



INQA AHE

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

Minutes of the INQA AHE Board

6 May 2010, 17.30 –19.30 h

Safari Hotel, Windhoek, Namibia

Present: David Woodhouse (President), Adil Ahza , Carol Bobby , Rolf Heusser, Leendert Klaassen, Maria José Lemaitre, Sinapi Moli, Theresa Okafor, Marie-Odile Ottenwaelter, Daniela Torre, Mark Frederiks (INQA AHE Administrator).

Apologies: Nadia Badrawi, Dorte Kristoffersen, Dale Patterson, Lee Harvey (Observer).

1. Any items arising from the General Assembly or otherwise during the Forum

The name of this agenda item was changed to “**evaluation of the Forum**”.

Board members expressed their satisfaction with the content and organization of the Forum but had mixed feelings about the program of the week and the participation.

With regard to the program there was dissatisfaction that the Networks meeting on May 7 was portrayed as a GIQAC meeting, and that the Commonwealth of Learning meetings on May 3 and the GIQAC meeting on May 8 were included in the INQA AHE Forum program. Such confusion should be avoided in the future, although the actual combination of several meetings with the INQA AHE event is positive, both showing INQA AHE’s collaborative approach and providing more reasons for people to travel to the event(s).

With regard to the participation it was noted that there were few members from e.g. Europe and America present at the Forum, and few experienced members. The conferences have always, intentionally, been inclusive but lately the fora have also become inclusive. In the past there were only two persons from each full member allowed to fora. Do we want that again? Should the fora be exclusively for full members and should fora only be held at easily accessible locations? What is easily accessible? – this depends on where you live!

There is a dilemma (that emerged during the first 10 years of conferences, and in fact gave rise to the fora) that experienced members do not want to spend time on elementary aspects, but less experienced members need to interact with experienced members. The Board agreed that fora should bring together new and experienced members, and ways need to be found to make it useful for both groups. One possibility is to have one day when the participants are split into two groups, and one day when all are together. It had been intended to split the breakout groups at this Forum according to participant background or interest, but the implementation of this was left too late.



INQAAHE

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

To check on the perception that full members are underrepresented at INQAAHE events, it should be investigated which full members have not sent representatives to the last conference and to this forum.

Action Secretariat: check which full members have not representatives at the last conference and forum

2. Any unfinished items from the May 4 agenda

The name of this agenda item was changed to “**discussion of membership issues**”.

Directors noted that INQAAHE has changed a lot in the last 20 years. We should rethink the role of the Network, and then redefine the membership, also as a strategic input for the next 20 years. In the GA it was reconfirmed that the primary role of INQAAHE is to be a network of QA agencies, and this was the starting point and context for the Board’s discussion.

It was agreed that full member status for QA agencies, and affiliate status for individuals are appropriate categories to maintain. What other organisations wish to be or should be members, what do they expect, what services can we offer them, and what should be the available membership categories?

Noting that INQAAHE operates through projects, would it be possible to be a network of full member agencies only, and distribute the project outcomes to institutions and other stakeholders? Or is it necessary to allow other bodies, such as institutions, to be members of the network in order to engage their interest in the project work?

Directors agreed that the network should be as inclusive as possible, but what does inclusiveness mean in practice? INQAAHE is inclusive in several ways, such as: each bona fide agency can become a full member (even if a Ministry sets up a proto-agency); we are not in a hurry to cancel membership when members do not pay their fees; we have included other membership categories in addition to full members. The developmental role of INQAAHE means that institutions should be included as members, though sometimes institutions just want to have the INQAAHE brand.

One question then is whether we are willing to admit every institution that wants to join (providing it is in good standing with the relevant QA agency? If so, we could be overrun. If not, how do we specify which are admissible? We could revert to the original approach of admitting an institution only if it is responsible for the quality of some other institutions – but then it would qualify as a full member, and the problem is solved differently.

Another question is whether to keep the separate category of institution members, or whether to have only one other category of member, namely associate member, for all member organisations that are not QA agencies. It was remarked that if the associate membership



INQAAHE

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

category did not exist then several Board members would not be here. Their valuable experiences would be missed.

It was observed that the exchange between those who apply QA and those who undergo it is relevant. Institutions should be retained as members, but who should be the targeted contacts: heads of QA departments or vice-chancellors? (But INQAAHE does not specify who should be the contact for a QA agency member.) Membership applications show that some are rather vague about their interest in QA. If building capacity is important for INQAAHE then capacity building might be the decisive element for accepting new members.

It was noted that we now provide a targeted service to professional associations without creating a new membership category; and that there are institutions in the Full, Associate and Institution Member categories, so when we introduce a targeted service to institutions, it will cut across all three categories, and cannot be confined to the Institution Member category. It was concluded that INQAAHE should cater for the variety in membership, but this does not necessarily require a proliferation of membership categories.

It was agreed that members should be surveyed. The primary questions would be: what do you expect from INQAAHE; what are your needs in terms of development and professionalization and how could INQAAHE contribute to that? The results might indicate specific needs and desires on the part of different types of members. It was proposed to discuss the results of the survey during a Board meeting. From this needs assessment, the strategic options could be identified, which will help us to select priorities among the goals in our strategic plan. Another matter for reflection is the added value of INQAAHE compared to regional networks.

Action Secretariat: survey of needs assessments of members

It was mentioned that, during the last year, most new membership applications have been from institutions and affiliates. It was agreed that the membership committee would analyse some examples of motivations of new members to become an INQAAHE member.

Action Membership committee: to set up a survey of needs assessments of members

The possibility was mentioned of introducing an observer status. For organizations in a developmental stage this could be a solution for 1 or 2 years.

Some directors suggested that a face-to-face meeting would be beneficial in preparing a discussion on the next 20 years. In addition, it was agreed that the interactive Board membership area on the website would be used again.

Action Secretariat: re-activating interactive Board membership area on the website