CALL FOR PAPERS:
INNOVATION AND RESEARCH AWARD 2026-2027

I. Background/Rationale

INQAAHE's strategic plan for the period 2023–2027 focuses on two paramount objectives: advancing research in the field of quality assurance (QA) and strengthening membership capacity. To better serve its members and ensure INQAAHE provides value to their operations and functions, the organization has introduced the INQAAHE Funding Scheme (IFS).

The IFS for Innovation and Research supports INQAAHE members on a competitive basis, promoting the dissemination research and innovative projects designed to enhance quality assurance systems worldwide. (A separate call is issued specifically for capacity-building purposes.)

INQAAHE is committed to recognizing and rewarding excellence in research by adopting an inclusive approach designed to serve its diverse community and contribute to the development of innovative solutions to the challenges facing tertiary education and quality assurance providers.

The award-winning scheme provides an opportunity for INQAAHE to empower researchers in conducting high-quality research while promoting the dissemination of their findings to a global audience.

Benefits of the Award

- 2,500 EUR.
- An opportunity to publish the research in the *Journal of Quality Assurance in Higher Education*.
- A presentation slot at an INQAAHE event, with associated fees waived.
- A dedicated session to celebrate the award-winning paper, which will include the presentation of the award.
- Global promotion of their achievement by INQAAHE, including outreach via social media and other platforms.

The type of research being conducted and subject to the award-winning scheme is the following:

- **Completed papers** with demonstrable impact on tertiary education and/or quality assurance sector.
- Applied or exploratory research is welcome.
- Conducted by individuals or teams, that are members of INQAAHE.

II. Eligibility

Eligibility is open to individuals and teams from organizations that are INQAAHE members (Full, Associate, or Affiliate Members).

Applicants are required to submit completed research papers as part of their application. Submissions must demonstrate that the project or paper has been finalized at the time of application.

Each applicant may apply once every two years.

Collaboration with other INQAAHE members is encouraged. The team leader, who must be a member of INQAAHE, will receive the grant. The grant and associated benefits may be distributed among team members with no implication or requirement of INQAAHE in the distribution.

III. Types of proposals eligible for the Innovation and Research Award

The call is open to any topic that contributes to advancing capacity in providing tertiary education and quality assurance. This includes papers that report on:

- **Innovative experiences in QA** that present, analyze, and discuss these practices and their relevance to enhancing or innovating quality assurance processes.
- **Completed or finalized studies or research projects** that employ an empirical approach and report on the results of research projects or case studies.
- **Completed essays** that present original discussions. These can include theoretical or methodological analyses, evaluations of published research, or examinations of relevant practices.

IV. Evaluation of proposals

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following **criteria**:

- Completeness of the proposal application form.
- Completeness of the paper, project, or study.
- Relevance to international, national, or regional goals related to tertiary education quality assurance and INQAAHE's mission.
- Appropriateness of the theoretical framework, research design, and methodology.
- Contribution to the body of knowledge in the field of quality assurance and higher education.

Additional criteria that will be considered during the selection process include:

- Applicants with a limited track record in research or those submitting their first publication.
- Applicants from INQAAHE member organizations located in LDCs or lower and upper-middle-income countries.
- Research themes that align with the INQAAHE Strategic Plan 2023–2027 and/or address the following topics: QA and AI, QA and recognition of qualifications, QA and sustainable development, new models and methods of QA, and QA and micro-credentials.

- Publication criteria for the *Journal of Quality Assurance in Higher Education* will be considered. These criteria are required for publication in the Journal but may not be necessary for awarding the INQAAHE grant.

The selection committee will be comprised of members of the INQAAHE Board, volunteer experts, and members of the editorial Board of the Journal. The INQAAHE Committee for Capacity Building and Research of INQAAHE will formulate a recommendation to the INQAAHE Board for final decision.

V. Timeline

Complete application is to be submitted to the INQAAHE Secretariat at secretariat@inqaahe.org by the following **deadlines**:

1. **Submission of the proposal**: April 30, 2027.
2. **Notification to the successful applicant**: June 15, 2027.

VI. Dissemination and ownership

INQAAHE will support the award recipient in publishing their work in the ***Journal of Quality Assurance in Higher Education.***

In addition to the opportunity for publication, the award recipient will be offered:

- A **presentation slot at an INQAAHE event**, with associated fees waived.
- A **dedicated session to celebrate the award-winning paper**, which will include the presentation of the award.
- **Global promotion** of their achievement by INQAAHE, including outreach via social media and other platforms.

INQAAHE reserves the right to disassociate from the study if the Board determines that the research, innovation outputs, or activities conflict with INQAAHE's mission and values or do not uphold the stated objectives of the project.

The selection is not subject to appeal.

The **ownership of the work** remains with the recipient and aligns with the regulations of the *Journal of Quality Assurance in Higher Education* should the paper be published.

INQAAHE Funding Scheme

Innovation and Research Paper Submission Template

1. **Project Title**
2. **Name of the Researcher(s)** (Include agency affiliation and contact information.)
3. **Status with INQAAHE** (e.g., Full member, Associate, Affiliate)
4. **Partnering organizations (if any)** (include primary contact information.)
5. **Project abstract** (150 words)
6. **Research paper (no more than 6000 words). Adhering to the Journal of Quality in Higher Education submission guidelines.**