priorities and performance indicators, and aiming at continuously improving the quality of the study programme. It regularly and systematically analyses the quality of its programme.

Note:

Complete and detailed Accompanying guidelines (in French only) can be downloaded on the Agency's website: www.aeqes.be. These guidelines can be used by HEIs when working on their self-evaluation report as well as by experts mandated by AEQES for taking part in evaluations.

The self-assessment reports are to be compiled in accordance with the following scheme: a succinct presentation of the study programme (part 1), followed by its self-evaluation against the five criteria specified in this reference framework (part 2).



ANNEX 4 – REVISION OF THE FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURE: ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST ROUND OF FOLLOW-UP EVALUATIONS

After the follow-up evaluations had been conducted for the first time (2013-2014), AEQES wanted to make an assessment that would include a consultation of the main stakeholders concerned (institutions and experts), take account of the recommendations made to AEQES after the evaluation of 2011 (ENQA and EQAR), and put things into a methodological perspective.

This assessment was conducted using a dossier compiled by the Executive Unit and communicated to the Steering Committee on 2 September 2014. The Steering Committee then commissioned the Follow-up WG, which proposed a revision of the procedure, adopted by the Steering Committee in March 2015.

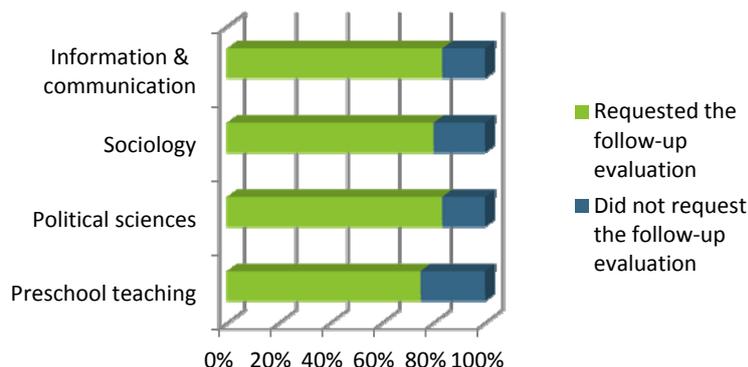
This dossier comprises:

- 1 A summary of the steps taken during the first implementation of the procedure;
- 2 A general assessment;
- 3 Proposals for improvement;
- 4 Annexes (not included here) with the summaries of surveys disseminated among experts and institutions and extracts from the AEQES reference framework and the ESG (2015).

1 Summary of the steps

Preparatory phase

- 15 January 2013: letter sent to all institutions concerned by the 2009-2010 initial evaluation (programmes in sociology, political science, information & communication, and preschool teacher)
- February 2013: the Steering Committee adopted **the memorandum “Update of the follow-up action plan”**, which was drafted by the Standards and Indicators WG
- March 2013: Results of the consultation of the institutions;
 - 12 out of 16 university colleges for the bachelor’s degree programme in pre-school teacher;
 - All the institutions for all the other programmes (with the exception of the University of Liège due to existing internal procedures, which also occur halfway through the AEQES cycle)



- February/March 2013: The Experts WG selected the experts who will participate in the follow-up evaluations – The Steering Committee was informed at its plenary session of 16 April 2013
- June/July 2013: Drafting of the “**Memo to the follow-up committees**”
- August and November 2013: The entities sent their updated follow-up action plan to the Agency
- September 2013: Training seminar (E-day) for all the experts
- 16 January 2014: Preparatory meeting for visits in 2014 (based on the assessment of the first follow-up visits of 2013)

Follow-up visits

- From 11 October to 27 November 2013: 10 visits for the programmes in information & communication, political science and sociology
- From 27 January to 27 March 2014: 12 visits for the preschool teacher programme

Confidential reports of experts and publication of the updated follow-up action plans

- 3 January 2014: Sending of confidential experts reports on the follow-up visits in autumn (one month period if amended documents are requested by the experts) (request for extended deadline → 17 February 2014)
- End of February/beginning of March: consultation of experts on the said documents
- 19 March 2014: Publication of updated follow-up action plans
- May 2014: Sending of confidential reports following the 12 preschool teaching programmes (deadline for sending amended documents: 5 June 2014)
- Beginning of June: consultation of experts on amended documents
- 12 June 2014: Publication of updated follow-up action plans

Evaluation and assessment

- 30 December 2013 to 25 May 2014: survey among experts
- 23 May to 17 June: survey among institutions
- August 2014: communication of results from the surveys

2 Procedure in 2013-2014: Results?

The complexity of the procedure, the use of over-technical vocabulary, and the absence of coordinators' meeting when the procedure was launched undoubtedly caused some confusion or misunderstanding about the memorandum in a number of institutions.

The misunderstandings were mainly of two sorts: contrary to what some institutions thought, the follow-up visit was not repeating the first evaluation visit (it did not have the scope, neither in terms of the size of the expert panel, nor in the number of interviews and participants to be mobilised), and the document sent to the Agency (schedule and updated follow-up plan) was intended to be published on the AEQES website at the end of the procedure.

Furthermore, following the Agency templates for drafting the updated follow-up action plan at times turned into a complicated operation, and the results were not easy to read and understand.

A summary of the main differences between the two existing evaluation procedures is given below:

Full external evaluation	Follow-up procedure
A full SER	An updated follow-up action plan
A panel composed of 5/6 experts (the chair, the peer experts, one education/quality assurance expert, experts from the profession, and a student expert)	A follow-up panel composed of two experts (a peer profile from the initial committee + an education/quality assurance expert with a transversal view)
A 2- to 4- or 6-day visit, depending on the offer of programmes	A one-day visit
Many meetings with the internal and external stakeholders of the programme: academic authorities, QA officers, heads of programmes, teachers, assistants, students, graduates, administrative staff, representatives of the professional world	Four interviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authorities and QA coordinators for the programme - Teachers - Students - The participants of the first interview for a second interview
The report written by the experts is published	Only the updated follow-up action plan is published (if the opinion of the follow-up panel is positive)

As regards the positive elements of the assessment, the two surveys show that:

- The institutions appreciated the intervention of the experts; some impact measurement is tangible (90% at the level of the entity leadership and 78% at the level of QA and quality of teaching), and, generally speaking, expectations were met (staff motivation and providing an external view);
- From the point of view of experts, the follow-up procedure was found satisfactory to meet the three expectations of the mission ("measure the achievements of the initial follow-up action plan, give an opinion on the new action plan, and assess the development of the quality culture within the entity"), and several concrete solutions were proposed to further refine the methodological aspects (instructions, format of documents, etc.).

The publication of the updated follow-up action plans has two implications:

- In a context of (strong) competition between institutions, the indication of the projects or strategic lines is a sensitive issue. The institutions may be reluctant to enter them in a table (or a text) that is posted on the Agency's website. Besides, this observation is valid for the two procedures: the full evaluation and the follow-up evaluation.
- Furthermore, in the framework of their mission that was subject to assessment for the follow-up procedure, the follow-up panel has often found itself in a situation to give a reserved opinion on the proposed documents intended for publication, usually for formal reasons.

The very fact of getting experts to give, if necessary,⁴ a reserved opinion on the documents drafted by the institutions questions the relevance of the procedure on this point: Do we want the experts to comment on whether said documents should be published, or on the actual implementation of improvement actions – thus on the recognition of a quality dynamic – or on both?

In fact, what are the stakes of the follow-up evaluation procedure?

Three reasons can be distinguished from the perspective of the institutions, namely to:

- Ensure a continuous improvement process and thus stimulate the emergence of a quality culture;
- Communicate the implementation of actions and projects in progress to bear witness to the dynamism generated in the institution or faculty;
- Benefit from an external – and instructive – view on the quality dynamic.

From the perspective of AEQES, at issue is clearly to:

- Mitigate an excessively long evaluation cycle (10 years);
- Have data on the development of internal quality assurance in the institutions and programmes;
- Benefit from a feedback on the impact of external evaluations in order to showcase, if needed, the usefulness of the evaluations and the applied method.

The question may then arise as to whether the tools proposed and implemented in 2013-2014 are the most appropriate to meet the expectations and stakes?

Another point for reflection comes from the observation of some situations by the Executive Unit, when the continuity of the quality process linked to the AEQES evaluation is discontinued. More specifically, in those – fortunately minority – cases, the transmission of information could not be achieved between the new persons in charge of the administration, coordination of programmes, quality coordination, etc. and the people in office in 2009-2010. These situations actually question the weakness of the legal mechanism (AEQES decree 2008) that calls for the creation of an internal evaluation commission, but does not provide for the sustainability of the quality process beyond the initial evaluation visit. Would it be advisable to strengthen a mechanism which makes it possible, in one way or another, to guarantee a collegial construction of the monitoring plan and change management?

The answer to all these questions will contribute to adjust the follow-up procedure in the most appropriate way.

For the record, a working meeting with the experts who contributed to this first implementation of the procedure will take place soon. The objective of this meeting is to further analyse the methodology and to allow the Agency to further improve it.

⁴ That was the case of about 85% of the situations encountered.

In terms of schedule, the ten-year plan 2014-2024 includes the upcoming follow-up evaluation site visits in 2015-2016 for the bachelor's degree programmes in marketing and foreign trade as well as nursing and midwifery care. This corresponds to a decision of the Steering Committee to make the follow-up evaluation visit mandatory halfway through the ten-year evaluation cycle. To ensure optimal communication for the institutions concerned, the Steering Committee should take its decisions for adjustments by November at the latest, so as to give the Executive Unit the time necessary to amend the memos and other reference documents.

3 What changes could be envisaged? Proposals for improvement

Firstly, it is worth pointing out that the Steering Committee has already decided⁵ to introduce a **mid-term and mandatory follow-up evaluation visit** (i.e. currently five years after the full evaluation), instead of an optional follow-up visit after three years. The ten-year plan 2014-2024 has been amended according to this decision.

On the basis of this assessment, the following actions will take place:

- Work on the **communication** by clarifying the terminology (*action plan* cf. dimension 5.3 of the AEQES *reference framework, schedule and follow-up plan, schedule and updated follow-up plan*, etc.), by systematically organising a preparatory meeting with the institutions (leadership level and coordinators) during the launch of the procedure, and by revising the reference documents (e.g. memos including a reference framework applicable to follow-up), once the procedure is adjusted.
- Ask the institutions to design a **confidential progress report for the follow-up experts**, in order to provide information on the way they have taken into account the recommendations of the experts who evaluated their programmes initially, in the framework of the institution's strategy and of developments in the area of higher education. This confidential report will present this information in the most appropriate form (table for summary presentation, for example), and demonstrate to the experts how the institution meets the expectations of the ESG 1.9.⁶
- Reflect on how to ensure the **sustainability of the quality assurance process in a form to be determined by the institution**, beyond the diagnosis phase for the first self-evaluation.

The Executive Unit prompts the Steering Committee to examine the following two improvement paths: either maintain the current procedure (publication of the updated action plan and transmission of a confidential follow-up report from the experts) with the improvements itemised below (Proposal 1); or develop a new procedure that leads to the publication of the follow-up report from the experts, and not to the publication of the report with the institution's action plan (Proposal 2). Both proposals include the actions presented above. The Executive Unit considers that proposal 2 is more favourable to the reinforcement of internal quality assurance within the institutions, and more compliant with the mission of quality assurance agencies. For these two reasons, it is the proposal that it recommends.

⁵ See the minutes of the plenary session of 1 October 2013.

⁶ "1.9. **On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes.** Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned."

Proposal 1

To improve the current procedure, the “updated follow-up action plan” sent by the institution and intended for publication is accompanied by a confidential report, which answers to the questions: *“Since the initial evaluation, what progress have you accomplished with regard to the follow-up action plan drawn up after that evaluation? What impediments and/or points requiring attention have you identified during the implementation? What are your priority actions for the upcoming months or years?”*

After their visit, the follow-up evaluation panel drafts a confidential report that includes its decision about the publication of the “updated follow-up action plan.” If needed, exchanges between the institution and the Executive Unit lead to an amended document (or, if the opinion is negative, a right of response). After consulting the experts, the institution’s schedule and their updated follow-up plan are posted on the Agency’s website with the explicit indication that they were endorsed by the experts.

The Executive Unit believes that the main advantage of this proposal is the public announcement of the institution’s commitment to carry out concrete actions, which may represent a driver for action within the institution. A confidential report may also be appreciated by the institution as it may deal with more sensitive elements. Nevertheless, non-publication of such reports could entail a failure to comply with the report publication criterion with regard to the ESG. The major disadvantage remains the complexity of the procedure: the institution’s (internal) document as an (alas, poorly readable) action plan is used as an object of evaluation for the follow-up evaluation experts to “measure the attainment of the initial follow-up action plan, give an opinion on the new action plan, and assess the development of a quality culture within the institution.” This is a complex matter for the institutions and the experts alike... not to mention the potential reader of the Agency’s website.

Proposal 2

This proposal reverses the objects of publication: only the follow-up evaluation report from the experts is published, and the communication on the overall follow-up (taking into account the recommendations of the experts after the initial visit; implementation of the action plan) falls under the internal responsibility of the institution.

Before the follow-up evaluation visit, the institution sends a confidential report to the Agency with answers to the questions: *“What progress have you made since the initial evaluation with regard to the follow-up action plan drawn up after that evaluation? What impediments and/or points requiring attention have you identified during the implementation? What are your priority actions for the upcoming months or years?”*, and is accompanied by internal documents (tables showing the results, action plan, link to website, etc.), which demonstrate that the institution is acting and communicating with all interested parties on these questions.

At the end of the follow-up evaluation visit, the experts draft a preliminary report on the quality management of the initially evaluated programme(s) (results and prospective actions). Like every report intended to be published by the Agency, this is subject to a right of the institution to respond before publication.

In all likelihood, the adoption of this proposal will ultimately lead to the disappearance of the publication (on the website) of the first “follow-up action plan” prepared by the institutions six months after the publication of the evaluation report, and will mobilise increased attention towards the preparation of an action plan as during the self-evaluation stage.

To offset the disappearance of the “driver effect” subsequent to a publication, two actions are proposed during the initial evaluation of a programme:

- Upon receiving the self-evaluation reports (SER), the Executive Unit proceeds to a preliminary reading to ensure that they are complete and that the instructions have been followed, in particular as regards criterion 5.3 (presentation of a first action plan), and sends the SERs to the experts. If this preliminary reading (on the form and not the content) shows that a SER is incomplete, it is returned to the institution for revision;
- The evaluation experts are particularly watchful about criteria 1, 2.2, 4.4 and 5.3 in the AEQES reference framework.

The Executive Unit believes that the main advantage of this proposal is to strengthen internal quality assurance towards a balance between “internal and external procedures.” The Agency will no longer have to publish documents from the institutions and, more importantly, to ask the experts to comment on their formal relevance. A prerequisite to this proposal is an internal efficient and transparent management that meets AEQES criteria 1, 2.2, 4.4 and 5.3 and the future ESG 1.1, 1.7, 1.9 and 2.1. If this prerequisite cannot be met, it would constitute a major disadvantage to the implementation of this proposal. Contrary to what was presented in the first proposal, as the follow-up evaluation report from the experts will be published, it will require special care in formulating every sensitive element.

The table below summarises the different steps of the two proposals and their analyses.

The common elements of the two procedures are highlighted in the green box.

	Proposal 1: The action plan of the institution is published and anyone can read the institution’s commitment to improve the quality of its programme(s)	Proposal 2: Only the follow-up evaluation report of the experts is published, and it takes stock of the implementation of the planned actions and the development of a quality culture that serves the quality of the programmes within the institution
<i>Before the FU evaluation</i>	Clarification of the terminology Revision of the reference documents and templates for the reports	
<i>Before the FU evaluation</i>		- Pre-screening of the SERs, in particular as regards criterion 5.3.
<i>Preparation</i>	Preparatory meeting with the institutions (leadership level and coordinators)	
<i>Documents received from the institution</i>	2 documents: prospective action plan (to be published) + confidential report on the results, the strategy and planned actions	1 document: a confidential report on the results, the strategy and prospective follow-up action plan
<i>Visit</i>	Visit by a follow-up panel composed of two experts (one having participated in the initial evaluation, the other not; peer profile and quality assurance profile)	
<i>AEQES sends the preliminary report</i>	Confidential report with a decision about the publication of the prospective follow-up action plan	Preliminary report on the quality management of the programme (results and prospective actions)

<i>Exchanges with the institution</i>	The institutions send an amended document if the experts issue a reserved opinion and have a right of response if the opinion is negative.	Right of institutions to respond to the preliminary report of the experts
<i>Consultation of the experts</i>	Consultation of the experts on new elements provided	
<i>Publication</i>	The prospective action plan with the follow-up panel's endorsement OR Negative opinion of the experts with the right of the institution to respond	The report of the experts, accompanied by the institution's right to respond if relevant

Advantages	Public communication of the institution's commitment to take concrete action = internal driver	Reinforcement of internal quality assurance as from the first evaluation (cf. criteria 1, 4.4 and 5.3 of the AEQES reference framework and ESG 1.1., 1.7., 1.9 and 2.1). The Agency no longer needs to comment on the relevance for publication of the follow-up action plan of the institutions
	The report of the experts remains confidential and deals with sensitive elements without delay	
Disadvantages	Complexity of the procedure and poorly readable documents to be published	The report of the experts is published: every sensitive element is formulated with care
	Reluctancy of the institutions to include strategic elements in public documents, in a context of competition between HEIs	
	Non publication of a report by experts after a mid-term evaluation (failure to comply with the report publication criterion according to the ESG)	

ANNEX 5 – AEQES WORKING GROUPS

This table gives an overview of the AEQES Steering Committee working groups, their composition, their missions, and their work in progress and planned, as this self-evaluation report is being finalised.

The members indicated between brackets are members who do not sit on the Steering Committee and who joined the groups in their capacity of external experts.

AEQES WORKING GROUPS <i>Coordination of the Working Group</i>	COMPOSITION	MISSIONS, WORK IN PROGRESS AND TO BE CARRIED OUT
SELF-EVALUATION <i>Eva Jaroszewski</i>	Board Angeline AUBERT-LOTARSKI Danielle MAES Andrée SURSOCK	Conduct the self-assessment in a participatory manner Produce the SER and have it validated by the Steering Committee Contribute to organise the visit of ENQA experts
COMMUNICATION <i>Yoneko Nurtantio and Alexis Vermote</i>	Fabienne JACQUES [Fabienne LECRIS] Izida KHAMIDOUILLINA Marc STREKER Marc VAN HOLSBEECK	Communication plan of the Agency Communication actions
EXPERTS <i>Axelle Piret</i>	Sandrine CANTER [Arielle BOUCHEZ] <i>(substitute: Selma BELLAL)</i> Izida KHAMIDOUILLINA <i>(substitute: Carine PIERRE)</i> + 2 members of the Executive Unit	Validation of applications for 2016-2017 and following. Choice of members qualified to be panel chairs Regularly adjusts the jurisprudence for the selection of experts (to be approved by the Steering Committee) Procedures for including a student expert in the follow-up evaluation panels
METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS <i>Thérèse Zhang</i>	Board [Guy AELTERMAN] Angeline AUBERT-LOTARSKI [Freddy COIGNOUL (Chair of the CoQER)] [Paul LODEWICK] Danielle MAES <i>(substitute: Fabienne JACQUES)</i> Carine PIERRE Andrée SURSOCK Vincent WERTZ	Conduct exploratory work based on studies and comparative analyses of different EQA models Draw up a criteria grid and define a method to identify the needs of the sector Draw up different scenarios for the WBF with regard to the established criteria Produce a preliminary report Gather opinions from the sector Produce a final report
TEN-YEAR PLAN <i>Axelle Piret</i>	Fabienne JACQUES <i>(substitute: Alain BLONDEAU)</i> Pascal LAMBERT Frédéric de ROOS Anne VANDENBROUCKE	Annual adjustment of the evaluations plan Reflection on the evaluation methodology by study field and by entity (in connection with the work of the Methodological developments WG)

ANNEX 6 – PROCEDURE MA 06/1: TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR ANY COLLABORATION BETWEEN AEQES AND ANOTHER EVALUATION AGENCY

This procedure has been part of the AEQES Quality Manual since October 2009. It sets the framework in which AEQES may collaborate with other evaluation agencies. It was applied in 2012-2013 and 2015-2016 with the CTI as well in 2014-2015 with MusiQuE.

Procedure description: MA 06/1 Terms and conditions for any collaboration between AEQES and another evaluation agency	Date of approval: 6 October 2009 Revision date: 10 November 2015
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Responsible: Steering Committee

Definition: the procedure described below determines the terms and conditions under which AEQES envisages a joint evaluation with another evaluation agency.

Conditions for the procedure being applied:

- Motivation of the collaboration request
- Fits in with AEQES' 10-year plan (full evaluation and follow-up evaluation)
- Legitimacy of the external agency (for instance, agency on EQAR)
- Matching methodologies and reference frameworks
- Formal approval by the Steering Committee
- The signing of a collaboration agreement between AEQES and the other agency
- Financial involvement of the Agency limited to missions defined in the Decree.

Procedure steps:

First step: SUBMISSION OF THE REQUEST

Institutions wanting to work together with AEQES submit a request to the Agency, stating their motivation. The request fits in with the schedule of the 10-year plan. It must have reached the Agency before the latter has officially written to the institutions to trigger the self-evaluation phase.

The request is addressed to the Executive Unit of AEQES, who takes due note thereof and informs the Steering Committee.

Second step: EXAMINATION OF THE REQUEST and AGENCY DECISION

The Executive Unit is responsible for maintaining contact between AEQES and the external agency and for checking the methodology and reference frameworks. The Board drafts an opinion which is then submitted to the Steering Committee for approval.

If the Steering Committee agrees to the request, the decision is communicated to the institutions and to the external agency. The self-evaluation phase is started.

If the Steering Committee is against the request or if the application involves any problem (additional information, scheduling problems, etc.), such information is communicated to the institutions and to the external agency.

Third step: AGREEMENT and TERMS AND CONDITIONS of the COLLABORATION

The cooperation agreement signed between AEQES and the external agency describes the work to be done and how it is to be fulfilled. It may be an agreement to implement a joint evaluation or to recognise the results of an evaluation implemented by the partner agency. In both cases, the agreement will set explicitly all aspects.

Joint evaluation	Recognition of the results of an evaluation implemented by the partner agency
<p>Amongst others, the agreement specifies the presence during the evaluation visits of AEQES experts and of a member of the Executive Unit, the coordination of preparatory activities including meetings with coordinators. It also specifies the use of a joint reference framework, the organisation of the visits and the process of drafting reports. Last but not least, the agreement provides for the option of the Agency to publish the system-wide analysis without incurring additional intellectual property rights expenses.</p>	
<p>In cases where the evaluation language of the external agency is not French, the institutions evaluated are (financially) responsible for translating the self-evaluation reports for the AEQES experts. Fees for translating and publishing the evaluation reports for the institutions are borne by the Agency.</p>	
<p>Coordinator meetings are organised by AEQES. The presence of representatives from the external agency is required in at least one coordination meeting.</p>	
<p>Fourth step: APPOINTMENT of the AEQES EXPERTS The selection of experts is made according to procedure MA 03. The Agency limits its financial contribution to covering the tasks falling to it and which are assigned to it by Decree. Each of the AEQES experts has a contract with the Agency. This expertise contract determines the size of the Agency's contribution.</p>	
<p>Fifth step: PUBLICATION of the REPORTS The Executive Unit posts on the www.aeqes.be the reports of each institution, together with the system-wide analysis, as usual.</p>	<p>Fifth step: PUBLICATION of the REPORTS The Executive Unit posts on the www.aeqes.be the reports of each institution, as well as the system-wide analysis (if any).</p>

Upstream procedures: Definition of the strategic objectives (MA 01)

Downstream procedures:

- Initiating an evaluation (OP 01)

Documents to be produced:

- Collaboration agreement
- Reference framework and joint tools

Performance and/or satisfaction indicators:

- Stakeholders' satisfaction rate (measured via surveys).

ANNEX 7 – CODE OF ETHICS

This code of ethics concerns the members of the Steering Committee, the Board of AEQES, the staff members as well as the experts.

Members of the Agency's Steering Committee and Board	Independence	Agency members represent a certain type of education, student organisations, trade unions, the Directorate General for Non-Compulsory Education, and professional, social and cultural associations. This broad scope enables a wide range of perspectives and discussions of general interest, opening up possibilities for improving training and educational practices in the area of higher education in the French-speaking Community of Belgium as a whole, without favouring any particular interests. A member of the Steering Committee shall not, during his or her period of office, act as an expert.
	Fairness	Agency members shall serve with consistency, objectivity and integrity, respecting the diversity of higher education.
	Transparency	The Agency provides regular information on the status of its various missions, publishing bi-annual activity reports and a self-evaluation report every five years, as well as issuing regular bulletins on its missions and operations. Steering Committee members help increase transparency by facilitating communication between the Agency and the higher education institutions they represent.
	Confidentiality	Agency members undertake to respect the confidentiality of any information or documents sent to them.
	Involvement	Each member is actively involved in the Agency's various activities, taking part in discussions and working groups.
Agency's staff	Independence	Executive staff is responsible for upholding the Agency's independence vis-à-vis all higher education stakeholders. No member of staff may handle a case in which he or she has a personal interest, whether direct or indirect.
	Fairness	Executive staff treats all institutions with consistency, objectivity and integrity, respecting the diversity of the various types of higher education.

	Transparency	Executive staff provides clear and objective information, as comprehensive as allowed by professional ethics, to higher education institutions and other stakeholders in this area.
	Confidentiality	Executive staff undertakes to respect the confidentiality of all Agency information or documents. In addition, the staff guarantees the confidentiality of the self-evaluation reports compiled by institutions and the contents of any discussions taking place during evaluations.
	Involvement	Executive staff implements the resolutions of the Steering Committee and the Board, carrying out the work with diligence and professional dedication. Staff members formulate their opinions, reports and options in a precise and practical manner.
<i>Experts</i>	Independence	The experts are independent of the institutions evaluated. In this respect, the Agency has developed a jurisprudence defining the limits of such independence. In particular, experts shall not have maintained any contractual relationship with the evaluated institutions during the five years prior to the visits. Experts also act independently of the WBF's official structures and its organising authorities.
	Integrity	The integrity of the experts represents the basis for the trust placed in them and the credibility attached to their judgement. Experts perform all aspects of their assessments fairly, not letting their judgment be influenced by their own interests or those of anyone else. They undertake to have no personal contact with the institutions during their period of office.
	Objectivity	Experts gather, assess and communicate, in a rigorous and relevant manner, the information related to the activity or process examined. The judgements they pronounce are supported by aspects identified in the self-evaluation reports, in the relevant documentation or in the interviews. They make reference to the current status of knowledge and best practice in the areas described.
	Consistency	Experts examine with equal attention the various parts of a study programme within an institution or between institutions evaluated. Each external evaluation uses similar organisational and management criteria, thereby achieving the greatest possible equality.

	Respect for diversity	Experts respect the diversity of the projects and institutions, as well as the diversity of the programmes objectives, inasmuch as they meet the overall objectives of higher education and quality assurance.
	Personal involvement	Experts subscribe to the Agency's missions and objectives, using their skills to meet their responsibilities and contribute fully to the success of their mission.
	Confidentiality	Experts undertake to guard the confidentiality of all information they receive, as well as the contents of any confidential or restricted-use documents that they need to consult for the purpose of their duties or in the execution thereof.

ANNEX 8 – LINKS TO MAIN DOCUMENTS CITED IN THIS REPORT

1 Standards and indicators, and methodological documents

Reference Framework et Accompanying guidelines

<http://aeges.be/documents/REFERENTIELANGL5.pdf>

<http://aeges.be/documents/20160105guide%20d'accompagnement.pdf>

10-Year plan

http://aeges.be/calendrier_plan.cfm

Guidelines for HE institutions

http://aeges.be/infos_documents_details.cfm?documents_id=455

Guidelines for experts

<http://aeges.be/documents/Guide%20experts%20EN.pdf>

2 Studies and analyses

Duykaerts C., Remaud B., Sallets J., *Bilan de la collaboration AEQES/CTI pour l'évaluation des programmes de bioingénieur et ingénieur civil en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles : évaluation et accréditation, approches compatibles?*, 2013.

http://aeges.be/rapports_details.cfm?documents_id=327

TRENDS

http://aeges.be/rapports_details.cfm?documents_id=193

FOCUS

http://aeges.be/rapports_details.cfm?documents_id=385

GAM Report

http://aeges.be/rapports_details.cfm?documents_id=400

Results of the survey addressed to experts and HEIs to elicit their view on important trends in higher education, and to hear about their expectations towards AEQES

http://aeges.be/rapports_details.cfm?documents_id=456

QUAREMME M., *Influence du processus d'évaluation AEQES sur les démarches qualité dans l'enseignement supérieur : résultats des enquêtes en ligne*, 2012.

http://aeges.be/rapports_details.cfm?documents_id=248

VAN DEN EEDE P., *Évaluation de la qualité dans l'enseignement supérieur: légitimité et valeur ajoutée des experts étudiants selon les différentes parties prenantes*, 2015.

http://aeges.be/rapports_details.cfm?documents_id=404

STEVENS B., *Enjeux, leviers et freins perçus dans la démarche de suivi qualité de l'agence pour l'évaluation de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur (AEQES) pour le cursus du bachelier préscolaire*, 2015.

http://aeges.be/rapports_details.cfm?documents_id=447

Berthiaume D., Van Ouytsel A., Duykaerts C., *A Tribute to transversal expertise: What is the contribution of non-disciplinary experts to evaluation committees in academic programme evaluation in French-speaking Belgium?*, 2015.

http://www.eua.be/Libraries/eqaf-2015/paper-23_berthiaume_vanouytsel_duykaerts.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Report on the first AEQES' annual seminar

http://www.aeqes.be/calendrier_events_details.cfm?news_id=124

3 Position papers and memorandum

AEQES' position paper on the legal changes needed to improve the Agency's functioning

<http://aeqes.be/documents/20121004%20AEQES%20position%20paper%20of%20June%2018.pdf>

Memorandum addressed to policymakers

<http://aeqes.be/documents/AEQES-Memorandum-web.pdf>

4 Documents in support of the strategy and internal management of quality at the Agency

Mission statement

http://aeqes.be/english_about_us.cfm

Plan stratégique 2016-2020

<http://www.aeqes.be/documents/Plan%20strategique%20AEQES%20-%20plan%20strat%202016-2020.pdf>

Quality Manual

<http://aeqes.be/documents/20110614%20Quality%20Handbook%20-%20EN.pdf>

Rapports d'activités

http://aeqes.be/agence_rapports.cfm

5 Jurisprudence for the selection of experts

Jurisprudence for the selection of experts and the composition of the experts panels

http://www.aeqes.be/infos_documents_details.cfm?documents_id=251

6 Code of ethics

Code of ethics

<http://aeqes.be/documents/Deontological%20code%20-%20AEQES.pdf>