

REVIEW OF
THE EUROPEAN
ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION
ACCREDITATION (EAPAA)

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Review Team

Guy Haug, Chair

Allan Rosenbaum, Academic Expert

Delia Gologan, Student Expert

Christina Rozsnyai, Secretary

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Executive Summary

The European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA) is a subject-specific accreditation agency for bachelor and master programmes in public administration in Europe. It has conducted over 40 accreditations since 2000.

EAPAA has commissioned the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) to coordinate an external evaluation of the agency for the purpose of establishing its compliance with the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP). EAPAA also asked the review team to evaluate its compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) with the intent of seeking registration in the European Quality Register (EQAR).

Based on an informative and analytical self-evaluation report submitted by EAPAA, the review team conducted a site visit in Edinburgh on 10-11 September 2013, organised by EAPAA and linked to its annual meeting together with the two leading professional organisations in public administration in Europe. There, the review team was able to meet with representatives of every group that is involved in the activities and decision-making of EAPAA, including students and stakeholders. The review schedule with specific interview groups and individuals is attached to this report as Annex 2.

The present review analyses EAPAA's compliance with each of the ESG Part 2 and Part 3 as well as with the relevant GGP. The latter are grouped with the ESG as set down in EAPAA's self-evaluation report, with a few marked exceptions. A table in Annex 1 provides a list of the GGP with the matching ESG in order to facilitate the review of EAPAA's compliance by INQAAHE.

The review team found that EAPAA complies fully with eight ESG, three in Part 2 and five in Part 3. Substantial compliance was found in six instances, four of them in Part 2 and two in Part 3. The team judged that EAPAA complies only partially with ESG 3.8 and ESG 2.8. does not apply to EAPAA.

Three GGP could not be grouped under the ESG. GGP 9 was found not to apply to EAPAA, while the agency complies fully with GGP 11 but fulfils only partially the requirement of having criteria for trans-border education, GGP 12.

The review team believes that EAPAA is overall in substantial compliance with the European Standards and the Guidelines of Good Practice. It was especially impressed by the professional quality of the EAPAA operations and documents. Given the limited budget EAPAA has been working with, the review team is of the view that the agency has achieved great success in contributing to the improvement of the quality of public administration education, due to its professionalism, the dedication of its staff, members and evaluation teams.

To improve its work, the review team makes recommendations that are summarised in the following section.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to assist EAPAA in designing its further strategy and raising its level of quality, the review team points out three areas where there is room for improvement.

Resources

By and large, the review team accepts EAPAA's assessment that its human and financial resources are limited and yet have allowed the development of the agency and its activities up to now. However, if EAPAA wants to develop in the coming years, acquiring additional resources is critical. The upcoming change in leadership, with a new secretary general succeeding the founding one, is a window of opportunity for EAPAA.

The review team believes that EGPA might negotiate additional resources with its two member organisations EGPA and NISPAcee, both with respect to additional monetary as well as human and logistical support.

Strategy

EAPAA is one of a few subject-based quality assurance organisations in Europe. It is a founding member of EASPA, the European network of such agencies. If EAPAA really wants to become a strong member in this community of agencies, it needs to design and implement an overall medium-term strategy.

Subject-specific agencies share a number of common features, some of which EAPAA needs to strengthen, such as

- a strong link with employers and practitioners
- external financial support from either the EU Commission or professional organisations
- investing strongly in image building across borders.

The added value these agencies possess is the comparability across borders they provide within a particular sector. EAPAA already enjoys this advantage, but activities serving specifically this aim should become a higher priority in EAPAA's strategy. This is the case in particular with joint and transnational programme accreditation, which have the potential to help build the European dimension.

The review team welcomed the announced intention of EAPAA to add internationalisation among its accreditation criteria. The other subject-specific agencies also build their image through publications and subject-related research projects, such as the ones EAPAA is planning at the moment. The review team is fully aware that public administration is a particularly important field in that it influences the developments of institutions and states in the implementation of their objectives. The strength of EAPAA of being a European-wide agency is a competitive advantage over national agencies that can be used to enhance its brand.

Control

The review team believes that there is room for improvement in developing more formal, more organised, more systematic control in EAPAA's processes. The informal and in some ways spontaneous development suited well a young organisation and allowed for flexibility to adjust over the initial learning curve. For the future, however, more structured processes would be helpful for, e.g.

- setting down procedures for selecting of visiting team members
- training visiting team members
- organising follow-up procedures
- emphasising more the internal quality assurance mechanisms when evaluating study programmes
- collecting and analysing feedback from various constituents who participated in evaluations
- a strategy for promoting re-accreditation to increase such applications
- joint accreditation procedures, where EAPAA should set in place an explicit safeguard regulation clearly stating that its standards cannot be lowered in joint accreditation activities.

All these initiatives exist among EAPAA's activities, but the review team believes that a more structured approach in these areas would contribute to EAPAA's development and sustainability.

Glossary

ANOSR	National Union of Students Organisations from Romania
ARACIS	Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
CEENQA	Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EAPAA	European Association for Public Administration Accreditation
EASPA	European Alliance for Subject-Specific and Professional Accreditation and Quality Assurance
ECCE	European Council on Chiropractic Education
EGPA	European Group for Public Administration
EKKA	Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency
ENQA	European Association of Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAA	External Quality Assurance Agency
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (commonly referred to as European Standards and Guidelines)
ESU	European Students Union
GGP	INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice
INQAAHE	International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
NASPAA	National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administrations
NISPAcee	Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe
PA	Public Administration
OAQ	Swiss Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education
QANU	Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities
SER	Self-Evaluation Report of EAPAA, 2013

Introduction

BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

The European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (hereafter: EAPAA) has commissioned the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) to coordinate an external evaluation¹ of the agency. The INQAAHE secretariat conducted the preparatory negotiations, which included the Terms of Reference and a contract with EAPAA, as well as inviting the members of the review team. It also collected the necessary documentation from EAPAA and the review team and forwarded them to EQAR and INQAAHE.

The remit of the review, as set down in its Self-Evaluation Report (SER, p. 6), is three-fold,

- to evaluate in how far EAPAA meets the European Standards and Guidelines² (ESG) Parts 2 and 3³ for the purpose of EAPAA seeking to be listed in the European Quality Register (EQAR),
- and in how far it meets the Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP) of INQAAHE⁴;
- as well as to provide EAPAA with recommendations for its internal quality development.

EAPAA was founded in 1999 as an association under Dutch law and conducted its first accreditations in 2002. In this decade it has accredited 41 programmes in various countries in Europe (SER p. 12 and listed in Appendix 23 pp. 175-177). Its desire to ask experts to advise on its strengths and weaknesses comes at a time of change for the agency. It has changed its statutes, effective 1 January 2011, resulting in a different membership and management structure. Moreover, in September 2013, its long-term Secretary General is retiring and a new one is taking his place. EAPAA has taken advantage of its self-evaluation process by exploring its weaknesses and the challenges to be dealt with in the future. They are summarised in its SER (p. 5) as follows,

- “EAPAA will focus in future more explicitly on competences and learning outcomes
- EAPAA should aim for a greater coverage of public administration programmes in Europe
- EAPAA should be more active in undertaking regular and systematic self-assessments”.

The external evaluation described in this report focuses on the remit to check for EAPAA’s compliance with the international standards and the agency’s internal operations as a whole. The fruitful self-evaluation process of EAPAA underlines its responsibility for ensuring its own quality, reflecting the integration of the principles promoted by the Ministers of Education in their Berlin Communiqué of 2003, namely that higher education institutions hold the primary responsibility for their own quality. The evaluation by an external team of experts (hereafter: review team) serves as an additional instrument

¹ The terms “external evaluation”, “external review”, or just “evaluation”, “review” are used interchangeably without difference in meaning, unless otherwise specified

² 3rd edition, 2009

³ Part 2: external quality assurance of higher education, reviewing the internal quality assurance practices of higher education institutions set down in Part 1, Part 3: quality assurance of external quality assurance agencies

⁴ 2007

toward the improvement of quality by providing a broader perspective of analysis of the agency's operations. Therefore, this report describes and analyses EAPAA's compliance with each of the international standards, taking the ESG as a basis and grouped together with relevant GGP. In order to fulfil the third part of its remit, the review team comments on various quality issues related to EAPAA's operations and its situation within the quality assurance landscape in Europe the course of its analysis. With a few key recommendations at the end of its report the review team would like to assist EAPAA in further developing its operations.

The Review Process

With the remit of the review to evaluate EAPAA against two, although for the most part comparable, sets of standards, the evaluation described in this report was conducted along the lines set down in

- the ESG Parts 2 and 3
- the GGP of INQAAHE
- the Recommendations for External Reviews of EQAR
- the Guide for Applicants by EQAR
- the Manual for INQAAHE Review Service.

EAPAA is an international quality assurance agency, which conducts its processes and procedures mostly in English. This was hence the language of the entire external evaluation.

The information gathered by the review team was based on the SER of EAPAA (55 pages, and 214 pages of 27 appendices), and the site visit, conducted on 9-10 September 2013, which served to corroborate the information and to clarify issues. The visit was held in Edinburgh on request of EAPAA, which held its annual conference here at this time and was attended by many of the persons to be interviewed. Others were invited to Edinburgh specifically for the site-visit interview. During the visit the review team met the EAPAA self-evaluation team; members of its Board; the bureau manager, outgoing and incoming secretary general; representatives of EAPAA's constituent organisations; the EAPAA Accreditation Committee; representatives of programmes reviewed by EAPAA; representatives of members of EAPAA Site Visit Teams; representatives of students/graduates of programmes accredited by EAPAA; and representatives of other stakeholders. The full schedule of the site visit and groups and persons interviewed are attached to this report as **Annex 2**.

All members of the review team had extensive and international experience in quality evaluation and quality assurance. The Curricula Vitae were provided to the review coordinator. The review team members were

- Guy Haug, chair – expert in higher education strategy, Valencia University of Technology, Spain
- Allan Rosenbaum, academic expert – director of the Institute for Public Management at Florida International University, USA
- Delia Gologan, student expert – studies in pharmacy and political science (master), General Secretary of ANOSR, member of ARACIS and ESU pools

- Christina Rozsnyai, secretary – programme officer for foreign affairs, Hungarian Accreditation Committee, Secretary General of CEENQA.

Additional details about the review team are presented in **Annex 3**.

The review team met before and several times during the site visit to agree on its questions and assessments. It presented its main findings at the end of the site visit to a large audience, representing most of the interview groups.

After the visit, the review team secretary drafted the review report based on the discussions and conclusions of the team. Review team members then contributed to the draft and agreed on the final version. The review team sent this version to EAPAA to check for factual errors. Their statement is attached to this report as **Annex 4**. The corrections were incorporated into the present report. The conclusions and recommendations reflect the consensus of the review team.

Self-Evaluation Process

EAPAA describes the self-evaluation process in its SER (pp. 6-7). It began in 2012 with a discussion in the EAPAA Board at their annual meeting, at which they identified the main issues. Based on the discussions a self-evaluation team was set up. The Secretary General drafted the SER in ongoing consultation with the team and prepared the review team site visit. The Board and the EAPAA Accreditation Committee members were sent the draft SER for comments, which were integrated into a second draft. The constituent members of EAPAA as well as “all accredited and interested programmes” were asked to comment, before the SER was finalised.

The members of the self-evaluation team is listed in the SER (p. 6),

- “Prof. Christoph Reichard EAPAA chair and em. professor University of Potsdam, Germany;
- Prof. Arthur Ringeling EAPAA Accreditation Committee chair and em. professor Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands;
- Prof. Taco Brandsen EAPAA secretary-general from September 2013, professor Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands;
- Dr. Theo van der Krogt EAPAA secretary-general till September 2013 and em. associate professor University of Twente, Enschede, the Netherlands”.

The SER contains both descriptive and analytical parts and reflections of EAPAA’s strengths and weaknesses. Each criterion of correspondence with ESGs and GGP, is analysed and a judgment on compliance as well as possible action to be taken are provided. At the end of the SER, EAPAA provides an overview of what it sees to be its strengths and weaknesses. The chapters of the SER follow largely those seen in the present review report (exceptions are marked).

Context of the Review

EAPAA MISSION AND SCOPE

EAPAA was founded on the initiative of “a group of public administration programmes from various European countries...” (SER p. 9). Two public administration organisations, the European Group for Public Administration (EGPA) and the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee), were behind the idea. Consequently, its scope is the accreditation of programmes in public administration. Specifically,

“EAPAA accredits only academic level bachelor and master degree programmes in public administration (including public policy and public management) in Europe (defined as all member states of the Council of Europe) and the so called CIS Countries who are not member of the Council of Europe (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)” (SER p. 12)

The types of programmes that can apply for accreditation with EAPAA are specified (SER p. 14) as

- “ first cycle bachelor level public administration programmes (3 or 4 years)
- second cycle graduate/master level public administration programmes (1 or 2 years)
- combined/comprehensive public administration programmes (4 or 5 years, combining bachelor and master programme)⁴
- executive/mid career public administration master programmes (1 or 2 years)“

EAPAA accreditation is conducted in a peer review process, with students and employers included in visiting teams. Its geographic range corresponds to that of EAPAA’s parent organisations EGPA and NISPAcee. Research is part of the evaluation criteria only with respect to the assessment of the qualifications of academic staff and the state-of-the-art of the curriculum. As EAPAA is transnational, it is not governed by a public authority or legal framework as a national agency would. Moreover, accreditation by EAPAA is voluntary. It follows that EAPAA activities are standardised for all evaluations, regardless of the country where the evaluated programme is operating. In case of international programmes, EAPAA may adapt its procedures if needed.

The mission, as set down in the SER (p. 11) describes the agency as follows.

“The European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA)

- promotes the quality of European academic level public administration programmes by developing appropriate accreditation standards for such programmes through its Accreditation Committee,
- encourages curriculum development and innovation,
- provides a forum for discussion on quality and accreditation, and
- assures the quality of European Public Administration programmes by accrediting programmes when they apply for this accreditation.”

EAPAA IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

As EAPAA is an international organisation, it seeks to ensure and maximise its international embeddedness. The two major European public administration organisations EGPA and NISPAcee were behind the establishment of EAPAA and are its statutory members, thereby ensuring EAPAA's reach. Its annual meetings are organised in cooperation with the professional organisations, where EAPAA arranges workshops on focus areas both to increase its visibility and to broaden the knowledge in the field at large of its members and experts (SER p. 12). Nevertheless, EAPAA recognises, as noted earlier, that it "should aim for a greater coverage of Public Administration programmes in Europe" (SER p. 5). The volume of 41 accredited programmes over a span of eleven years certainly seems to justify this view, which pertains also to the geographic coverage of EAPAA work. It is mentioned repeatedly in the SER (e.g. p. 27),

"EAPAA ideally should have accredited at least one public administration programme in the most important countries of its domain. This criterion is not fulfilled so far; there are important lacunas (especially with respect to southern Europe, the UK, Scandinavia, and the CIS-countries region)."

EAPAA aims to fulfil this strategic goal by being active internationally. In addition to its affiliation with the two European professional organisations and arranging regular meetings in concordance with those of the professional organisations in the field, the agency is a member of INQAAHE, the European Alliance for Subject-Specific and Professional Accreditation and Quality Assurance (EASPA) and affiliated with its US partner, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administrations (NASPAA). It is also a member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CEENQA) and was for two years a candidate member of the European Association of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), where it plans to apply for full membership at an appropriate moment in the future⁵.

EAPAA believes that it has a competitive edge in offering a review process with an international range and international expertise. Moreover, it is highly cost-effective, with a lean part-time staff of three and limited evaluation costs: evaluated programmes pay an evaluation fee to EAPAA and reimburse experts' travel and accommodation expenses, but experts are not being paid a fee or a per-diem for their work (SER p. 33 and elsewhere). Its first-time application to EQAR is considered an important step in fulfilling its strategic goals.

EAPAA MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

EAPAA has revised its statutes, effective 1 January 2011, for the purpose of raising the independence and sustainability (SER p. 10) of the organisation⁶. While earlier, its membership consisted of individual programmes in public administration, now EGPA and NISPAcee are the two corporate members. With this, EAPAA seeks to avoid a conflict of interest in virtually accrediting its own members. Earlier members remain as "affiliates". Having implemented the structural change in membership underlines

⁵ Mentioned in the SER (p. 12 and elsewhere), EAPAA originally sought to seek ENQA membership as another remit of this current review, but as ENQA now requires that it coordinate reviews for its members itself, EAPAA has postponed this plan.

⁶ Both the old and new statutes are provided in the appendices to the SER, Appendices 3 and 1 respectively.

EAPAA's commitment to independence in its accreditation decisions, highlighted by the fact that EAPAA has denied accreditation to members when these were still higher education institutions with public administration programmes. The two corporate members delegate persons to the General Meeting and each nominates two of the five Board members, the fifth being the chair who is recommended by the Board (SER Appendix 1, p. 9).

Actual accreditation is conducted and overseen by an Accreditation Committee, which is fully independent from the rest of the organisation. It consists of "at least five members which are appointed by the committee itself" (SER p. 33). Their duty is to organise and decide on all accreditation matters, including standards and procedures. The Committee's members regularly participate in site visits. In such cases, the Committee member cannot participate in the discussion and decision-making on the case.

The EAPAA management structure thus "... consists of the following entities:

1. **General Meeting** The General Meeting is the assembly of the EAPAA members where all important decisions concerning the association are taken.
2. **Board** The Board is charged with the management of the Association. It prepares the General Meetings and is responsible for the association on a day-to-day basis within the limits of the policies and decisions of the General Meeting. The Board represents the association and it also is responsible for the functioning of the secretariat.
3. **Accreditation Committee** The Accreditation Committee is the (independent) entity that reviews all applications for (re-) accreditation. It also is responsible for the development and maintenance of the accreditation criteria and procedures. The Committee has a Presidium consisting of the chair, the vice-chair and another member of the Committee.
4. **Secretariat** The secretariat organises the work of the association on a day-to-day basis. It assists the Board and the Accreditation Committee in its work. The management of the secretariat is in the hands of the secretary-general. The secretary-general is the secretary of the Board and the Accreditation Committee.
5. **Advisory Panel** The Advisory Panel is the meeting of the affiliated institutions. During the meetings of the Advisory Panel the affiliated institutions are informed about developments within EAPAA and the accreditation world at large. The Advisory Panel can advise to the EAPAA Board and Accreditation Committee, upon invitation or uninvited, about all issues relevant to quality assurance and accreditation of public administration programmes in Europe" (SER p. 11).

The secretariat has a staff of three, all of them part-time. In addition to the secretary-general there is a deputy and a bureau manager.

Compliance with European Standards and Guidelines and INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice in Quality Assurance

The following chapter presents the evidence, analyses and conclusions of the review team to each of the ESG and GGP. The sequence of the sections, taken almost directly from the SER⁷, follows the ESG, to which the comparable GGP are added. Where this was not applicable, GGP are discussed separately. A table listing the INQAAHE sequence of the GGP in accordance with the Manual for INQAAHE Review Service is provided with the matching ESG to facilitate the decision-making by the INQAAHE Board in **Annex 1**.

To facilitate the review of the two sets of standards and guidelines, the SER sometimes subdivides a standard into several elements, which are indicated by letters next to the standard number. This ensures that all components of each set of standards and guidelines are deliberated.

The review team conclusions at the end of each set of standards were formulated in compliance with both the EQAR and INQAAHE guidelines. That is, EQAR asks for an “argued conclusion as to the agency’s substantial compliance”, whereas for INQAAHE, the team is asked to state “whether the EQAA meets each individual Guideline fully, substantially, partially, or fails to meet the Guideline”. The arguments to the conclusions are thus presented in the “Analysis” sections. The conclusions on substantial compliance are formulated in one of the INQAAHE categories, where **“fully compliant” and “substantially compliant” constitute substantial compliance** in the sense EQAR understands it, while the review team gave “partially compliant” judgements where it considered them appropriate, and argues in the respective “Analysis”, that there were aspects of the standard that EAPAA is in fact fulfilling, but not to a substantial degree.

ESG 2.1: USE OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

ESG 2.1	External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines. 1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance 1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards 1.3 Assessment of students 1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff 1.5 Learning resources and student support 1.6 Information systems 1.7 Public information
GGP 5.a	The EQAA recognises that institutional and programmatic quality and quality assurance are primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves;

⁷ The Review Panel decided to adopt the structure of the ESG/GGP used in the SER, with some exceptions. For reasons of clarity, the following ESG and GGP were grouped differently than that in the SER: GGP 8.b was added to ESG 2.3; GGP 9.d is discussed here not under the main heading of ESG Part 2 as in the SER but separately at the end of the standards, along with two other GGP with no matching ESG; GGP 10 referring to appeals is listed in the SER under a separate heading of Accountability Procedures, but added to ESG 3.7 d here. Separate ENQA criteria listed in the SER were omitted in this report.

GGP 5.b	The EQAA respects the academic autonomy, identity and integrity of the institutions or programmes;
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ESG GUIDELINES

The standards for internal quality assurance contained in Part 1 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. It is important that the institutions' own internal policies and procedures are carefully evaluated in the course of external procedures, to determine the extent to which the standards are being met.

If higher education institutions are to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance processes, and if those processes properly assure quality and standards, then external processes might be less intensive than otherwise.

Evidence

Several EAPAA documents, including the Accreditation Committee Standing Orders, the basic document governing the independent decision-making body on accreditation, and the Accreditation Criteria developed by the Committee, demonstrate the requirement that the criteria must adhere to the ESG. The Accreditation Committee has hence developed its accreditation criteria deliberately in line with the ESG. EAPAA reflects its presumption of the institution's responsibility for its own quality in its criteria and procedures. The EAPAA approach to accreditation is emphatically mission-based, taking into consideration what a programme would like to accomplish, as seen in the criteria and noted repeatedly by EAPAA constituents in the site visit interview.

A table of EAPAA criteria as comparable to the ESG was presented in the SER (p. 19) as follows,

ESG		EAPAA criteria	
1.1	Policy and procedures for quality assurance	5.2	Mission-based accreditation
		5.6	Quality improvement and innovation
1.2	Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards	5.2	Mission-based accreditation
		5.6.2	Curriculum development
		5.11	Supportive services and facilities
1.3	Assessment of students	5.7	Student assessment
1.4	Quality assurance of teaching staff	5.9	Faculty
1.5	Learning resources and student support	5.11	Supportive services and facilities
		5.12	Student services
1.6	Information systems	5.6.1	Programme accomplishment
1.7	Public information	5.13	Public relations

A detailed comparison is provided in SER Appendix 25 (pp. 187-194), which includes the elaboration of the EAPAA criterion together with "checkpoints" for the visiting team.

Analysis

The review team was able to ascertain from the interviews with visiting team members and evaluated programme representatives that the EAPAA criteria for accreditation are followed. Evaluations look at compliance with each criterion and ensure that each is reviewed in depth, a score is given by the visiting team for each. At the same time they are to keep in mind substantial compliance with the quality and

adherence to the mission of the programme overall, allowing for a certain degree of flexibility in consideration of the unique aspects of a programme.

EAPAA is a subject-specific accreditation agency and conducts its evaluations with a strong input from public administration experts from various countries. While the same criteria are applicable to all programmes, they are explicitly subject-oriented (in accordance with the various fields falling under the broad umbrella of “Public Administration”) and experts reviewing the programme certify that the professionally accepted requirements for public administration are ensured by the programme.

Conclusion

Fully compliant

ESG 2.2: DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

ESG 2.2	The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.
GGP 5.c	The EQAA applies standards or criteria that have been subject to reasonable consultation with stakeholders
GGP 6	The EQAA has documents that indicate clearly what the EQAA expects of the institution. Those expectations (which may for example be called standards or factors or precepts) are appropriate for the core activities of an institution of higher education or programme. The standards should explicitly address all areas of institutional activity that fall within the EQAA’s scope, such as teaching, learning, research, community work, etc. and necessary resources such as finances, staff/faculty, and learning resources. Standards may refer to specific areas, levels of achievement, relative benchmarking and types of measures, and may provide general guidelines. They may also include specific learning goals.
GGP 7.a	The documentation concerning self-evaluation explains to the institutions of higher education the purposes, procedures, processes and expectations in the self-evaluation process. The documents also include the standards used, the decision criteria, the reporting format, and other information needed by the higher education institution.

ESG GUIDELINES

In order to ensure clarity of purpose and transparency of procedures, external quality assurance methods should be designed and developed through a process involving key stakeholders, including higher education institutions. The procedures that are finally agreed should be published and should contain explicit statements of the aims and objectives of the processes as well as a description of the procedures to be used.

As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of higher education institutions.

Evidence

EAPAA has a number of documents governing accreditation, which are published on the agency website. The documents were developed over the course of EAPAA’s ten-year activity and have been refined several times. As the agency’s governing bodies are constituted by the main organisations in the field of public administration, the criteria and procedures were developed in close cooperation with the field and

are kept up to date with developments in the public administration profession at national and international level..

The documents elaborate the evaluation process and requirements in a useful way for both evaluators and visiting team members, explaining the context and functions of the process as well as the stages of the procedures.

Analysis

The review team was able to ascertain that EAPAA has a well developed set of documents guiding the evaluation and accreditation process, both for evaluators and the evaluated programmes. The documents are clear and cover the whole process, from application to decision-making.

EAPAA as an organisation is deeply embedded in the field of public administration through its ongoing contact with its constituent bodies. In fact, it was these bodies that originally conceived of the need for an accrediting agency in the field. Thus there is ongoing dialogue with respect to what constitutes good public administration education and what the criteria for its evaluation are. EAPAA meetings are scheduled during the annual conferences of its member associations: Board and Accreditation Council meetings coincide with the EGPA conference in the fall and EAPAA meetings and training workshops are held both then and at the time of the NISPAcee conference in the spring. These combined events provide a forum for discussion about developments in the field and the appropriateness of the existing criteria and procedures.

On the other hand, students and practitioners, although included in the visiting teams, are not involved in the development of criteria and procedures – except indirectly, since from this year the Accreditation Council includes a representative from the professional world. While the criteria include all the student-related standards and site visits check these in line with the criteria, the dominant view of evaluated programmes is from an academic perspective. The review team believes that a stronger input from students and practitioners into the process (e.g.: on the curricula, the student-centred learning methods, assessment correlated with learning outcomes etc.) would benefit the development of public administration education and quality assurance through EAPAA’s accreditation work.

Conclusion

Substantially compliant

ESG 2.3: CRITERIA FOR DECISIONS

ESG 2.3	Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.
GGP 4.b	This includes full and clear disclosures of its relevant documentation such as policies, procedures and criteria.
GGP 4.e	If the external evaluation leads to a decision about the higher education institution or programme, the procedures applied and the criteria for decision-making are public, and the criteria for review are transparent, public, and ensure equality of treatment.

GGP 8.b	The EQAA also has specifications on the characteristics, selection and training of reviewers. The EQAA's system must ensure that each institution or programme will be evaluated in an equivalent way, even if the external panels, teams, or committees (together, the "external panels") are different.
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ESG GUIDELINES

Formal decisions made by quality assurance agencies have a significant impact on the institutions and programmes that are judged. In the interests of equity and reliability, decisions should be based on published criteria and interpreted in a consistent manner. Conclusions should be based on recorded evidence and agencies should have in place ways of moderating conclusions, if necessary.

Evidence

EAPAA is an accreditation agency, and as such its decisions are formal. The criteria for evaluation and decisions and the accreditation procedures are set down in a set of documents. These are

- Accreditation Criteria
- Accreditation Procedures
- Self-Evaluation Guidelines
- Accreditation Application Form
- Declaration of Independence
- Accreditation Logo Guidelines
- Site visit Manual
- Site Visit Report Template
- Site Visit Report Scoring Form

All the documents are public and can be downloaded from the EAPAA website. In the accreditation process, the EAPAA Secretariat and, when necessary, also the Accreditation Committee consult with the applicant to clarify the documentation and information needed for the evaluation, and may ask for additional information after the programme has submitted its SER.

The EAPAA accreditation process calls for an evaluation by a visiting team. The Accreditation Committee Standing Orders state that visiting team members must be from another country than the programme assessed and they must be trained or have relevant experience in evaluation.

The team is asked to write a report of the analysis of the programmes' compliance with each criterion and score it as to the degree of its compliance, using the Scoring Form. The Accreditation Committee making the accreditation decision based on the visiting team report and score is not bound by the score, however, but is free to change the initial score based on evidence in the report as well as for sake of consistency with decisions on other programmes. The score proposed by the visiting team is not made public, but the final score, issued by the Accreditation Committee, is published as part of the final decision by the Accreditation Committee and along with a short report summarising the entire evaluation procedure..

EAPAA may reach different accreditation decisions,

- accreditation for 7 years;
- conditional accreditation for maximum 3 years, with stated conditions that can be expected to be fulfilled by the set time;
- postponement of accreditation for a maximum of 1 year, when the programme does not fulfil the requirements but may do so in that time;
- no accreditation.

Depending on a programme's stage of development, accreditation decisions may grant

- full accreditation for programmes who have two cohorts of graduates;
- "peer approved" for new programmes that have been designed but are not yet fully implemented;
- pre-accreditation for programmes that have been running but do not have two cohorts of graduates as yet.

Various aspects of the accreditation criteria have been changed several times, but EAPAA has a clear rule that those criteria are applicable that were in effect at the time of a programme's application for accreditation. All documents are available on the agency website.

Analysis

The review team found that EAPAA has clear and explicit documentation for its accreditation criteria and procedures. They were provided in the appendices to the SER.

EAPAA tries to ensure consistency of its decisions by several means. While visiting teams are asked to score the fulfilment of the accreditation criteria by the evaluated programme in their report, the Accreditation Committee reserves the right to change any score or overall judgments in order to ensure consistency with previous decisions. For sake of professionalism as well as consistency, visiting teams should always include a member who has participated in an earlier evaluation, and the visiting team is usually chaired by one of the members of the Accreditation Committee. In order to ensure that the team understands the national and legislative context and has a first-hand understanding of the applicant's documents, at least one of the members of the visiting team is able to read and understand the language of the programme.

On the other hand, the review team was concerned with the frequent changes in the various documents used in accreditation. EAPAA explained that these were generally minor changes that served to keep the criteria and procedures in line with developments in the field, or to improve them where they found it necessary. Moreover, that the criteria in effect at the time of the application for accreditation by a programme apply to the given accreditation. This was confirmed by representatives of accredited programmes, who confirmed that they had perfect knowledge of the criteria that would be used to assess them. Nevertheless, the review team believes that EAPAA could develop a concept and strategy for implementing changes in a more methodical manner to ensure full consistency and transparency of its evaluations.

Conclusion

Substantially compliant

ESG 2.4: PROCESSES FIT FOR PURPOSE

ESG 2.4	All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.
GGP 9.A	The EQAA evaluations address both the higher education institution's own self-assessment and external reference points, such as judgments by knowledgeable peers or relevant legislation.

ESG GUIDELINES

Quality assurance agencies within the EHEA undertake different external processes for different purposes and in different ways. It is of the first importance that agencies should operate procedures which are fit for their own defined and published purposes. Experience has shown, however, that there are some widely-used elements of external review processes which not only help to ensure their validity, reliability and usefulness, but also provide a basis for the European dimension to quality assurance.

Amongst these elements the following are particularly noteworthy:

- insistence that the experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task;
- the exercise of care in the selection of experts;
- the provision of appropriate briefing or training for experts;
- the use of international experts;
- participation of students;
- ensuring that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached;
- the use of the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/follow-up model of review;
- recognition of the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

Evidence

The EAPAA accreditation process considers the mission and profile of the programme, while adhering to EAPAA's basic quality criteria. EAPAA explicitly pays attention to the need to accommodate differences in the national contexts and legislations and can therefore adapt its procedures and guidelines for the self-evaluation without compromising the core of its quality evaluation. Guidelines ensure that visiting team members are selected who have the appropriate knowledge in the field of public administration and the skills for conducting the evaluation. In addition, visiting team members have the opportunity to participate in the annual training provided in conjunction with the annual meetings of the constituent organisations and EAPAA. The Accreditation Committee Standing Orders set down that visiting team members must either receive training or have experience in evaluation. In fact, EAPAA takes care to assemble visiting teams that include at least one member who is experienced in evaluations. The Site Visit Manual provides extensive information for visiting teams, including guidelines and techniques for conducting interviews with various groups.

The fact that experts are selected from a professional field by members of the field ensures that the team as a whole has professional and academic competence and reputation as peers. The rules for selection of visiting teams are set down in the Accreditation Committee Standing Orders (SER Appendix 6, p. 62). They may be proposed by EAPAA members or affiliates, the Board or the Accreditation Committee itself, but all experts are always appointed in a decision taken by the Accreditation Council. Visiting teams

include three public administration academic experts, a practitioner and a student. The academic members are from another country than the evaluated programme while the practitioner and student are from the country of the evaluated programme. Evaluations are conducted in English, German or French.

The criteria require the applicant programme to provide evidence that they are fulfilling their mission. The procedure for accreditation involves a SER, a site visit by the site visit team who draft a report, a published report by the Accreditation Committee with a summary of the programme, evidence, judgment and scores for criteria compliance. Public reports also include recommendations by the Accreditation Committee based on the recommendations of the visiting team.

Follow-up procedures include re-evaluations of conditions, if a conditional accreditation was given, or if an accredited programme reports major changes pursuant the accreditation requirements. Programmes are also asked to submit progress reports every two years.

As EAPAA activity is per se international, EAPAA may assess national criteria in addition to its own if the programme requests it in order to use EAPAA accreditation to fulfil the national accreditation requirement.

Analysis

The review team found that EAPAA is flexible in its approach in a number of ways. EAPAA puts great emphasis in its documentation and approach on the mission of an evaluated programme, which was reflected repeatedly in the site visit interviews. Visiting team and Accreditation Committee members noted that while each of the accreditation criteria is always being scrutinised, the overall quality of the evaluated programme is considered in line with the objectives of the programme and the requirements of the profession. The review team heard in the interviews that, as compared with many other accrediting agencies, EAPAA requires only as much information by applicants as is necessary for decision-making. At the same time, EAPAA often asks for additional information if it considers it necessary.

Combining visiting team training with the annual meetings is both cost-effective and ensures the synergy of the experts with the professional bodies in the field. However, the interviews reflected the lack of strict procedures – part of an internal quality assurance culture – regarding the training of the experts, their permanent updating on information or specific supervision of their performance during an evaluation by the EAPAA secretariat or Accreditation Committee. The academic members of the visiting teams are generally renowned experts in public administration. Students are recruited from the field as well. The choice of students has been discussed in the interviews, given that EAPAA has used graduates in the past if a current student (not belonging to the programme) could not be found. Moreover, EAPAA requests the programme to suggest three students (or graduates) as potential members of the site-visit team and then chooses one of them. The review team was told that in accordance with the change of statutes, EAPAA now looks to local or international student organisations to recommend a student for a team and is doing its best to use only current students.

The provision in EAPAA rules that visiting team members are to participate in training or have experience in evaluation in the field was discussed between the review team and several interview groups. The review team concluded that training was not as stringently required as could be expected. On the other hand, the agency is a profession-specific accreditation agency and ensures that it works only with academics who

have experience in the field. As was noted before, this does not apply to the student or practitioner member. However, a pre-visit briefing is part of the standard procedure.

Conclusion

Substantially compliant

ESG 2.5: Reporting

ESG 2.5	Reports should be published and should be written in a style, which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.
GQP 4.c	The EQAA also demonstrates public accountability by reporting its decisions about higher education institutions and programmes.
GQP 4.d	The content and extent of reporting may vary with cultural context and applicable legal and other requirements.
GQP 9.c	The EQAA's reported decisions are clear and precise.

ESG GUIDELINES

In order to ensure maximum benefit from external quality assurance processes, it is important that reports should meet the identified needs of the intended readership. Reports are sometimes intended for different readership groups and this will require careful attention to structure, content, style and tone.

In general, reports should be structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations, and recommendations. There should be sufficient preliminary explanation to enable a lay reader to understand the purposes of the review, its form, and the criteria used in making decisions. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by readers.

Reports should be published in a readily accessible form and there should be opportunities for readers and users of the reports (both within the relevant institution and outside it) to comment on their usefulness.

Evidence

EAPAA publishes the accreditation reports of the Accreditation Committee, These are based on the visiting team reports, with evidence, accreditation score and explanations and the accreditation decision. The reports by the visiting team follow a report template, while the secretariat compiles a standard-format accreditation report on the basis of the Accreditation Committee decision, comments and recommendations.

The reports are clearly structured and accessible to the intended readers. Only positive accreditation decisions are published.

Analysis

The reports fulfil the fundamental requirements in that the reports are accessible for the intended readership and provide information about the quality of the evaluated programme. Accreditation reports published by EAPAA contain the essential information about a programme's compliance with the criteria and an explanation of the decision. Nevertheless the review team believes that the publication of the full visiting team report, with the scores and judgment of the Accreditation Committee, would add to transparency of the process and provide students and the public with full information about the programme and its quality. The current reports do not publish all the recommendations of the visiting team either. EAPAA comments in its SER (p. 25) that a reconsideration of this practice might be in order "so the positive characteristics of the programme become public more clearly".

The review team was also wondering about the EAPAA practice of not publishing negative decisions. It believes that in the interest of transparency the quality of programme should be publicly accessible.

Conclusion

Substantially compliant

ESG 2.6: Follow-up procedures

ESG 2.6	Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.
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ESG GUIDELINES

Quality assurance is not principally about individual external scrutiny events: It should be about continuously trying to do a better job. External quality assurance does not end with the publication of the report and should include a structured follow-up procedure to ensure that recommendations are dealt with appropriately and any required action plans drawn up and implemented. This may involve further meetings with institutional or programme representatives. The objective is to ensure that areas identified for improvement are dealt with speedily and that further enhancement is encouraged.

Evidence

EAPAA has several follow-up procedures. The Accreditation Committee Standing Orders (SER Appendix 6, p. 65) require programmes to submit a status report every two years. If a programme receives conditional accreditation, a deadline is given for meeting the conditions at which time the Accreditation Committee reviews them, often with a site visit. A site visit is required also for a re-accreditation procedure, where earlier recommendations are always considered.

Recommendations are made in accreditation reports with the primary aim of assisting programmes in improving their quality. Conditionally accredited programmes will be required to respond to these recommendations while fully accredited programmes do not necessarily have to do so. However, at the time of the re-accreditation, the Accreditation Committee will inform itself about what the programme has done with the recommendations.

Analysis

EAPAA tailors its follow-up procedure to the severity of its findings. In addition to reviews of conditions fulfilled and tracking the programme via biennial reports, EAPAA accompanies a programme in the early stages from “peer-approved” to pre-accredited to fully accredited status, with several consultations. The following up of a programme’s quality is thus an ongoing process.

In spite of the various follow-up practices, EAPAA notes in its SER (p. 26) that it needs to document its follow-up in its guidelines and criteria. The review team encourages EAPAA to do so. In addition, the review team suggests increasing the weight of the follow-up procedures by assigning the checking of conditions directly to the Accreditation Committee, rather than via the Secretary General, as is the current practice.

Conclusion

Fully compliant

ESG 2.7: Periodic reviews

ESG 2.7	External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.
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ESG GUIDELINES

Quality assurance is not a static but a dynamic process. It should be continuous and not “once in a lifetime”. It does not end with the first review or with the completion of the formal follow-up procedure. It has to be periodically renewed. Subsequent external reviews should take into account progress that has been made since the previous event. The process to be used in all external reviews should be clearly defined by the external quality assurance agency and its demands on institutions should not be greater than are necessary for the achievement of its objectives.

Evidence

Full accreditation by EAPAA is granted for seven years. As EAPAA accreditation is not mandatory, request for re-accreditation is left up to the programme. The accreditation status is lost after this time, however, and the reputation of the programme and of EAPAA are the leverage for a cyclical repetition of the accreditation process.

Analysis

The accreditation is given for a set period of time, but a seven year period seems to the review team to be too long for a stringent quality control. The review team recognises that the biennial reporting requirement allows EAPAA to track a programme’s progress but would recommend the agency to reduce the time limit. The common period in Europe is re-accreditation in five or six years.

The review team noted that a number of accredited programmes have not sought re-accreditation in the past. In the site visit it was told that this may be due to the fact that EAPAA’s is a voluntary accreditation, the person in charge at the higher education institution may have changed or the current economic crisis limits the flexibility of a programme within an institution to allocate funding for the process. The review team believes that EAPAA should look into this issue and there is room for improvement with regard to the visibility of EAPAA. It appreciates that EAPAA recognises this and is taking measures to strengthen its reach and reputation.

Conclusion

Fully compliant

ESG 2.8: System-wide analyses

ESG 2.8	Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.
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ESG GUIDELINES

All external quality assurance agencies collect a wealth of information about individual programmes and/or institutions and this provides material for structured analyses across whole higher education systems. Such analyses can provide very useful information about developments, trends, emerging good practice and areas of persistent difficulty or weakness and can become useful tools for policy development and quality enhancement. Agencies should consider including a research and development function within their activities, to help them extract maximum benefit from their work.

Evidence

The SER, (p. 27) acknowledges that “EAPAA has not produced such system-wide analyses”. It argues that it first needs to have enough experience in the accreditation of public administration programmes and, “ideally should have accredited at least one public administration programme in the most important countries of its domain”.

Analysis

In the discussions in the site visit, the review team discussed the issue of system-wide analysis with several interview groups. It concludes that EAPAA is, in fact, very much embedded in the field of public administration through its constituent organisations, and in constant dialogue about the improvement of the quality of public administration education. A working group of EGPA and NISPAcee follows the educational developments, in which discussions EAPAA takes and active part. In addition, the review team learned that a research project on the subject, to be conducted in collaboration with the Secretary General, is in the preparatory phase. The review team acknowledges the commitment of EAPAA to alleviate this shortcoming. The review team, in fact, believes that such analyses would increase the visibility and reputation of EAPAA.

Conclusion

Not compliant

ESG 3.1: Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education

ESG 3.1	The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.
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ESG GUIDELINES:

The standards for external quality assurance contained in Part 2 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experiences gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education institutions.

The standards for external quality assurance should together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies constitute the basis for professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

Evidence

EAPAA conducts its external evaluation and accreditation activities, and has criteria and processes in line with the ESG. Appendix 25 to its SER (pp. 187-194) provides a detailed comparison between the ESG Part 1 and the EAPAA accreditation criteria together with checkpoints for the visiting team.

The standards in ESG 2 covering additional activities and features are fulfilled to various degrees, as described above, with the exception of 2.8.

Conclusion

Fully compliant

ESG 3.2: Official status

ESG 3.2	Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.
GGP 1.d	The ownership and governance structure is appropriate for the objectives of the agency.
GGP 4.a	The EQAA informs and responds to the public in accordance with applicable legislation and the cultural context of the EQAA.

Evidence

EAPAA was founded under Dutch law in 1999 and conducts accreditation since 2002. It is a non-profit association registered by the Chamber of Commerce in Enschede, The Netherlands. A copy of the registration was supplied in the SER (Appendix 2, pp. 17-20). The copy is dated 19.1.2011.

The EAPAA General Assembly voted for a change in its membership structure and hence new Statutes in late 2010. The decision was taken because EAPAA wanted to attain “a more visibly independent position” (SER p. 10) from the programmes that it accredits. According to the old Statutes, the constituent members were institutions with public administration programmes. The new members are the two European public administration networks, EGPA and NISPAcee. Although there is no reference to “affiliate members” in the new Statutes, EAPAA uses this term to refer to institutions offering public administration programmes, including those who were members before 2011, the majority of them with programmes accredited by EAPAA. Both the old and new Statutes were provided in the SER Appendices 3 (pp. 21-29) and 1 (pp. 5-14), respectively.

Analysis

EAPAA is legally established European accreditation agency in the field of public administration, and has conducted over 40 programme accreditations in just more than a decade. It is not legislated by a national authority that governs its operations; rather, they are regulated by EAPAA Statutes and recognised in the public administration community in Europe and beyond. The review team would like to point out that the European Commission Report on Progress in Quality Assurance in European Higher Education of 2009⁸ already regretted a shortage of European/international accreditation initiatives in specific disciplines/professional fields and called for the strengthening of this “second pillar” of quality assurance, next to the already better established networks of nationally-based, generalist agencies.

In the case of international agencies, the definition of “competent authorities” is different than with national agencies. The review team suggests that the acceptance and reputation of an agency in the disciplinary/professional community it serves could be a good alternative for recognising it as competent. Precedents for agencies accepted in this way exist (e.g. the International Evaluation Programme of EUA or the European Council on Chiropractic Education ECCE).

EAPAA is recognised as a competent accreditation agency by its peer organisations. These include not only EGPA, which is part of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) and NISPAcee,

⁸ Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Report on progress in quality assurance in higher education. Brussels, 2009. p. 9

but also NASPAA, its American counterpart. EAPAA is also a founding member in EASPA, the European Alliance for Subject-Specific and Professional Accreditation and Quality Assurance, and is a member of INQAAHE and CEENQA.

If a programme seeks accreditation that is legally recognised in the country where it is running, EAPAA ads the relevant criteria and processes required by the local legislative requirements.

Conclusion

Substantially compliant

ESG 3.3: Activities

ESG 3.3	Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.
GGP 1.b	The statement explicitly provides that external quality assurance is a major activity of the EQAA, and it requires a systematic approach to achieving the mission or objectives of the EQAA.
GGP 5.d	The EQAA aims to contribute to both quality improvement and accountability of the institution.

ESG GUIDELINES:

These may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the agency.

Evidence

In accordance with its statutes, EAPAA's chief activity is the accreditation of bachelor and master programmes in public administration, including public policy and public management, in Europe. The geographic range covers the countries included in the two constituent member networks EGPA and NISPAcee (all member states of the Council of Europe and the CIS countries Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, SER p. 12). Until now, EAPAA has been conducting about four to six accreditations per year, including twelve joint assessments with the Dutch agency QANU, and one each with the Swiss agency OAQ and the Estonian agency EKKA (SER p. 32).

The decision-making body on accreditation is an independent Accreditation Committee, which develops its own procedures and criteria in accordance with the Accreditation Committee Standing Orders. EAPAA accreditations contribute to the accountability of evaluated programmes by publishing its decisions and to quality improvement by issuing recommendations and checking their implementation. Quality improvement is a declared goal of EAPAA, set down in its mission statement.

Analysis

The documentation and site-visit interviews make it clear for the review team that EAPAA is a fully-fledged accreditation agency. It discussed the question of the small volume of accreditation carried out. EAPAA is currently seeking to expand its activity to countries where it has not been active and to increase its visibility in order to consolidate the value of the EAPAA quality seal. At the same time it is evident to the review team that EAPAA is recognised among its peers as the only subject-specific, European

accreditation body for public administration. The review team also recognises that the field of public administration as such is limited in the number of higher education programmes that are being offered.

Conclusion

Fully compliant

ESG 3.4: Resources

ESG 3.4	Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures and staff ²¹
GGP 1.c	There is evidence that the statement of objectives is implemented pursuant to a practical management plan that is linked to EQAA resources.
GGP 2	The EQAA has adequate and accessible human and financial resources to conduct external evaluation effectively and efficiently in accordance with its mission statement and its methodological approach. The EQAA's resources are also adequate for the appropriate development of the agency.

Evidence

As noted, EAPAA conducts c.a. four to six accreditation procedures per year and charges an evaluation fee to the programme applying for accreditation. The income from accreditation is necessarily less than many other quality assurance agencies in Europe. Additional income for EAPAA, as decided according to the Statutes in the annual meeting of the General Assembly, comes from the membership fees of its two constituent organisations and thus indirectly from its affiliates. The General Assembly also approves the annual budget and strategy. The staff of EAPAA consists of the secretary general and the bureau manager, who both work part-time for EAPAA. A deputy secretary general position, unpaid, exists but is temporarily not active. All others, including peers and Board members, are not paid fees, but only get reimbursement for EAPAA-related expenses.

The review team was provided with EAPAA's budgets for 2011 and 2013 (SER Appendices 19 and 20, pp. 165-167, respectively). The budget is balanced and includes, in addition to modest fees for the officers, provisions for administration and overhead as well as travel, representation, etc. Incomes from accreditation paid by the applicant programmes cover largely the expenses of the individual procedure. A surplus was accrued from membership and accreditation fees that was earmarked for the present external review by INQAAHE and for EQAR registration. Total expenses for 2013 were €33,000 while income was €35,000.

Analysis

The limited volume of accreditations brings in a limited amount of income. On the other side, EAPAA is highly cost effective with a small staff. Much of the work done in the course of accreditation is based on the gratuitous contribution of peers. The peers interviewed in the site-visits were all of the opinion that participation in reviews contributes to their knowledge of the profession and contribution to the discipline, and students felt that it enhanced their CVs.

The review discussed at length the sustainability of EAPAA with the limited resources they have. EAPAA would like to increase its accreditation activity and is looking for means to brand itself more visibly. The review team acknowledges that the low figures in financial statements are probably misleading, because they do not reflect high in-kind contributions from corporate members and from evaluators. Yet, if the volume of activity were to increase, a larger and more sustainable budget would be needed. EAPAA does not have the resources now to conduct activities beyond the organisation of accreditation procedures, such as system-wide analyses; workshops to disseminate and multiply the evaluation results and suggestions in order to improve public administration education; projects to create clusters with professional representatives and raise the quality of practical training/internships offered to students and, on a long term, etc. Activities aimed at meeting these goals are nonetheless being organised, even though they may formally be part of EGPA and/or NISPACE, with whom EAPAA maintains a very close working relationship. The review team recommends that EAPAA seek ways to receive additional contributions from its constituent members. Contributions can take the form of financial payment as well as additional logistical support for the above mentioned initiatives or others.

The review team appreciates the dedication of the visiting team and EAPAA members interviewed to contribute to the work of EAPAA. It is somewhat concerned that the leverage EAPAA may have for requiring unpaid work and timely delivery from its experts may be difficult to sustain when the volume grows. Nonetheless, the culture of the public administration sector seems to be receptive to this kind of commitment, since NASPAA, the American counterpart of EAPAA, has been carrying out a large number of accreditation procedures over the past 40 years without paying a fee to evaluators, who see their participation rather as a contribution to the field.

Conclusion

Substantially compliant

ESG 3.5: Mission statement

ESG 3.5	Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.
GGP 1.a	The EQAA has a written mission statement or set of objectives that takes into account the cultural and historical context of the EQAA.

ESG GUIDELINES:

These statements should describe the goals and objectives of agencies’ quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of their work. The statements should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the agency and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statements are translated into a clear policy and management plan.

Evidence

EAPAA has a mission statement, adopted by its General Assembly. It is shown on its website and provided in the SER (pp. 34-35).

The European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA)

- promotes the quality of European academic level public administration programmes by developing appropriate accreditation standards for such programmes through its Accreditation Committee,
- encourages curriculum development and innovation,
- provides a forum for discussion on quality and accreditation, and
- assures the quality of European public administration programmes by accrediting programmes when they apply for this accreditation.

Analysis

The review team is convinced that EAPAA’s mission statement reflects its focus of activity and, conversely, that EAPAA carries out its activities in accordance with its mission. EAPAA in fact is a common forum for quality assurance of public administration education for the various networks in the field, and is thus a catalyser for debate at its annual forums.

Accordingly, it updates its strategy annually to answer the developments in the field. The review team has detected a need for a better transition between the mission statement, the strategic development plan and the annual operational plans, and supports EAPAA in its endeavour to “pay more attention to the achievement of strategic objectives” that it has itself identified in its SER (p. 35).

Conclusion

Fully compliant

ESG 3.6: Independence

ESG 3.6	Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.
GGP 9.b.	An EQAA must be independent, i.e. it has autonomous responsibility for its operations, and its The EQAA's decisions must be impartial, rigorous, thorough, fair, and consistent, even if the judgments are made by different panels. Consistency in decision-making includes consistency and transparency in processes and actions for imposing recommendations for follow-up action.

ESG GUIDELINES:

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts);
- the definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence;
- while relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

Evidence

EAPAA has separated itself as an organisation, with its own Statutes and legal registration, from the programmes it accredits in order to better demonstrate its independence. The Accreditation Committee is guaranteed independence in adopting its own by-laws, to be approved by the General Assembly, and selecting its members in EAPAA Statutes (Articles 5 and 6, SER Appendix 1, p. 7). Accreditation Committee members may not be Board members of EAPAA, and are “appointed on the basis of their personal capacities and actions, without assignment or consultation.” Accreditation Committee members who either live or work in the country from which a programme is applying for accreditation may not participate in the discussion or decision about the programme Accreditation Committee Standing Orders (Article 9.2, SER Appendix 6, pp. 59-66).

EAPAA has a number of provisions in place to ensure the independence of accreditation procedures. The Accreditation Committee Standing Orders state that visiting team members have to sign a declaration of independence (provided in SER Appendix 9, p. 103). The academic visiting team members are chosen from countries other than that where the programme operates.

Analysis

The review team has carefully checked in its site visit all points of possible vested interest and is convinced that EAPAA is fully independent organisationally, and its Accreditation Commission conducts all matters related to accreditation fully independently.

Conclusion

Fully compliant

ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies

Clarity and availability of documents

ESG 3.7.a	The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available.
GGP 4.e.	If the external evaluation leads to a decision about the higher education institution or programme, the procedures applied and the criteria for decision-making are public, and the criteria for review are transparent, public, and ensure equality of treatment.
GGP 6	The EQAA has documents that indicate clearly what the EQAA expects of the institution. Those expectations (which may for example be called standards or factors or precepts) are appropriate for the core activities of an institution of higher education or programme. The standards should explicitly address all areas of institutional activity that fall within the EQAA’s scope, such as teaching, learning, research, community work, etc. and necessary resources such as finances, staff/faculty, and learning resources. Standards may refer to specific areas, levels of achievement, relative benchmarking and types of measures, and may provide general guidelines. They may also include specific learning goals.
GGP 8.a	The EQAA has clear documentation concerning the external evaluation that states the standards used, assessment methods and processes, decision criteria, and other information necessary for external review.

Inclusion of self-evaluation and external peer review

ESG 3.7.b	These processes will normally be expected to include a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process These processes will normally be expected to include an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
GGP 7.b.	Typically, an EQAA review process includes a self-evaluation through self-study by the institution or programme, external peer review, and a follow-up procedure. As necessary and appropriate, the EQAA guides the institution or programme in the application of the procedures of the quality assurance process, such as self-evaluation, external review, or solicitation of assessment/feedback from the public, students, and other constituents.

Transparency of decisions and reports

ESG 3.7.c	These processes will normally be expected to include publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
GGP 4.e	If the external evaluation leads to a decision about the higher education institution or programme, the procedures applied and the criteria for decision-making are public, and the criteria for review are transparent, public, and ensure equality of treatment.

Follow-up procedures

ESG 3.7.d	These processes will normally be expected to include a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.
GGP 10	The EQAA has appropriate methods and policies for appeals. Appeals should be conducted by reviewers who were not responsible for the original decision and who have no conflict of interest, but appeals need not necessarily be conducted outside the EQAA.

ESG GUIDELINES:

Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes.

Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people.

Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions or conclusions which have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

Evidence**Clarity and availability of documents**

The documents underpinning accreditation were listed and discussed in section 2.3. The documents for applicant programmes, elaborated and adopted by the Accreditation Committee, are elaborate and clear. They may be downloaded from the EAPAA website and are provided to applicants on receipt of their application. Given that EAPAA accredits subject-specific programmes, the expectations from the programme are evident from the documents as well as the expertise of the peers in the field.

In evaluating bachelor and master programmes in public administration, EAPAA has a provision in its Accreditation Criteria that while adhering to the basic criteria, they may be adjusted to the programme level by the Accreditation Committee if the evaluation calls for it. EAPAA focuses on teaching and learning, finances, staff and learning outcomes. Research is taken into consideration with respect to the content of the programme, its curriculum and teaching staff qualifications. Community work is not considered relevant by EAPAA unless the mission or content of an individual programme calls for it.

Inclusion of self-evaluation and external peer review

EAPAA conducts its accreditation procedures in line with the ESG (see section 2.1). Self-evaluation reports are the basis of the evaluation, followed by a visit to the programme by a visiting team of usually two days, with a briefing the evening before day 1 (sample visit template in SER Appendix 13: Site Visit Manual, pp. 212-122). The site visits involve interviews with

- programme management
- department and/or faculty management
- teaching staff
- students
- graduates
- employers

and

- visit to facilities
- examination of student work.

The composition of a visiting team includes three international academic members, a practitioner/employer from the country of the applicant programme and a student (or a graduate, e.g. for executive programmes or in some cases when no current student can be identified). External peer review was discussed in section 2.4.

Transparency of decisions and reports

The outcome of all accreditation procedures is a report by the Accreditation Committee, based on the report of the visiting team. Reporting was discussed in section 2.5 above. Report templates are available for the visiting team, and the procedure is described in the visiting team manual. Decision-making is regulated in the Accreditation Committee Standing Orders.

Only reports on positive accreditation decisions are published.

Follow-up procedures

Follow-up procedures were discussed in detail in section 2.6. Accreditation with conditions is followed up on after the set deadline for fulfilling the conditions. Accredited programmes are expected to submit progress reports every two years.

EAPAA has an appeals procedure in place. The Accreditation Procedure article 9.4 stipulate that the applicant may, with submission of arguments, request the Accreditation Committee to reconsider its decision. Article 11 regulates appeals. The Accreditation Committee will invite “three renowned public administration academics” to review the appeal and advise the Accreditation Committee on whether to revise its decision or not (SER Appendix 5 pp. 49-50).

Analysis

The review team considers the clear and extensive documentation of EAPAA commendable. EAPAA considers itself a learning organisation, which is constantly developing with a profession that is itself developing. The documents allow room for the visiting team and Accreditation Committee to accommodate changes as well as the specific conditions of a programme.

Attention is paid to ensure consistency between reports over time on the level of the Accreditation Committee, with the provision that the scores in the visiting team reports are only suggestions, and these are not published or provided to the applicant programme.

Conclusion

Fully compliant

ESG 3.8: Accountability procedures

ESG 3.8	Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.
GGP 3	The EQAA has a system of continuous quality assurance of its own activities that emphasises flexibility in response to the changing nature of higher education, the effectiveness of its operations, and its contribution towards the achievement of its objectives. The EQAA conducts internal self-review of its own activities, including consideration of its own effects and value. The review includes data and analysis. The EQAA is subject to external reviews at regular intervals. There is evidence that any required actions are implemented and disclosed.
GGP 4.f	The EQAA also discloses to the public the decisions about the EQAA resulting from any external review of its own performance.

ESG GUIDELINES:

These procedures are expected to include the following:

1. A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;
2. Documentation which demonstrates that:
 - the agency’s processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts;
 - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;
 - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
3. A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency’s activities at least once every five years.

Evidence

The Accreditation Committee Standing Orders (Article 10, SER Appendix 6 pp. 65-66) call for the quality assurance of EAPAA’S quality assurance system in the form of evaluation forms, sent to the programme

evaluated and the site visit team after the accreditation decisions has been taken. The results are to be discussed by the Accreditation Committee at its next meeting. In addition, according to its Statutes EAPAA is to be evaluated by an external team every seven years. The first such evaluation is the current one. Results of two sets of surveys, from 2011 covering accreditations between 2007 and 2011 and from 2012, were provided in the SER with summaries and analyses of strong and weak points (Appendix 26 pp. 195-2013).

Informal procedures include the constant update of its criteria since EAPAA is embedded in the professional community via its constituent members and the annual joint meetings. In this respect, EAPAA receives ongoing professional feedback about its activities.

Analysis

EAPAA is a small organisation with limited resources. The operations of its own organisation are small and thus allow for informal checks of results via the peer community. The review team believes, however, that EAPAA could do more to comply with this standard and to formalise and improve its internal quality assurance in order to ensure transparency for its academic and professional community. This is another area in which the constituent organisations could provide assistance in e.g. by evaluating EAPAA processes. The current external evaluation and the internal preparations offer a good basis on which to build regular SWOT analyses and discussions on internal quality based on them in order to build internal permanent and cyclical procedures for guaranteeing the quality of daily activities.

The seven-year cycle is too long and does not comply with this provision in the ESG. EAPAA acknowledges that in its SER (p. 49).

Conclusion

Partially compliant

GGP without a matching ESG

Advice to government

GGP 9.d	When the EQAA advises the government or other public bodies, the decisions made by each agency should be made as independently as practicable.
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Evidence

Does not apply to EAPAA.

Contribution to the quality assurance community

GGP 11	The EQAA collaborates with other EQAAs, if possible, in areas such as exchange of good practices, capacity building, review of decisions, provision of transnational education, joint projects, and staff exchanges.
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Evidence

EAPAA is a founding member of EASPA and a member in the international quality assurance networks INQAAHE and CEENQA.

EAPAA has conducted joint evaluations with QANU, OAR and EKKA.

EAPAA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with its American counterpart NASPAA to both share information on procedures and activities and to coordinate accreditation activity, where possible, if there is an application by a programme seeking accreditation by both organisations.

The chair of the EAPAA Board, in collaboration with the Secretariat, is preparing a research project on the quality of public administration programmes (mentioned in section 2.8).

Analysis

EAPAA is embedded, both in organisation and through ongoing contact, in the professional community of public administration. In addition, it is a member of several quality assurance networks and has experience with joint accreditation, where its peers participated in joint reviews.

Conclusion

Fully compliant

Transnational/Cross-Border Higher Education

GGP 12	The EQAA has policies relating to both imported and exported higher education. These policies may be the same as those for domestic providers and domestic provision. In formulating its policies and practices, the EQAA should consider relevant guidelines issued by international agencies and other associations. All EQAAs should consult with appropriate local agencies in the exporting or importing countries, although this might not be possible or appropriate in situations such as those involving distance learning or small enrolment.
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Evidence

EAPAA is open to transnational programme evaluation and its criteria and procedures can accommodate it, with the possibility to adapt them for specific needs. The review team heard in the site visit, that EAPAA has actually carried out such a review only once, with a programme offered by a Dutch university and taught in Suriname. The panel was first surprised to find that in spite of EAPAA’s embedded international dimension, the agency never accredited any joint or double-degree programme; later, in the interviews, this was explained by the strongly national base of public administration programmes and also because until now no such programme ever asked for accreditation by EAPAA. This situation may, however, change in the near future, since it seems that a few joint/dual degree programmes have informed EAPAA that they are looking into the possibility of accreditation by EAPAA. When this happens, EAPAA should be fully equipped for dealing with such programmes.

Analysis

While EAPAA as an organisation is international, the programmes it accredits are not. EAPAA stated that its accreditation procedure is already open for transnational programmes, even though it has not yet received any application from, and has therefore not developed specific criteria for, such programmes. While recognising that there are few transnational programmes in the field of public administration, the review team recommends that EAPAA should build on its strength as a European-wide agency and take pro-active measures in this direction. The review team also recommends that EAPAA should think about a set of core criteria to add to its existing ones that are specific for cross-border programmes.

Conclusion

Partially compliant

Conclusion

EAPAA is fulfilling its aim of contributing to the improvement of the quality of higher education in public administration. Over forty programmes have sought the EAPAA quality seal over the course of its operations. The representatives of both the accredited programmes and the experts involved in accreditation have expressed their enthusiasm during the site visit interviews for EAPAA and its work. The two European public administration organisations and the U.S. accrediting body for the subject are in ongoing contact with EAPAA and support its organisation and operations. The review team was especially impressed by the professional quality of the EAPAA documents. Given the limited budget EAPAA has been working with, the review team is of the view that the agency has achieved great success in contributing to the improvement of the quality of public administration education, due to its professionalism, the dedication of its staff, members and evaluation teams. Respected members of the public administration community stand firmly behind EAPAA and have made themselves available to the review team for the site visit.

The review team hopes that the recommendations presented at the beginning of this report will help EAPAA to pinpoint its weaknesses while offering possible solutions to ameliorate them.

Annexes

Annex 1: The GGP Matched to the ESG

Annex 2: Review Visit Schedule

Annex 3: the Review Team

Annex 1: the GGP matched to the ESG

The following table is intended to facilitate its decision about EAPAA compliance to the GGP by the INQAAHE Board. The subdivisions of the GGP are shown in the numbering used in this review report.

The grouping follows that contained in this report (which differs slightly from that provided in the SER).

GGP		ESG	
GGP 1.a	The EQAA has a written mission statement or set of objectives that takes into account the cultural and historical context of the EQAA.	ESG 3.5	Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.
GGP 1.b	The statement explicitly provides that external quality assurance is a major activity of the EQAA, and it requires a systematic approach to achieving the mission or objectives of the EQAA.	ESG 3.3	Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.
GGP 1.c	There is evidence that the statement of objectives is implemented pursuant to a practical management plan that is linked to EQAA resources.	ESG 3.4	Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures and staff ²¹

GGP		ESG	
GGP 1.d	The ownership and governance structure is appropriate for the objectives of the agency.	ESG 3.2	Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.
GGP 2	The EQAA has adequate and accessible human and financial resources to conduct external evaluation effectively and efficiently in accordance with its mission statement and its methodological approach. The EQAA's resources are also adequate for the appropriate development of the agency.	ESG 3.4	Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures and staff ²¹
GGP 3	The EQAA has a system of continuous quality assurance of its own activities that emphasises flexibility in response to the changing nature of higher education, the effectiveness of its operations, and its contribution towards the achievement of its objectives. The EQAA conducts internal self-review of its own activities, including consideration of its own effects and value. The review includes data and analysis. The EQAA is subject to external reviews at regular intervals. There is evidence that any required actions are implemented and disclosed.	ESG 3.8	Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

GGP		ESG	
GGP 4.a	The EQAA informs and responds to the public in accordance with applicable legislation and the cultural context of the EQAA.	ESG 3.2	Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.
GGP 4.b	This includes full and clear disclosures of its relevant documentation such as policies, procedures and criteria.	ESG 2.3	Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.
GGP 4.c	The EQAA also demonstrates public accountability by reporting its decisions about higher education institutions and programmes.	ESG 2.5	Reports should be published and should be written in a style, which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.
GGP 4.d	The content and extent of reporting may vary with cultural context and applicable legal and other requirements.		
GGP 4.e	If the external evaluation leads to a decision about the higher education institution or programme, the procedures applied and the criteria for decision-making are public, and the criteria for review are transparent, public, and ensure equality of treatment.	ESG 2.3	Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.
		ESG 3.7.c	These processes will normally be expected to include publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
		ESG 3.7.a	The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available.

GGP		ESG	
GGP 4.f	The EQAA also discloses to the public the decisions about the EQAA resulting from any external review of its own performance.	ESG 3.8	Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.
GGP 5.a	The EQAA recognises that institutional and programmatic quality and quality assurance are primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves;	ESG 2.1	<p>External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.</p> <p>1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance</p> <p>1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards</p> <p>1.3 Assessment of students</p> <p>1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff</p> <p>1.5 Learning resources and student support</p> <p>1.6 Information systems</p> <p>1.7 Public information</p>
GGP 5.b	The EQAA respects the academic autonomy, identity and integrity of the institutions or programmes;		
GGP 5.c	The EQAA applies standards or criteria that have been subject to reasonable consultation with stakeholders	ESG 2.2	The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.
GGP 5.d	The EQAA aims to contribute to both quality improvement and accountability of the institution.	ESG 3.3	Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

GGP		ESG	
GGP 6	The EQAA has documents that indicate clearly what the EQAA expects of the institution. Those expectations (which may for example be called standards or factors or precepts) are appropriate for the core activities of an institution of higher education or programme. The standards should explicitly address all areas of institutional activity that fall within the EQAA's scope, such as teaching, learning, research, community work, etc. and necessary resources such as finances, staff/faculty, and learning resources. Standards may refer to specific areas, levels of achievement, relative benchmarking and types of measures, and may provide general guidelines. They may also include specific learning goals.	ESG 2.2	The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.
		ESG 3.7.a	The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available.
GGP 7.a	The documentation concerning self-evaluation explains to the institutions of higher education the purposes, procedures, processes and expectations in the self-evaluation process. The documents also include the standards used, the decision criteria, the reporting format, and other information needed by the higher education institution.	ESG 2.2	The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

GGP		ESG	
GGP 7.b.	Typically, an EQAA review process includes a self-evaluation through self-study by the institution or programme, external peer review, and a follow-up procedure. As necessary and appropriate, the EQAA guides the institution or programme in the application of the procedures of the quality assurance process, such as self-evaluation, external review, or solicitation of assessment/feedback from the public, students, and other constituents.	ESG 3.7.b	These processes will normally be expected to include a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process These processes will normally be expected to include an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
GGP 8.a	The EQAA has clear documentation concerning the external evaluation that states the standards used, assessment methods and processes, decision criteria, and other information necessary for external review.	ESG 3.7.a	The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available.
GGP 8.b	The EQAA also has specifications on the characteristics, selection and training of reviewers. The EQAA's system must ensure that each institution or programme will be evaluated in an equivalent way, even if the external panels, teams, or committees (together, the "external panels") are different.	ESG 2.3	Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

GGP		ESG	
GGP 9.a	The EQAA evaluations address both the higher education institution's own self-assessment and external reference points, such as judgments by knowledgeable peers or relevant legislation.	ESG 2.4	All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.
GGP 9.b.	An EQAA must be independent, i.e. it has autonomous responsibility for its operations, and its The EQAA's decisions must be impartial, rigorous, thorough, fair, and consistent, even if the judgments are made by different panels. Consistency in decision-making includes consistency and transparency in processes and actions for imposing recommendations for follow-up action.	ESG 3.6	Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.
GGP 9.c	The EQAA's reported decisions are clear and precise.	ESG 2.5	Reports should be published and should be written in a style, which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.
GGP 9.d	When the EQAA advises the government or other public bodies, the decisions made by each agency should be made as independently as practicable.	ESG None	Discussed at the end of the ESG in the section “GGP Without a Matching ESG”

GGP		ESG	
GGP 10	The EQAA has appropriate methods and policies for appeals. Appeals should be conducted by reviewers who were not responsible for the original decision and who have no conflict of interest, but appeals need not necessarily be conducted outside the EQAA.	ESG 3.7.d	These processes will normally be expected to include a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.
GGP 11	The EQAA collaborates with other EQAAs, if possible, in areas such as exchange of good practices, capacity building, review of decisions, provision of transnational education, joint projects, and staff exchanges.	ESG None	Discussed at the end of the ESG in the section “GGP Without a Matching ESG”
GGP 12	The EQAA has policies relating to both imported and exported higher education. These policies may be the same as those for domestic providers and domestic provision. In formulating its policies and practices, the EQAA should consider relevant guidelines issued by international agencies and other associations. All EQAAs should consult with appropriate local agencies in the exporting or importing countries, although this might not be possible or appropriate in situations such as those involving distance learning or small enrolment.	ESG None	Discussed at the end of the ESG in the section “GGP Without a Matching ESG”

Annex 2: Review Visit Schedule

Monday 9 September	Who	Where
evening	Review team	The Glasshouse hotel Louis Stevenson room
Tuesday 10 September	Who	Where
9.00-10.30	Self-evaluation team	Radisson Blu Hotel – 80 High Street, The Royal Mile, Edinburgh EH1 1 TH MEETING ROOM: DUNEDIN 2 (for the whole day)
10.30-12.00	EAPAA Board and Representatives of EAPAA's constituent organisations	
12.00-13.00	EAPAA secretariat	
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-15.00	EAPAA Accreditation Committee	
15.00-16.00	Students	
16.00-17.00		
17.00-18.00		
19.00-21.00	Dinner (only review team)	Radisson Blu Hotel
Wednesday 11 September	Who	Where
9.00-10.00	Accredited Programmes	Radisson Blu Hotel – 80 High Street, The Royal Mile, Edinburgh EH1 1 TH MEETING ROOM: DUNEDIN 2 (for the whole day)
10.00-11.00	Site visit team members 1	
11.00-12.00	Other EAPAA Stakeholders	
12.00-13.00	Lunch	
13.00-13.30	Self-evaluation team	
13.30-14.30	Site visit team members 2	
14.30-15.30	Review team	
15.30-16.00	'First impressions' of the review team	

EAPAA self-evaluation team

Prof. Christoph Reichard, EAPAA chair and em. professor University of Potsdam, Germany;

Prof. Arthur Ringeling, EAPAA Accreditation Committee chair and em. professor Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands;

Prof. Taco Brandsen, EAPAA secretary-general from September 2013, Professor Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands (only present on 10 and 11 September);

Dr. Theo van der Krogt, EAPAA secretary-general till September 2013 and em. associate professor University of Twente, Enschede, the Netherlands.

EAPAA Board and Representatives of EAPAA's constituent organisations

Prof.dr. Christoph Reichard, University of Potsdam, Germany, chair

Mrs. Ludmila Gajdosova, Executive Director NISPAcee (representing NISPAcee)

Prof. Mirko Vintar, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (representing NISPAcee)

Prof. Edoardo Ongaro, Northumbria University, Vice-chair EGPA (representing EGPA)

Dr. Fabienne Maron, Scientific Administrator, EGPA Executive Secretary, International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) (representing EGPA)

EAPAA secretariat

The EAPAA-secretariat organises and prepares the accreditation process, and the Board and General Meetings and the meetings of the Accreditation Committee.

Dr. Theo van der Krogt, EAPAA secretary-general

Prof. Taco Brandsen, new EAPAA secretary-general

Mrs. Seeta Autar, EAPAA bureau manager

EAPAA Accreditation Committee

Prof. Arthur Ringeling (chair), Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Prof. Peter Knoepfel (vice chair), Inst. de hautes études en administration publique, Lausanne, Switzerland

Prof. Marleen Brans, Catholic University Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Prof. Robert Hertzog, Université de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France

Prof. Isabella Proeller, Universität Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany

Prof. Juraj Nemec, Matej Bel University, Banska Bystrica, Slovak Republic

Prof. Laszlo Vass, Budapest College of Communication and Business, Budapest, Hungary

Prof. Turo Virtanen, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Mr. Timo Moilanen, Ministry of Finance, Helsinki, Finland

Representatives of Programmes reviewed by EAPAA

- **Prof. Bram Steijn**, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands
- **Mr. Martin de Nobel**, University of Twente, Enschede, Netherlands
- **Prof. György Hajnal**, Corvinus University, Budapest, Hungary
- [**Prof. Nina Larionova** and **Mrs. Anna Tarasova**, Volga Tech, Yoskar-Ola, Russia, unable to attend due to visa issues]
- **Dr. Polona Kovač**, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia.
- **Mrs. Nynke-Jo Smit**, ISS, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands (Paramaribo programme)
- **Prof. Lucica Matei**, National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest, Romania

Representatives of Members of EAPAA Site Visit Teams

Academic members

- **Prof.em. Michael Hill**, UK (NL site visits)
- **Prof. Jeroen Maesschalck**, (site visit Police Academy Netherlands)
- **Prof. Bas Denters**, University of Twente, Enschede, Netherlands (site visit Catholic University Leuven)
- **Prof. Adrian Ritz**, University of Bern, Switzerland (site visit Volga State University of Technology)

Student/Graduate members

- **Mr. Tiago Pais** (site visit University of Potsdam)

Representatives of Students/Graduates of Programmes accredited by EAPAA

- **Ms. Myrthe Agterbos**, was student in the PA programme Twente, the Netherlands
- **Mr. Athanassios Gouglas**, was student in the MEPP programme Leuven, Belgium
- **Mrs. Mihaela Tuca**, was student in the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration programme, Bucharest, Romania
- **Mr. Erik Wässing**, was student in University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

Representatives of other Stakeholders

- EUPAN: EUPAN is an informal network of the Directors General responsible for public administration in the Member States of the European Union and the European Commission: **Ms. Johanna Nurmi**
- NASPAA: Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration. It is the membership organization of graduate education programmes in public policy, public affairs, public administration, and public & nonprofits management:
Ms. Laurel McFarland, Executive Director
- QANU (Netherlands): QANU is a quality assurance agency which primarily aims at assessing degree and research programmes offered by universities in the Netherlands. QANU and EAPAA collaborated two times for the accreditation of all Dutch public administration programmes. **Mr. Sietze Looijenga, director**

Annex 3: the Review Team

Name	Background
Guy HAUG, panel chair	Expert in Higher education strategy and evaluation, Valencia University of Technology, Spain. One of the architects of the ERASMUS programme, the Bologna process and the EU's Agenda for the Modernisation of Higher Education.
Allan ROSENBAUM, academic expert	Professor of public administration and Director of the Institute for Public Management and Community Service at Florida International University. Previously served as Dean of School of Public Affairs. Prior, on faculty of the Universities of Maryland, Connecticut and Wisconsin. Currently, President Elect of the American Society for Public Administration and past President of IASIA. On numerous journal editorial boards.
Delia GOLOGAN, student expert	Pharmacy studies, Political Sciences studies (master program), General Secretary of ANOSR (National Union of Students Organizations from Romania), National Youth Council, member of the Council of Romanian Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) and of the ESU QA Pool
Christina ROZSNYAI, secretary	German Studies and Library Science, Programme officer, Hungarian Accreditation Committee