



HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

Self-Evaluation Report HQA

September 2014

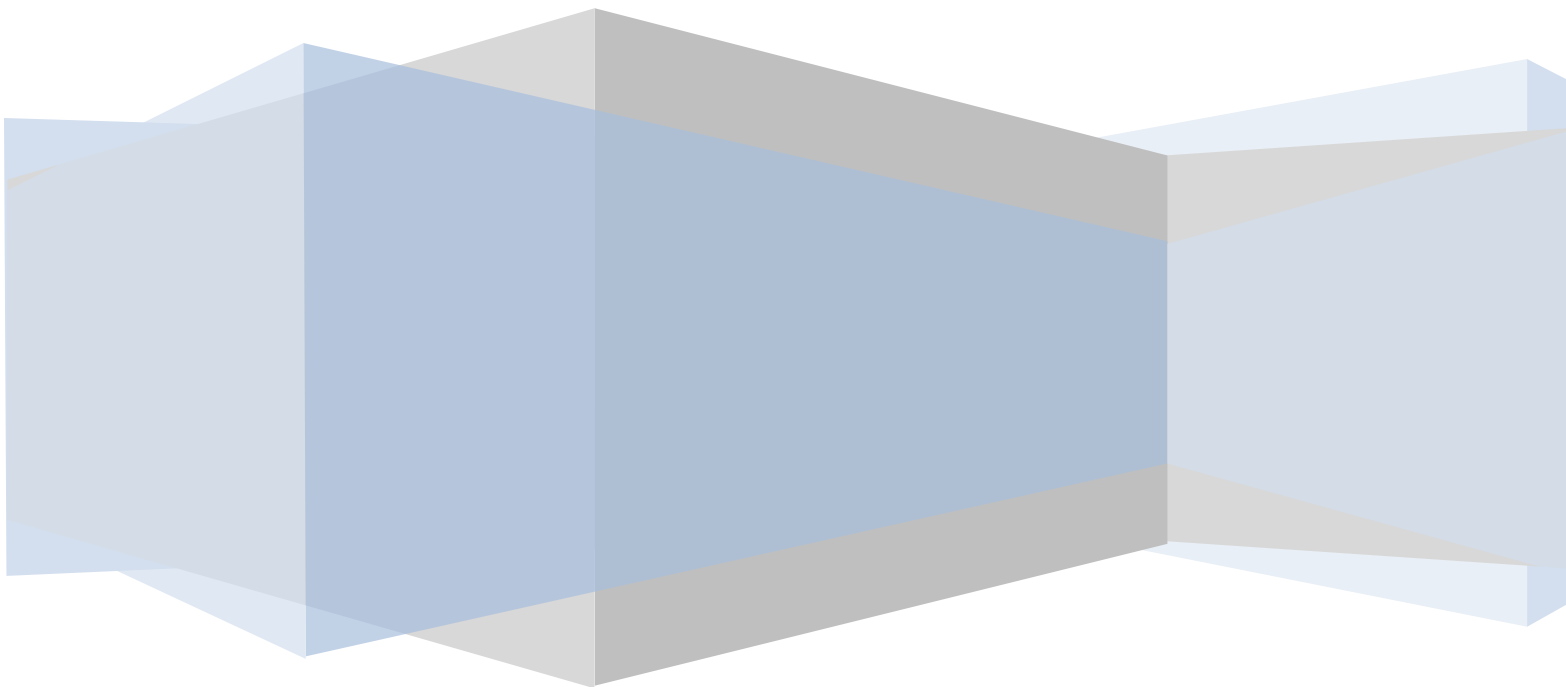


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Glossary (Key to Abbreviations)

AC	Administrative Council
ADA	Independent Administrative Authorities/Agencies
ADAE	Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy
ADIPPDE	Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education
ASEP	Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection
ASPETE	School of Pedagogical and Technological Education
COP	Ombudsman
CPS	Commission for the Protection of Competition
DEP	Teaching and Research Staff/Academic and Research Staff/Faculty Staff of Universities
EAP/HOU	Hellenic Open University
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EOPPEP	National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance
EP	Educational Staff of TEIs/Faculty Staff of TEIs
EPAL	Vocational Lyceum
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
ESPA/NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
ESR	Hellenic National Radio and Television Council
ESU	European Students Union
ESYP/NCE	National Council of Education
EU	European Union

EUA	European University Association
FEK	Government Gazette
HDPA	Hellenic Data Protection Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HQA/ADIP	Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency
IHU	International Hellenic University
MIS	Management Information System
MODIP/QAU	Quality Assurance Unit
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OMEA/IEG	Internal Evaluation Group
OSEP	Federation of Educational Staff of TEIs
PMS	Postgraduate Programme of Studies/Study Programme
POSDEP	Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Association
PS	Programme of Studies/ Study Programme
QAS	Quality Assurance System
RAE	Regulatory Authority for Energy
RBS	Regular Budget from the State
SAPE	Council for Higher University Education
SATE	Council for Higher Technological Education
SPDE	Council for Primary and Secondary Education
TEI	Technological Educational Institution

FOREWORD

This Self-Evaluation Report (SER) of HQA is the end product of a long period of preparative and collective actions.

The report tries to take into account and analyze the work done by HQA within the framework set by the Greek legislation. At the same time, it presents the current preparations for the Agency's future work. For the adequate preparation of SER, HQA has contacted foreign experts, whose relevant suggestions were crucial. In addition, the participation of HQA's members in related international meetings has been very helpful, due to the transfer of important feedback concerning international trends.

Specifically, drafting of this report – initially written in Greek - started under the coordination of the Plenary (Council) member Ioannis Vlachos, and continued under the new Administrative Council (AC, June 2014), with coordination by Council member Georgios Stamelos. For the editing of the final text, and its translation from Greek to English, several members of the old Plenary and the current AC have also actively contributed (in alphabetical order): Gerothanassis, Ioannis; Kapolos, Ioannis; Koukios, Emmanuel; Lazaridou, Maria; Niarchos, Dimitrios; Soldatos, Peter; Stamatopoulos Stylianos; Tsiantos, Vassileios; Vachos, Ioannis; Yannas, Prodromos; and Ypsilantis, Pantelis.

Among the Agency's administrative staff, Dimitra Dargenidou (administrative coordinator), Areti Mizara, Katerina Tsaliki, and Nicolas Georgiadis have also played very important roles.

INTRODUCTION

To implement the Bologna Process of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), co-signed by Greece, in August 2005 the Greek Parliament voted Law 3374 on quality assurance of higher education. This law established the independent agency named “Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education” (HQAA, ADIP in Greek - *see the Glossary with Key to abbreviations*).

The Agency guarantees the transparency of the evaluation procedures, having as its primary mission to support Higher Education Institutions by implementing procedures aiming at (a) ensuring and improving the quality of Higher Education; (b) informing the State and Higher Education Institutions about current international developments and trends on relevant issues; and (c) promoting research in this area.

Six years later, Law 4009/2011 renamed HQAA to HQA, i.e., “Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency”, giving it more responsibilities concerning accreditation of both study programmes and internal quality assurance system of institutions.

Since 2007, HQA has been an affiliate of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Operational difficulties, along with institutional changes, have contributed to the delayed launch of the process of HQA’s accession as a full member of ENQA.

Despite the difficulties of its overall operating environment (economic crisis, legislative and administrative instability, poor staffing), HQA managed to complete the first cycle of evaluation of the academic units (Schools or Faculties) in all higher education institutions, while the external evaluation of the institutions is currently in the implementation process. Furthermore, HQA is starting the accreditation process of study programmes in the context of its new role.

HQA is ready to address, through the valuable experience gained, the new challenges facing it, such as accreditation, but also of its own external evaluation.

In this context, HQA wishes to upgrade its reputation and strengthen its position, both nationally and internationally, by joining ENQA as a full member.

This report is a self-evaluation report of HQA, and is divided into three parts. The first part provides a summary description of the Greek education system, focusing on higher education (Chapter 1), and of its quality assurance system (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, an analysis of HQA’s work is presented. The second part provides the evidence of compliance with the ESG for external quality assurance in higher education (ESG - Part 2), as well as the evidence of fulfillment of the ENQA membership criteria (ESG - Part 3). In the third part, appendices are provided for detailed and complementary information and evidence.

For the preparation of this report, both members of the Agency and its staff worked closely, trying to capture the overall image of HQA.

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

STRUCTURE OF THE GREEK EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

1.1. GENERAL PRESENTATION

The Greek educational system falls under the general responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, which is responsible for the legislation concerned. It is divided into three levels: Primary, secondary and tertiary education. Primary education includes nursery schools (4-6 years) and elementary schools (6-12 years). Secondary education is divided into two stages. The first stage is Gymnasium (age 12-15), whereas the second stage (age 15-18) is made up of two different types of schools: The general orientation Geniko Lykeio (General Lyceum), and the vocational orientation Epaggelmatiko Lykeio (Vocational Lyceum).

There also exist various specialized and Intercultural schools (Gymnasia, sports, music, religious, experimental, special education, evening schools, etc). The education provided by the completion of secondary education is part of the first four levels (1-4) of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which is in harmony with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Tertiary education corresponds to NQF levels 5-8. Levels 6-8 are those from higher education, which is further divided into Universities and Technological Educational Institutions (TEIs).

Under current national legislation, HQA is responsible for the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions (Universities and TEIs), i.e., responsible for EQF levels 6-8.

More information on Greek higher education is provided below.

1.2. HIGHER EDUCATION

1.2.1. Introduction

Higher education is provided by higher education institutions (Universities and TEIs). The higher education institutions are fully self-governing legal entities, governed by public law. The supervision of the State is exercised by the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs (Article 1 and 2 of L. 4009/2011).

Higher education constitutes the last level of the national education system, and comprises the University and Technological sectors (a binary higher education). The *University sector* includes Universities, Technical Universities, and the School of Fine Arts. The *Technological sector* includes the Technological Educational Institutions (TEIs), and the School of

Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE). Collective bodies, established and acting in compliance with special legislation, administer each institution.

In Greece, according to the Constitution, there exists only public higher education (Article 16 of the Greek Constitution).

National Council of Education

An advisory body to the State is the National Council of Education (ESYP), which is based in Athens, and is comprised by the Council and three sub-advisory Councils. The Council is chaired by the President of the ESYP. The three sub-advisory Councils of ESYP are the Council for Higher University Education (SAPE); the Council for Higher Technological Education (SATE); and the Council for Primary and Secondary Education (SPDE). Each Council has its own President. The current structure of ESYP became operational in 2003, when the first bureau was appointed.

ESYP is a consultative body to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs for questions of educational planning and policy.

Furthermore, other bodies in action in the context of higher education are the following:

(A) The Hellenic Universities Rectors' Synod (Conference)

This is a non-legislated body, established in 1987, that started to operate as a forum for exchanging views and ideas between the heads of the Universities. From 1990, the Synod (Conference) has obtained a composed character and a permanent Secretariat, and started to broaden its spectrum of initiatives. As a result, the Synod today plays a significant role in the area of University Education. Synod's members are the Rectors and Vice-Rectors of all Hellenic Universities (http://www.synodos-aei.gr/index_en.html).

The Synod's object is to coordinate the Universities' activity, and act as their delegate in order to achieve, among other things, the following goals:

- To form views on various key educational and research issues concerning especially Universities;
- To elaborate initiatives aiming at achieving an effective association between Universities and their social, cultural and economical environment;
- To contribute to the Governmental planning and its measures of educational and research policy;
- To promote University Community views;
- To develop associations with equivalent international Unions and
- To promote the aspirations and consolidate the interests of the Greek University Community members.

(B) The Hellenic TEIs Presidents' Synod (Conference)

A corresponding body also exists for the Technological Educational Institutions with equivalent objectives.

(C) The Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Association (POSDEP)

The Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Association (POSDEP) is the Union body of academic and research staff (DEP) of Greek Universities. Its basic aims are the following (<http://www.posdep.gr/>):

- (1) To promote the democratization and autonomy of higher education establishments.
- (2) To study, and contribute in solving, the problems arising in higher education.
- (3) The improvement of the level of studies and research carried out at Universities, and their orientation towards responding to the needs of the scientific, technological, economic and cultural developments of the country.
- (4) Linking Universities with their social environment, so that they can contribute to the study and solution of problems of each region.
- (5) The standardization of objectives and coordination of activities of the association members aiming at
 - (a) Ensuring and promoting the scientific work of its members, as well as seeking to resolve all issues related to their scientific development;
 - (b) Promoting wage and pension demands and, generally, improving the working conditions of its members.
- (6) Defending the University asylum and academic freedoms.
- (7) Providing active and responsible support on facing the national popular, social problems.

(D) The Federation of Educational Staff of TEIs (OSEP)

The relevant body for the TEIs is called Federation of Educational Staff (OSEP), and its official website is <http://www.oseptei.gr/>.

1.2.2. Institutions and study programmes

Overall, in 2012, Greece had 24 Universities and 16 TEIs (including ASPETE), i.e., a total of 40 higher education institutions. With the implementation of the reorganization plan of the Ministry of Education in 2012 (known as project "Athena"), Universities decreased to 22 and TEIs (with ASPETE) to 14, thus reducing the total number to 36 (*for more see Annex, part I, doc 1*).

The study programmes offered by the HEIs are divided into three cycles: (A) first cycle — Undergraduate (requiring 4, 5 or 6 years of study, depending on the subject); (B) second cycle – Postgraduate /Master studies (1 to 2 years); and (C) third cycle — Doctoral studies (at least 3 years).

The TEIs have undergraduate courses (4 years of study), and Master programmes.

The undergraduate courses are free of charge, with the exception of two particular Universities, the Hellenic Open University (EAP), and the International Hellenic University (IHU):

IHU was founded in 2005 (by Law 3391), with headquarters in Thessaloniki, and has been developing English-speaking postgraduate courses aimed at international audiences.

EAP was founded in 1992 in Patras, but remained defunct until 1997, at which time legislation was enacted (Act 2552/97) regarding its operation. The first cohorts of students were admitted in 1999. Further legislation amended the operation of this University by further specifying *inter alia* its scope, admissions, tuition and academic recruitment procedures (Article 14 of Act 2817/2000, Article 3 of Act 3027/2002 and Article 13 of Act 3260/2004).

EAP (in Greek: Ελληνικό Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο - ΕΑΠ) is a multi-school university run by the Greek State. This Patras-based institution is unique in the Greek context, in exclusively providing distance learning education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The EAP postgraduate programmes require tuition fees, with a few exceptions, whereas doctorates are usually free. This cycle is restructured following the European trend. Study programmes at all levels may also be interdisciplinary, inter-institutional, and/or international. In the latter case, study programmes can take place in a foreign language.

1.2.3. Access to higher education

Students wishing to enter in the first cycle of the Greek higher education (levels 6, 7 and 8) are first required to hold a Lyceum Certificate. General secondary school graduates (General Lyceum) have the full right to access, whereas graduates of Vocational Lyceum (EPAL) have access only to courses in TEIs. Lyceum Certificate holders must also take national-level examinations (Pan-Hellenic Examinations), which are different for the graduates of General Lyceum and those of EPAL.

An exception is made for the two special Universities (Hellenic Open University and International Hellenic University), which have their own rules on access. In Greece there is no alternative mode of access (e.g., by recognition of prior learning, etc).

The success rate in the Pan -Hellenic examinations is around 80 % (e.g., 81% in 2014). Up to 1970, it did not exceed 25 %. The spectacular increase observed was due to the great expansion of the network of higher education institutions and the study programmes offered and funded by national funds (state/municipality) and/or with the contribution of European funds.

It must be noted that the access to a specific study programme depends on the candidate's examination grade, in combination with his/her order of preference for the particular programme. Consequently, there is a sort of competition not only of candidates, but also among the different study programmes offered by the institutions.

The number of admitted students per study programme is determined centrally by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, higher education institutions do not have the right to influence the number of admitted students. The latter is a source of tension between the Ministry and the institutions.

Access to the second and third higher education cycle (Master and PhD) is a decentralized procedure, defined locally by the higher education Institutions. Of course, access to the second cycle implies the existence of the Ptyhion/Diploma title of the first cycle, whereas access to the third cycle implies the existence of a second cycle diploma. There are still some exceptions, where the title of the first cycle is enough prerequisite for access to the third cycle, but this is a remnant of an older system that tends to disappear.

1.2.4. Internal structure of study programmes

Study programmes follow a semester-based approach. The academic year has two semesters, winter and spring.

The educational activities are organized so as to be consistent with the provisions of the Bologna Process. Thus, each semester courses are equivalent to 30 ECTS. The ECTS are generally connected with the student work load, but they are not yet correctly applied by all Institutions, and not always associated with learning outcomes.

The use of learning outcomes, although adopted by the Legislation (Φ5/89656/B3/13-8-2007 - ΦΕΚ 1466/B, 19/13-8-2007), has not been fully implemented in practice until today. A mandatory system for the connection of ECTS credits with learning outcomes for all programmes of higher education study was introduced in 2011 (Law 4009/2011). One of the objectives of the application of the process of the accreditation of study programmes, just launched by HQA, is precisely the full implementation of the ECTS system, including the association of work load with learning outcomes.

More specifically, according to the last report of 2012 (EACEA, 2012: 48), Greece belonged to the 21.3 % of the participating countries (10 out of 47) concerning credit units being related to student work load, but not learning outcomes.

CHAPTER 2

THE HQA AND QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Greece has developed a three-instrument-based system for quality assurance of its three-level educational system. So, responsible for quality assurance of the primary and secondary education is the Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (*ADIPPDE*). For vocational education, as well as for non-formal education, quality assurance is the responsibility of the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (*EOPPEP*).

In Higher Education, quality assurance is regulated by virtue of [Law 3374/2005](#), which determines the framework and the specific processes of internal and external evaluation in Higher Education Institutions (HEI). The same law sets up an independent administrative Agency, under the name “Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency” (HQA, ADIP in Greek). Several years later, by the [Law 4009/2011](#), ADIP was renamed to “Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency” (HQA, still ADIP in Greek), at the same time taking over additional responsibilities, mainly in relation to accreditation of internal quality assurance systems of institutions and study programmes.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that, even before the establishment of HQA several Greek higher education institutions and study programmes had gone through evaluation in the 90s. This was possible either through the external evaluations of European University Association (EUA) or through special programmes supported by European funds. In total, 14 out of the 18, then, Universities, and 11 out of the 14 TEIs had experienced external evaluation between 1994 to 1999. In particular, eight (8) Universities had participated in the Institutional Evaluation Programme of the EUA.

2.2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE BODIES IN GREEK HIGHER EDUCATION

The founding Law 3374/2005 has created a quality assurance system involving specialised bodies within the higher education system. There are three bodies of this kind, two inside the institutions (OMEA and MODIP) and one at the national level (HQA). More specifically:

OMEA

The Internal Evaluation Group (in Greek, OMEA) is responsible for the internal evaluation of one academic unit (Article 5). It monitors the completion of questionnaires, informs the governing bodies and the members of the academic unit on the feedback received and the results of the dialogue between professors and students, and gathers all necessary documentation. Faculty staff of Universities (DEP) or of Technological Educational Institutions (EP), as well as a student representative participate in the OMEA of their academic unit.

MODIP

The Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP in Greek) is the responsible body for quality assurance at the institutional level (Article 2). MODIP is established in each institution by a decision by the Institution's Council, and consists of the Rector or one of his/her deputies as Chairperson, five Professors, one representative of each category of staff, a representative of the undergraduate student body, and a representative of the postgraduate students and doctoral candidates.

MODIP is particularly responsible for the following:

(A) Development of the strategy of the institution, as well as its specific policies and necessary procedures for the continuous improvement of the quality of the work and services performed by the institution; this is a basic pillar of the internal quality control system of an institution;

(B) Organization, functioning, operation, and continual improvement of the internal quality control system of the institution;

(C) Coordination and support of the evaluation procedures followed by the academic units, and other services of the institution; and

(D) Support of external evaluation and accreditation procedures of the study programmes and the internal quality control system of the institution, in the context of the principles, guidelines and directives given by HQA.

To meet the above mentioned objectives, MODIP cooperates with HQA, and is responsible for the regular monitoring, and publication of the evaluation of all relevant procedures and their results on the Institution's website.

The internal evaluation is the responsibility of the MODIP of the higher education institutions. MODIP itself is subject to evaluation by HQA, and it must meet the criteria and indicators for evaluation, as specified in standards provided by the HQA.

HQA

HQA will be analytically presented in the next section of this report.

2.3. THE HQA

Greece has consistently followed the provisions of the Bologna Process in establishing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In August 2005, the Greek Parliament voted a Law for quality assurance in higher education (Law 3374/2005, Government Gazette, 2/8/2005, Sheet No. 189). Its purpose was to establish a mechanism of continuous evaluation of the quality of teaching, research and any other services higher education institutions aim at ensuring; also, to improve the quality of research and teaching, of the curriculum and other services rendered by Universities/TEIs in connection with their work.

More specifically, HQA (Article 1. 3) is responsible for the evaluation of the academic units (Faculties or School¹) and, through these, for the institutions as a whole. HQA has been

¹ In Greece, an Academic School is considered as the academic unit that offers only one undergraduate programme of studies. So, School and Study programmes are almost synonymous.

created as an independent agency based in Athens, with administrative autonomy, and being supervised by the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs for guaranteeing the legality of its acts.

HQA was renamed by Law 4009/2011 (FEK A 195) into HQA (Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency). With Articles 70-72, the process of academic accreditation in higher education has been established. Responsibility for organizing the accreditation and issuance of the final decisions was awarded to the HQA.

However, the new Law prevents a transition period and a continuation through changes (Article 80, "Other transitional provisions" Paragraph 12c). Those pending assessment procedures in accordance with Law 3374/2005 should be completed in accordance with the provisions of that law. For schools/faculties and departments of Universities that upon publication of this law have not initiated the evaluation process in accordance with its provisions, this process begins and is completed in accordance with the provisions of the same law. With the finalization of the evaluations of all academic units, the process based on the provisions of Law 3374/2005 ceases. For the purposes of these provisions, the "Plenary" body of HQA is considered the same as the "Council" of HQA.

Given these significant legislative changes, an attempt will be done to clarify both the initial work of ADIP (HQA), on which the Agency has worked since its foundation, to the present, and the future plans which have started to be developed by HQA. More specifically:

HQA's work through the changes of its concerned legislative framework		
Legislative Framework	Main Task	Implementation Process
1. Founding Law 3374/2005	1a. External Evaluation of academic units of HEI's (Faculties or Schools)	Completed
	1b. Institutional External Evaluation	Final submission of the Self-Evaluation Reports of all HEIs at the end of 2014
2. Law 4009/2011	Accreditation of Study Programmes	a. Completion of all necessary documents and supporting material of the consultation and information of the HEIs
		b. Beginning of installation of first delegates for the accreditation of study programmes
	Accreditation of Internal Quality Assurance System of HEIs	In connection with 1b (see details below)

In the next report sections, the background of HQA will be first presented, to be followed by the work done by HQA since its inauguration.

However, the Hellenic Open University and the International Hellenic University do not have Schools but only Faculties. In this case, a Faculty has more than one study programmes.

2.3.1. Background

As it has been already mentioned, HQA was founded in 2005. We should note that its start-up period was accompanied by strong negative reactions from a part of the academic community. Consequently, HQA had to try hard to reverse this negative climate, by developing collaboration with higher-education institutions, and also by creating a positive climate of confidence.

At the early stage of HQA actions, much attention has been given to securing the necessary infrastructure, such as the Agency's information systems, and its creation of an Experts Register, along with the diffusion of the aims of HQA to stakeholders and HEIs.

Unfortunately, frequent parliamentary elections in our country (2007, 2009, two in 2012) did not facilitate or stabilize the application of the legislative framework required for the efficient operation and effective work of HQA, neither its smooth development.

In fact, from 2011 (the year when the legislative framework of HQA changed) until the spring of 2013 HQA couldn't function properly, insofar as there was not a quorum to convene session, after the resignations of the President and four members of the Plenary (Board). The new HQA President was appointed in autumn 2012, and the new members of the new Board (Council) on April 2013².

So, recently, under the new legislative provisions, the Plenary has been replaced by the first Board of HQA (Council). The members of the Council were elected through a public call for expression of interest, and a specific selection process that will be described below. The new Council started its meetings in June 2014.

Nevertheless, and despite the adversities, between "spring 2013" and "spring 2014", the HQA managed to complete the external evaluation of all Schools or Faculties of higher educational institutions of the country. Actually, in less than a year 52% of the overall external evaluations were completed.

2.3.2. HQA Structure and organization

2.3.2.1. Human resources

A. Governance

According to its founding law, HQA was ruled by its Plenary, which consisted of the President and the Members. The HQA President was selected by the Ministry of Education after the assent of the parliament. The members of the Council were appointed by *The Hellenic University Rector's Synod* (see p.8) (6 members), as well as the Synod of Presidents of Technological institutions (4 members), while one member is proposed by the research institutions of the country, one member from the Central Union of Chambers of Greece, one member of the Student Union of Greek Universities, and one member of the Student Union of Greek Technological Educational Institutions, i.e., a total of 15 members. The

² It is important to note the difference in the legislative expression; indeed, Law 3374/2005 called the Board of HQA "Plenary", whereas the new Law (4009/2011) call it "Council" of HQA.

appointment of all members was confirmed by decree of the Minister of Education. The members of the Plenary had a full-time job in HQA.

The six (6) members coming from Universities had the following specializations:

- (j) Humanities,
- (ii) Legal, social and political sciences,
- (iii) Health sciences,
- (iv) Economics and business administration,
- (v) Engineering and geophysical sciences, and
- (vi) Science and informatics.

The four (4) members coming from the TEIs had the following specializations:

- (j) Administration and finance,
- (ii) Health care professionals,
- (iii) Technological and engineering sciences, and
- (iv) Technological, geotechnical and food sciences.

It should be noted that, for different reasons, the Student Union of the Universities, the Student Union of the TEIs, and the Central Union of Chambers of Greece did not designate any representatives. Therefore, the Council of HQA worked with a total of 12 members.

Student representatives from Universities and TEIs were not appointed for reasons of disagreement between the different Student Unions, which have failed for years to elect a board of the Central Student Union. Regarding the attitude of the Central Union of Chambers, it seems that, in their case, there was an internal dispute on which representative the Chamber may propose.

Since June 2014, the Plenary became Council of HQA, in accordance with the provisions of the law (L. 4009/2011), and its members are now appointed after public call, followed by a selection process (Article 67).

During the transition from the Plenary to the Council five new members were elected, and six members of the former Plenary have been re-elected, as follows:

HQA PLENARY (From May 2013 to 08-06-2014)	HQA COUNCIL (From 08-06-2014)
President Evangelos Coufoudakis – Petrousis University Professor of Indiana - Purdue, USA	President Evangelos Coufoudakis – Petrousis University Professor of Indiana - Purdue, USA

HEIs Members	HEIs Members
Professor Ioannis Gerothanassis University of Ioannina Science and Technology	Professor Ioannis Gerothanassis University of Ioannina Science and Technology
Professor Maria Lazaridou Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Health Sciences	Professor Maria Lazaridou Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Health Sciences
Professor Constantine Memos National Technical University of Athens Engineering and Geophysical	Professor Emmanuel Koukios National Technical University of Athens , Engineering and Geophysical
Professor Petros Soldatos Agricultural University of Athens Economics & Business Administration	Professor Efthimios Tsionas Athens University of Economics and Business, Economics & Business Administration
Professor Stylianos Stamatopoulos Democritus University of Thrace Legal, Social and Political sciences	Professor Stylianos Stamatopoulos Democritus University of Thrace Legal, Social and Political Sciences
Professor Georgios Stamelos University of Patras Humanities	Professor Georgios Stamelos University of Patras Humanities
National Research Institutions	National Research Institutions
Loukopoulou Louisa Researcher National Research Foundation	Dimitrios Niarhos Researcher National Centre for Scientific Research "Democritos"
TEI Members	TEI Members
Professor Ioannis Vlahos TEI of Crete Geotechnical Science and Food Technology	Professor Ioannis Kapolos TEI of Peloponnese Geotechnical Science and Food Technology.
Professor Kleomenis Oikonomou TEI of Athens Health and Welfare Professions	Professor Kleomenis Oikonomou TEI of Athens Health and Welfare Professions
Professor Vassileios Tsiantos TEI of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Technological Sciences, Engineering	Professor Vassileios Tsiantos TEI of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Technological Sciences, Engineering
Professor Pandelis Ipsilantis TEI of Thessaly Administration and Finance	Professor Prodromos Yannas TEI of Piraeus Administration and Finance

It should be noted, once more, that the Student Unions of Universities and TEIs, and the Central Union of Professional Chambers of Greece had not designated representatives for

different reasons. Accordingly, the Board of the HQA Council is now formed by a total of 12 members (The President and 11 members, as above). The reasons were presented above.

B. Administrative Staff

In the following, we will present the current status of the administrative operation of HQA as well as the plan for its future organization chart.

The operation of the Agency is supported by a Secretariat Division, which consists of three Departments: (a) Department of Administration, IT and Finance, (b) Quality Assurance Department, and (c) Research and Documentation Department. In more detail,

(A) Department of Administration, Information Technology, and Finance: it includes the following offices:

- (1) Central Secretariat (2 staff),
- (2) Finance and Procurement (2 staff),
- (3) Information and Technical Support (2 staff).

(B) Quality Assurance Department: it includes the following offices:

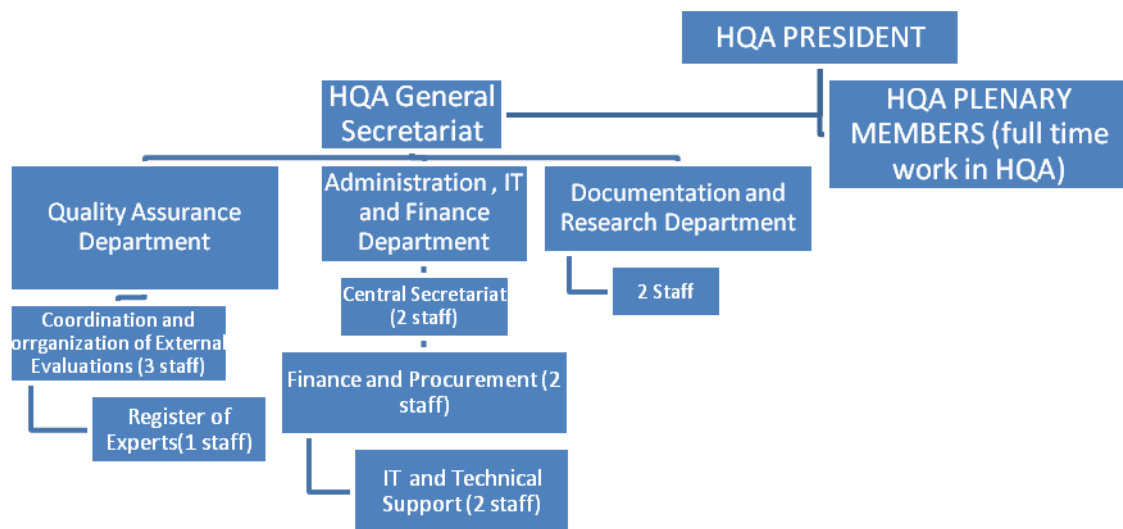
- (1) Coordination and Organization of External Evaluations (3 staff),
- (2) Register of Experts (1 staff).

(C) Documentation and Research Department (2 staff):

It is important to mention that these Departments and their offices are not covered by permanent staff. The above Departments are staffed by persons seconded from various organizations, such as higher educational institutions, the Ministry of Education, or other public services.

Seconded officials are a common phenomenon of Greek public administration. These employees are temporarily recruited from their particular positions in order to help/organize a new service or meet some emergencies. Unfortunately, this temporary solution, which has helped HQA to start its operation, became rather permanent due to the economic crisis in the recent years and the consequent lack of recruitment of permanent staff.

An overview the current organizational chart follows:



Nevertheless, the recent plenary has worked on the HQA’s future organization plan, which has not yet been approved by the relevant Ministries, as the current economic crisis has delayed its approval.

In accordance with this work, the scheduled HQA organization plan will be as follows:

A. Directorate of quality assurance and accreditation

- *Study programmes*
- *Internal quality assurance systems*
- *Experts Register*

B. Directorate of programmatic planning and financing agreements

- *Universities*
- *TEIs*

(This activity is a Greek specificity and is not related to the general framework of interests of the ENQA)

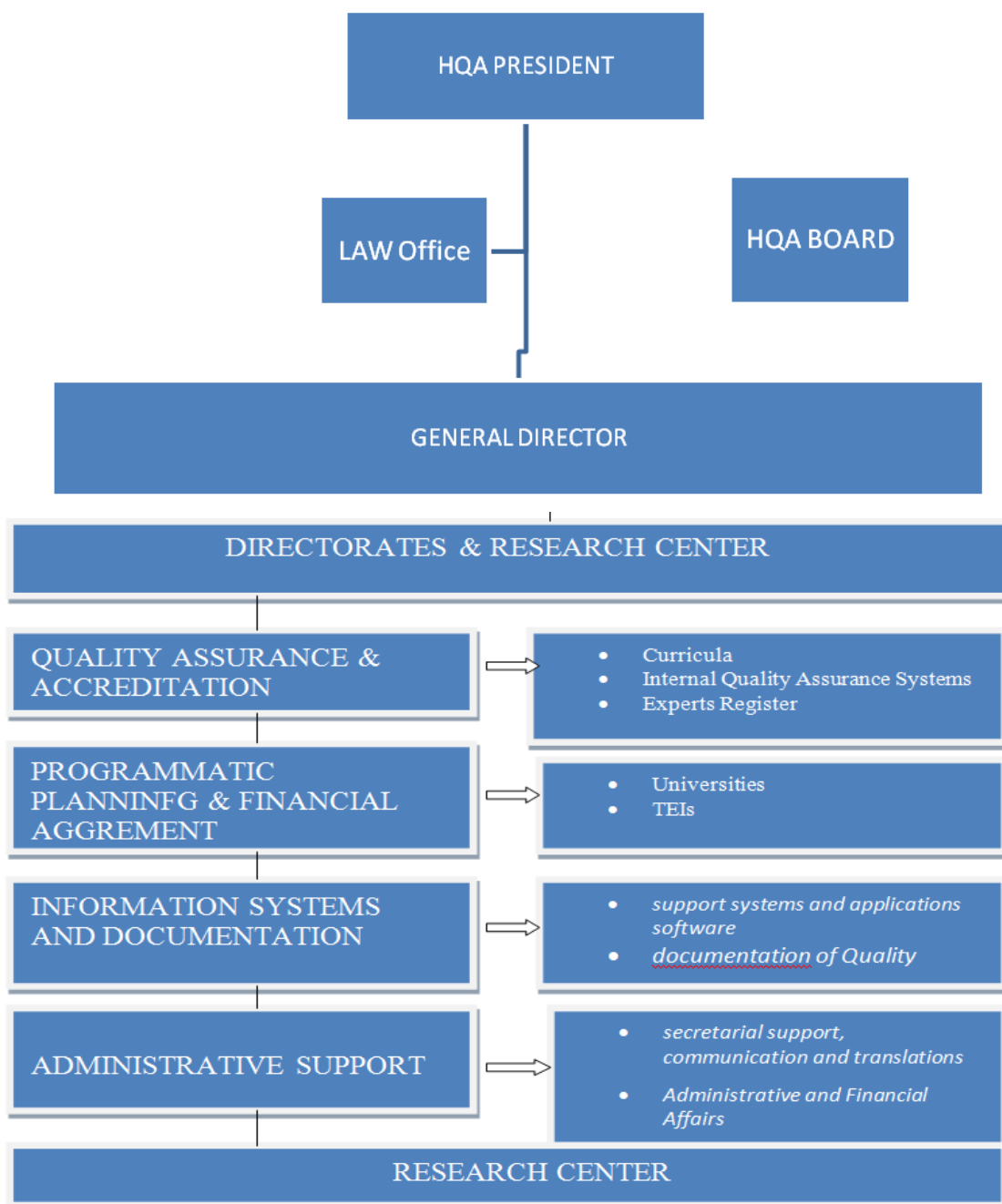
C. Information systems and documentation Directorate

- *Support systems and applications software quality*
- *Documentation*

D. Administration support

- *Secretarial support, communication and translations*
- *Administrative and financial affairs*

E. Research study Centre & Judicial office



On the basis of the corresponding establishment plan, a total of 45 staff positions have to be covered. The staff division is shown in the table below:

Division of Staff						
Directorates						
Staff Category	Directorate of Quality Assurance and Accreditation	Directorate of Progr. Planning and Financing Agreement	Information Systems and Document. Directorate	Administration Support	Research Center	Total
Special Scientific Staff	10	6	3		6	25
Administrative Staff	4	2	4	9	1	20
TOTAL	14	8	7	9	7	45

It should be noted at this point that, on the basis of the applicable general recruitment policy in the public sector in Greece, only one new recruiting will be approved for every 10 exits. It is highly unlikely that, in this way, we will be able to cover these positions in the near future, since the staff needs of hospitals and schools across the country are in priority over HQA. HQA's short-term goal is the legislative approval of its new organizational structure and the nomination of a General Director. The nomination of a General Director, according to the provision of the Law 4009/2011, is of great importance, since the HQA General Director will be responsible for the following functions:

- a) Coordination and direction of the scientific and administrative units,
- b) Recommendation to the President to convene the Board's agenda and participation in meetings without voting rights,
- c) Implementation of the decisions, guidelines, and any other acts of the Agency,
- d) Being the administrative and disciplinary head of the Agency's special scientific and administrative staff,
- e) Delegating the right of signature and permitting other members of the HQA Council to sign documents or other acts "with command of General Director",
- f) Being an expense executor, and
- g) Representing the Agency, in and out of court, in case of absence or incapacity of the President.

It should be noted that, according to the legal provision by L. 4009/2011, the General Director will be appointed by the President of the Agency, after public announcement of the position.

2.3.3. HQA Financing

HQA has adequate and proportional financial resources to organize and run the external quality assurance and accreditation process in an effective and efficient manner. This has been achieved so far with two sources of funding: The regular budget from the State (A), and European Funding (B).

A. Regular Budget from the State (RBS)

The Regular Budget from the State (RBS) covers personnel costs of the President, Members of the Board, the General Director (to be approved), and Administrative Staff. Furthermore, the Regular State Budget provides a limited financial support (~2% on average of the total budget) for property and equipment supplies (see Table 1). The annual financial support from the State in the period from 2010 up to the end of 2014 is illustrated in Diagram 1. Despite serious financial cuts of the Greek Government in the last five years, including the Ministry of Education, the RBS of HQA has remained relatively constant in the period 2012 - 2014. Further details of the definition of expenditures for 2015 are provided in the relevant Section on "Resources" (II - 2.4).

Diagram 1: Budget from State Resources for the period 2010-2014 (numbers in euros)

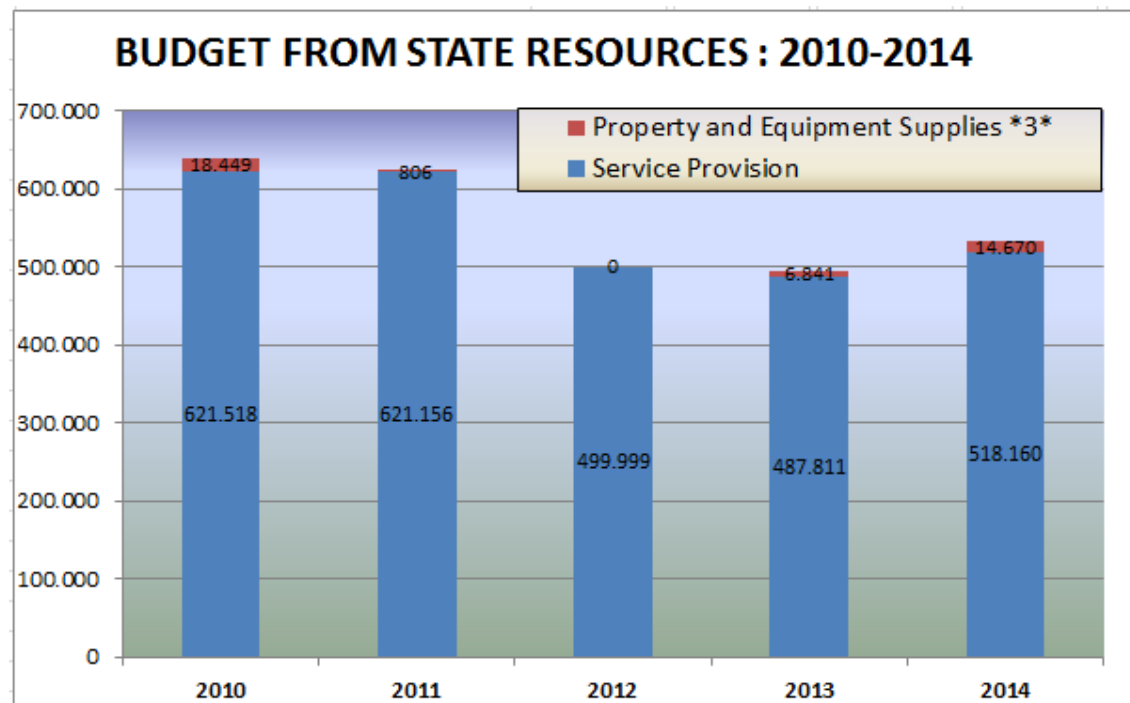


Table 1: Regular Budget from the State (RBS) for the period 2010-2015 (numbers in euros)

Code	Definition of Expenditures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
		Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Approved Budget
0000	Service Provision	621.518,01	621.155,60	499.999,00	487.811,21	518.160,18
	0200 Personnel Costs (Administrative Staff) *1*	77.114,59	111.685,07	0,00	68.685,79	206.310,18
	0300 Special Personnel Costs (President, Board's members, Executive Director.) *2*	534.860,06	503.340,00	499.500,00	417.704,88	242.000,00
	0500 Additional Services (Insurance and other contributions) *1*	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	45.000,00
	0700 Travel expenses of the Board's Members (from their Institutions to HQA)	7.172,72	4.029,14	69,00	0,00	19.350,00
	0800 Other Services	2.370,64	2.101,39	430,00	1.420,54	5.500,00
1000	Property and Equipment Supplies *3*	18.449,47	806,25	0,00	6.841,07	14.670,00
	1100 Supply equipment	948,71	355,47	0,00	0,00	900,00
	1200 Health, medical and cleaning supplies	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	1300 Maintenance and repair equipment	1.710,49	177,43	0,00	0,00	2.700,00
	1500 Supply of fuel and lubricants	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	1600 Miscellaneous supplies	303,85	273,35	0,00	0,00	1.395,00
	1700 Capital equipment	15.486,42	0,00	0,00	6.841,07	9.675,00
	Total Budget	639.967,48	621.961,85	499.999,00	494.652,28	532.830,18

1 Based on the new Law, all administrative staff costs must be paid by HQA.

2 Since 1st of July 2014, this category covers the salary of the President and of the Executive Director; The salaries of the members of the Board are covered by their Institutions, where they belong.

3 This category (1000) has been mostly covered by funds of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF 2007-2013).

B. National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF)

HQA funding from the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) has been achieved through integration of the HEIs evaluation process in the operational programme “Education and Life Long Learning” of NSRF (ESPA) 2007 - 2013 (extended to the end of 2015), through a project titled “Development of a National Evaluation System, Quality Assurance of Education and Promoting Social Inclusion in Priority Access 1, 2, 3 - Horizontal Action”. In Table 2, we present the projects and activities of the implementation of national evaluation system, quality assurance of education, along with the budget of 2010 – 2014, absorption (%) up to May 2014, the balance as well as the obligations of 2014 and 2015 (until October 2015).

Table 2: Implementation of National Evaluation System, Quality Assurance of Education funded by the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-13 (Euros)

Projects and Activities	Budget 2010-2015	Absorption (May 2014)	%	Balance 2014-2015	Obligations 2014-2015
1. IMPLEMENTATION OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION SYSTEM IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	4.002.198,75	2.564.026,40	64%	1.438.172,35	660.000,00
1.1. Support of External Evaluation with external partners	250.000,00	90.000,00	36%	160.000,00	160.000,00
1.2. Travel expenses of the External Evaluation Committees (EEC)	3.663.909,38	2.450.737,03	67%	1.213.172,35	500.000,00
1.3. Support services of meetings of the External Evaluation Committees (EEC)	70.000,00	5.000,00	7%	65.000,00	0,00
1.4. Staff training of Greek Universities and HQA in Agencies with advanced Evaluation Systems	18.289,37	18.289,37	100%	0,00	0,00
2. SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF COMPUTER HARDWARE; PERIPHERAL - ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENTS AND OPERATIONAL SOFTWARE	280.000,00	0,00	0%	280.000,00	280.000,00
3. NATIONAL INTEGRATED INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR MONITORING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION	580.000,00	0,00	0%	220.000,00	580.000,00
4. DISSEMINATION, PUBLICITY AND ASSIMILATION OF THE GREEK QUALITY OPERATING SYSTEMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	220.000,00	0,00	0%	220.000,00	0,00
6. DEVELOPMENT, OPERATION, AND PROMOTION OF HQA	1.080.419,40	369.598,07	34%	710.821,33	271.450,58
6.1. Operational cost and general expenditures of HQA	827.000,00	348.445,25	42%	478.554,75	150.000,00
6.2. Monitoring and updating the quality management system (ISO9001:2008)	51.419,40	12.403,40	24%	39.016,00	8.200,00
6.3. Subscriptions	40.000,00	2.320,48	6%	37.679,52	12.679,52
6.4. Travel expenses for enhancing knowledge about the strategy of quality in HEIs	82.000,00	6.428,94	8%	75.571,06	20.571,06
6.5. HQA external evaluation by ENQA	55.000,00	0,00	0%	55.000,00	55.000,00
6.6. Support of HQA with external partners	25.000,00	0,00	0%	25.000,00	25.000,00
7. TRANSLATION IN GREEK ALL EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORTS	390.000,00	0,00	0%	390.000,00	0,00
8. HQA OFFICE RENT	566.000,00	446.325,90	79%	119.674,10	119.674,10
11. STUDIES CONCERNING THE MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF HQA	350.000,00	0,00	0%	350.000,00	350.000,00
TOTAL	7.468.618,15	3.379.950,37	45%	3.288.667,78	2.201.124,68

The majority of the total budget of 7.468.618,15 euros (with an absorption rate of 45% up to may 2014) was allocated in:

- (i) Implementation of the external evaluation system in Higher Education Institutions (4.002.198,75 Euro, i.e., an absorption rate of 64%);
- (ii) Development, operation and promotion of HQA (1.080.419,40 Euro with an absorption rate of 34%), and
- (iii) HQA office rent (566.000,00 Euro, with an absorption rate of 79%).

Among the most important obligations for 2014 - 2015 will be the development of a national integrated information system for monitoring the quality in Higher Education, and the supply and installation of computer hardware and peripheral electronic equipment and operational system.

From Table 1, it is evident that, in the period 2010 – 2014, the total amount of financial support for HQA through the regular budget from the State was 2.789.411 Euro, which corresponds to 557.882 Euro on average per year. Furthermore, nearly 98% of RBS was allocated to the salaries of the HQA staff. In the period 2010 – 2014, the total amount of financial support for HQA through the National Strategic Reference Framework of 2007 - 2013 (European Grants with a limited National contribution 5%) was 3.579.950 Euro, which corresponds to 715.990 Euro on average per year.

Therefore, the percent contribution of the two types of budgets to organize and run the quality assurance and accreditation process in the period 2010 - 2014 was 56% from NSRF and 44% from RBS funds. This is a reasonable ratio which demonstrates that the actions of HQA are of high priority for the Greek Parliament in terms of, both, RBS and NSRF.

CHAPTER 3

THE HQA WORK

3.1. MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE HQA WORK

As it has already been discussed earlier, the initial targeting of HQA in 2005 has been amended in 2011 through the corresponding new legislation. This transition from the old to the new missions required the completion of the initial legislative provisions, and in particular, the completion of the external evaluations of academic units. The latter was also a prerequisite for a range of other activities of the academic units themselves, e.g., starting new postgraduate study programmes, participation in research projects, etc.

3.1.1. Missions in relation with L.3374/2005

According to the founding law of HQA, the legislature has chose institutional evaluation as a main tool for improvement (Article 1, L. 3374/2005), which includes internal or self-evaluation, and external evaluation (Article 2). The implementation and monitoring of this mission has been assigned to an independent agency under the name “Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education” (HQA). According to Article 10 of the same law, the main tasks of HQA are:

The HQA guarantees the transparency of the evaluation procedures, through its mission to support the higher education institutions in implementing the procedures aiming at assuring and improving quality in higher education; to keep the State and the higher education institutions informed on current international developments and trends in the relative issues; and to promote research in this area. In particular the HQA has the following responsibilities:

- A. Plans, coordinates and supports the evaluation process of higher education institutions’ evaluation procedures.
- B. Employs appropriate standards and guidelines in order to specify and review the form of the higher education’s evaluation report, as well as the evaluation criteria and indices in accordance with Paragraph 1 of Article 3, concerning the work of the academic units, their curricula and other services provided by higher education institutions
- C. Compiles, keeps and revises the register of independent experts and specialists in the area of quality assurance and improvement in higher education, both from Greece and abroad; this registry is open to all Greek higher education institutions.
- D. Collects information and maintains a database with the data from the evaluation reports of all Greek higher education institutions
- E. Keeps the competent bodies of the State and the Greek higher education institutions up to date concerning the current situation in Greece, as well as the current international trends and developments in the area of quality assurance and improvement in higher education.
- F. Maintains mutual cooperation with corresponding foreign organizations.
- G. Performs studies and carries out research in order to develop methodologies, techniques and applications for quality assurance and improvement in higher education.

H. Publishes the evaluation results and the measures adopted for quality assurance and improvement in higher education.

I. Represents the country at the institutional bodies and organizations which are formed by the corresponding national agencies of the EU Member States, and of Third Countries.

J. Formulates proposals for the adoption of measures, and the application of quality assurance and improvement practices, in relation to the objectives of the national higher education system, along with the international specifications, experience and practices”.

3.1.2. Missions in relation with L.4009/2011

The Law 4009/2011 amends the HQA, focusing on the one hand at the external evaluation for accreditation of study programmes and, on the other hand, on the accreditation of internal quality assurance at institutional level (Article 66). More specifically, in accordance with Article 66:

“1. As part of its tasks, HQA carries out, in particular, the following functions:

(A) Periodically accredits the quality:

(aa) of internal quality assurance systems of higher education institutions referred to in Article 14;

(bb) the higher education of study programmes, including short-cycle programmes, lifelong learning, distance learning, as well as cooperation with other educational or research institutes (domestic or foreign).

(B) Recommends to the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, and the governing bodies of the Universities, ways and means to assure the continued high quality in higher education

2. To achieve its tasks and the exercise of its competence, the Agency shall:

(A) Establish, organize, specify, standardize and publish in advance the relevant procedures, criteria and indicators, in particular in the framework of common principles and guidelines of the European higher education area;

(B) Develop an integrated information management system with evaluation database, in cooperation with the units of quality assurance of universities (MODIP);

(C) Support Universities and their units in the planning of the quality assurance and accreditation procedure;

(D) Carry out studies and research related to the mission.

3. With respect to its overall activities, the Agency may:

(A) Diversify the procedures and criteria for accreditation of the quality of curricula, laid down in Articles 71 and 72, for:

*(aa) The institutions that have received accreditation of their internal quality assurance systems, and for institutions that have not received such accreditation; and
(bb) New study programmes or study programmes which are already operating.*

(B) Postpone or suspend the evaluation and accreditation of a study programmes or of an internal quality assurance system, if the request for evaluation or accreditation is not accompanied by the required evidence, such as material information and the necessary documentation.

(C) Define another than Greek language for implementing the activities.

4. The external process for the accreditation is based on specific, predetermined, ex ante internationally accepted and publicly available quantitative and qualitative criteria and indicators. The purpose of the accreditation is the external quality assurance of higher education, and the efficiency and transparency of the overall functioning of the Universities".

As it is clear, the accreditation process results in judgments, positive, conditional positive, negative [Article 71(1)], which may have consequences for the study programmes and/or the institution [Article 71(5)].

3.2. TASKS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

3.2.1. The evaluation of academic units

HQA was responsible to plan, organize and process the external evaluation task. Procedures for the external evaluation were originally drafted by HQA, after consultation with the HEIs, and the template for the external evaluation was finalized and published.

Meanwhile, HQA created the External Experts Register, based on the criteria set by law, but also with some limitations the Agency set under the current general conditions, to which specific reference is made below.

By June 2014, the HQA has settled off external evaluations of 397 academic units.

The full course of external evaluations is shown in the following tables.

The analytical course of accomplishment of external evaluations/discipline is shown in the following tables.

***Accomplishment External Evaluation of
Academic Units (Schools or Faculties) of HEIs (per year)***

Year	Number of External Evaluations
2008	5
2009	0
2010	38
2011	83
2012	47
2013	126
2014	98
TOTAL	397

***Accomplishment of the External Evaluation
of the HEI Academic Units (number per year and per discipline)***

Scientific Domain	Number of external evaluations of the HEIs departments per year to June 2014						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Health sciences	0	0	8	18	6	16	13
Economics and Management Sciences	0	0	5	8	4	8	21
Science & Geotechnical Engineering	3	0	7	12	17	38	13
Humanities	0	0	7	11	2	38	31
Science & Informatics	2	0	10	34	15	15	4
Legal, political & Social Sciences	0	0	1	0	3	11	16
Total per year	5	0	38	83	47	126	98
Total:							397

3.2.2. The external evaluation of the institutions

The completion of the external evaluation of the academic units is followed by the external evaluation of the institutions themselves. The internal evaluation process of the institutions is currently ongoing and is expected to be finalized by the end of 2014. Afterwards, the external evaluation of the institutions will take place (estimated during the first semester of 2015).

3.3. THE NEW RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HQA

The new legislative framework gives to HQA new missions regarding the accreditation of the institutional internal quality assurance system, and the accreditation of study programmes.

In the current period, HQA is in the phase of planning the accreditation of study programmes (some preparatory meetings have already taken place). In parallel, HQA has organised information meetings, conferences and contacts with stakeholders (MODIP, Chairpersons of academic units, social institutions, etc.). At the same time, it supports the MODIP of the Institutions in their task of the internal evaluation of their institutions.

3.3.1. Study programmes accreditation

The accreditation is a form of external evaluation. However, it results in a type of evaluation that can have an impact on the institution and/or the study programmes.

HQA has already designed the different steps of the accreditation process, as follows:

- (i) The establishment of a Committee in order to prepare the subject-specific benchmark statements of similar study programmes or study programmes with the same title. The composition of each Committee shall be under the responsibility of the responsible Member of the Council, who will also chair the Committee. This Committee will be joined by the academic unit's chairpersons, representatives of stakeholders, student/students, and two international experts.
- (ii) Preparation of the internal evaluation of each study programmes (in relation with the corresponding subject-specific benchmark statements).
- (iii) Control of the quality of each internal evaluation report by the MODIP of the institution.
- (iv) Control of the quality of each internal evaluation report by HQA.
- (v) Final acceptance of the internal evaluation report.
- (vi) Establishment of the panel of experts for external evaluation.
- (vii) External evaluation procedure.
- (viii) Final report.
- (ix) Decision by HQA about accreditation.

3.3.2. Accreditation of the institutional internal quality assurance system

The accreditation of the internal quality assurance system of the institutions is the second major new task assigned to the HQA.

The accreditation process of internal quality assurance mechanisms of the institutions, represented at different stages of development, has been planned as follows:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Phase 1: | Planning and development of the institution's internal quality assurance system; |
| Phase 2: | Self-evaluation of the Institution and its quality assurance system; |
| Phase 3: | External evaluation of the Institution and its quality assurance system from a Committee of independent external experts; and |

Phase 4: Adoption of the accreditation decision from the HQA Council.

3.4. OTHER ACTIONS OF HQA

The HQA has developed, in parallel with its core task, a number of other actions. In short:

1. MIS (*Management Information System*)

MIS is a database with data from the external evaluation reports of the academic units. This platform will help improving the HQA templates for future actions (accreditation), by highlighting weaknesses or other points (in forms, procedures etc.), which require further improvement. It also provides a wealth of information that will serve as a basis for future comparative studies of similar study programmes and institutions. Data included in the HQA Annual Report for 2014 are considered as a first piece of work; the use of MIS being evident in both quantitative and qualitative data published in that report

2. *Information and dissemination*

HQA systematically seeks both to inform on and to disseminate its work. In this aim, it organizes or co-organizes events, in cooperation with Greek higher education institutions (*see Annex, Part I doc.2*).

3. *International relations and contacts*

The Agency actively participates in international conferences and seminars with the scope to present its work and also to improve it, and keep it updated continually; members of the Council, as well as of the administrative staff attend such meetings (*see Annex, Part I doc. 3*).

4. *Studies*

HQA aims to produce studies generated from its work or strictly related to it; an example of such a study is the one on “Universities’ Operational Costs” - *see the following link:*

<http://www.HQA.gr/data1/%CE%91%CE%BD%CE%AC%CE%BB%CF%85%CF%83%CE%B7%20%CE%9A%CF%8C%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%82%20%CE%9B%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%AF%CE%B1%CF%82%20%CE%A0%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%AF%CF%89%CE%BD.pdf>

5. *Register*

The Agency continues to enrich its register of external experts.

6. National Qualifications Framework

HQA has been actively engaged in the development of the national qualifications framework and, in particular, as regards the qualification levels 6, 7 and 8.

7. *Supporting institutions in the composition of their committees for the selection of academic staff*

In accordance with the transitional provision of the Law 4009/2011 (Article 77, Par. 3), on behalf of academic units, the responsible HQA Department continues up to now to audit external candidates from abroad for possible participation in the Selection Committees for

the recruitment or the promotion of the Greek higher education institutions' academic staff, in accordance with the relevant national legislation.

8. Providing opinions to the Ministry of Education on various issues

HQA expresses its opinion on the questions referred to it by the Ministry of Education. In particular, for the ATHENA project the HQA submitted to the Ministry of Education proposals, in which:

- Criteria and rules, compatible with the current legislation, are specified in order to serve as the basis for drawing up the ATHENA project; following informal meetings of the HQA Council,³ a document entitled ["Restructuring Map of the Greek Higher Education Institutions: An Overview of the Methodological Approach"](#) was submitted on 30 November 2012 to the Ministry of Education
- A large amount of quantitative and qualitative data is presented, generated from the assessment of the evaluation reports: internal/external evaluation reports of the academic units, and internal evaluation reports of the institutions.
- Opinions of the HQA's Plenary Members on both ATHENA projects published (principal and updated) are included in this report

3.5. STRATEGIC PLAN OF HQA

HQA, despite the unstable legal environment and the shortage of administrative and scientific staff, is constantly endeavoring to ensure its optimal functioning, as well as to further develop its strategy and strengthen its position.

Considering the completion of the external evaluation process of all academic units as an important milestone, the agency is now looking to the future with more confidence, dynamism and optimism.

In this context:

1. The HQA calls to be accepted as a full member of ENQA. This integration will put the HQA in a stronger position; moreover, the Agency will be an equal partner among the Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies in Europe.
2. At the same time, it has applied for accession to the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).
3. It aims, with systematic interventions to the Ministry of Education, at the adoption of the Agency's Rules of Procedure.
4. It seeks to secure the working status of the members of the Board with repeated requests to the competent Ministry.
5. It negotiates with the Ministry for, at least, the appointment of a General Director, who will act as a catalyst and a guarantee of the smooth HQA daily operation.

³ During that period (2012), after the resignation of certain members of the Plenary, HQA was under-performing, due to the absence of quorum for the holding of its Plenary Sessions.

6. Given the current tight financial conditions in Greece, HQA tries to find alternative solutions to enhance its scientific and administrative staff through the use of European funds of the NSRF, considering it as a key pillar of the HQA project development.

3.6. SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE HQA

Strengths

- Formal legal status
- Sufficient financial resources
- Developing and consolidating a quality culture in the Greek context of higher education and a relationship of trust between the HQA and the higher education institutions
- Social accounting due to the publication of the annual activity report
- Well-established, common to all and published external evaluation processes
- Full availability of support material, easily accessible with guidelines, templates and FAQs
- Establishment of a register of external experts
- Use of code of conduct to avoid conflicts of interests and selection of external experts with specific and well-known criteria
- Common criteria for both internal and external evaluations
- Efficient management in the organization of external evaluations as well as in the traveling organization of a large number of experts
- Completion of the external evaluations of the academic units despite a series of obstacles and delays
- Publication of the external evaluation reports
- Annual Activity Reports to the Greek Parliament
- Database (MIS) for meta-analysis of the external evaluation reports
- External consultation questionnaires and feedback from experts and academic units' chairpersons

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning of a follow-up process • Monitoring of international developments in the field of quality assurance in higher education • Development of team spirit between the members of the Council and the administrative staff • Internal and external feedback mechanism
<p>Weaknesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working status of the members of the board • Lack of permanent administrative staff • Lack of permanent scientific staff • Non-attendance of students in the HQA Council (despite the legislative provisions) • Non-attendance of stakeholders in the HQA Council (despite the legislative provisions) • Non-attendance of students in the external evaluation Committees (not required by the law) • HQA’s website • Language transfer, mainly Greek-English • Uncertain action plans and strategic planning due to the overall insecurity and instability
<p>Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening and stabilization of the HQA institutional status and functioning thanks to its full membership in ENQA and other relevant international organizations • Change of the HQA main role as accreditation agency • HQA’s internationalization at many different levels • Expectation of activation of students and stakeholders attendance in the HQA actions • Decision of students’ attendance in the Committees for the establishment of subject benchmark statements • Redesign of a new bilingual HQA website (Greek and English) • Publication of the HQA work in the field quality assurance in

	<p>higher education through different studies and reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening of the human resources training mechanism• Cooperation with similar foreign agencies - use of good practices• Active contribution in publications and participation in events related to quality assurance in higher education both in Greece and abroad (ENQA, EUA, etc.)
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncertain political and economic environment• Frequent changes in the political leadership of the Ministry of Education and in parallel, legislative changes• Lot of bureaucracy and inflexibility of the NSRF• Non-adoption of the Agency's organization plan on the Government's responsibility• Reactions of different groups who consider to be affected by the HQA work

PART TWO

CHAPTER 1

HQA'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE ESG CRITERIA (PART I & II)

1.1. STANDARD 2.1 USE OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

STANDARD

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.

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.

HQA compliance with the criterion (ESG 2.1)

HQA is responsible for developing the framework of principles, guidelines and instructions to the MODIPs of the higher education institutions. Therefore, it is responsible for all the material of the internal evaluation sent for completion by the institutions. This material is in line with the forecasts of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ENQA. The material in question began to be developed gradually since 2007 and entails continuous improvements and adjustments over time.

It should be noted that all relevant material have been prepared after a strict and continuous cooperation with the institutions. Indeed, from 2007 on, HQA practices a public consultation policy, and formulates the final version of its texts after elaboration of comments, observations and questions from interested institutions ([Internal Evaluation Report](#), [Application Guide](#)), and (*Annex Part I doc 4a & 4b*).

Additionally, HQA provides counseling and material support to both MODIP and OMEA (at official level, through relevant workshops, and in informal level, through correspondence and/or telephone-based, everyday counseling).

All information publications are posted on the website of HQA. So, the cooperation with the institutions of higher education is close and interactive.

The main documents regarding the evaluation process, as practiced by HQA after consultation with the HEIs, and in relation with ESG, are the following:

I. In the context of the first Law 3374/2005:

A. [Quality Handbook](#)

This offers a brief overview of the legislative framework governing the procedures for quality assurance in higher education institutions, of the role of HQA, as defined in Law 3374/2005, and also of the Directives of the European network for quality assurance in higher education (Quality Assurance - ENQA).

B. [Analysis of Quality Assurance Criteria of Academic Units](#)

This text is a systematic analysis of the quality assurance criteria laid down by Law 3374/2005, with the aim of facilitating the academic units to collect the necessary data, adjusted to the specificities of their academic fields, in order to meet the requirements of the internal evaluation process. These criteria changed a lot of times in the beginning of HQA's life, thus making the work of Institutions very difficult.

C. [Samples of Inventory Sheets](#)

- [6-month course](#),
- [Individual record for members of the faculty staff](#),
- [Course evaluation/teaching — by students](#).

The inventory sheets, by way of questionnaires, are illustrative samples for collecting qualitative and quantitative data, which will then enable the individual and responsible contribution of each of the players in the higher education quality assurance process.

D. [Application Guide of the Internal Evaluation Process](#)

This is a long text, where detailed instructions are given for the collection and analysis of data which have to be included in the internal evaluation report.

E. [Standard Format of the Internal Evaluation Report](#)

The text contains an indicative framework for the introduction of critical analysis and synthesis of data in order to help the internal evaluation group (OMEA) of each academic unit to prepare the internal evaluation report.

Creation of the Site (www.adip.gr)

In order to support the process of quality assurance in higher education, HQA has set among its first priorities the creation of a website, where the documents by HQA are made public, and answers are given to questions of general interest and/or FAQ.

Finally, upon receiving the internal reports of the academic units, HQA checks the completeness of the material (upon arrival) and its quality (before the beginning of the external evaluation), and eventually asks, through the MODIPs, for the material to be supplemented or revised.

It should be noted that, with the provisions of the L. 3374/2005, the evaluated unit at the institutional level was defined as the School or the Faculty.

Each institution would be evaluated after the evaluation of its units. Actually, as we have already mentioned, we are in progress of internal evaluation of institutions (end of 2014),

which will be followed by their external evaluation (1st semester of 2015). The main responsible for this action at institutional level is MODIP. So, each MODIP has to improve the quality standards and the implementation of quality upgrading mechanism in the context of its institution in order to obtain a positive evaluation report.

II. Under the new Law 4009/2001: Actual and future continuation of HQA’s work

With the new law, HQA extends its powers and is now responsible for the accreditation of the quality assurance mechanism in each institution. Following that, all MODIPs must be accredited by HQA.

Working towards the implementation of its new tasks, HQA has worked on the development, organization, completion, specification and standardization of the criteria and the indicators, as well as the methodological and certification procedures. Before its finalization, this material (texts) is put forth for public consultation, and takes its final form following any comments, observations and questions, mainly from interested institutions. All information publications are posted on the website of HQA www.adip.gr.

In parallel, HQA organizes activities to inform the institutions, primarily the MODIPs (i.e., workshops, seminars, diffusion of printed material, etc.), aiming at the dissemination of useful information (see *Annex, Part I, doc.2*). Additionally, HQA comes into contact with other important international organizations (EUA, ESU) in order to prepare the development of the accreditation process.

It should be noted that one of the two main new tasks of HQA is the accreditation of the internal quality assurance system of each institution. HQA has decided to use the evaluation process of institutions (presently in full development) as a training period for the MODIPs to be prepared for their future accreditation (as the new law determines).

The table below shows the correlation between the European standards of internal quality assurance in higher education institutions (ENQA - Part I, European principles and guidelines for internal quality assurance in higher education institutions) with the standards and criteria used by HQA.

Standards and Guidelines of ENQA - ESG PART (1)	HQA compliance with standards ESG PART I
1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Guide of the Internal Evaluation Process • Analysis of criteria • HQA Quality Handbook • L.3374/2005 Art. 1,2 & 3.
1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Guide of the Internal Evaluation Process • Analysis of criteria • Completeness criteria internal evaluation report • HQA Quality Handbook • L.3374/2005 (Articles 4-10).

1.3 Assessment of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Guide of the Internal Evaluation Process (Section 2.4, p. 6) • Course Evaluation Questionnaire (L.3374/2005 Articles 2 par. 3 Article 11 par 1 (d) & (e).)
1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of criteria • Application Guide of the Internal Evaluation Process (Section. 2.3, page 6) • L.3374/2005 Art. 3 par. 1 (a).
1.5 Learning resources and student support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of criteria (2.4-2.10)
1.6 Information systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of criteria (Section 2 (2.4-2.10)) • L.3374/2005 Art. 2 par. 5 (d).
1.7 Public information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of criteria • L.3374/2005 Articles 1 par. 2

1.2. STANDARD 2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

STANDARD

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.

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

HQA compliance with the criterion (ESG 2.2)

Quality assurance procedures, in which HQA is directly involved, have been established by Law 3374/2005 (and subsequently, for accreditation, by Law 4009/2011).

The results of quality assurance procedures are evaluated according to four sets of criteria: (a) Curricula-programmes of studies; (b) Teaching; (c) Research; and (d) Other services.

Each set of criteria includes specific indicators, which are further analyzed in Law 3374/2005, Article 3, par. 3.

Therefore, the criteria are common and known to all.

Subsequently, the criteria and the indicators are standardized, supplemented, and specified by the HQA by issuing clarifications, guidelines and standards ([Criteria Analysis](#)).

The draft detailing the standards was sent for consultation to the Greek higher education institutions in February 2007.

The observations and comments that were received were taken into account by HQA in its drafting the final version, and before issuing new additional Directives ([Clarification Instructions for Internal Evaluation Report](#)).

Internal and external evaluation standards were translated into English and were posted on HQA's website. Moreover, questionnaires addressed to academic unit members were standardized and made public; they constitute the raw material for the production of the internal evaluation report.

Consequently, both the supporting material (questionnaires) and the standards (of internal and external evaluation) are common knowledge, so that institutions, academic units and any other interested party are in general fully aware of them; moreover, their form has been finalized after consultation with the institutions and the academic units. They derive their legitimacy from the relevant legislative provisions.

A critical point in the whole process was the establishment of trust between HQA and the institutions. Despite the initial, not so positive reactions, emanating from a segment of the academic community, very good cooperation has been achieved over time, and at different speed (speed was found to be related to the particular characteristics of each institution).

The key components for achieving this result were of multiple origin; some of which are the following:

- (a) Allaying the fear of the unknown, following the first evaluations;
- (b) The practical assistance provided by HQA to the MODIPs in various ways (seminars, workshops, briefing papers, standard forms, continuous technical support, etc);
- (c) The Ministry's policy, which tied the evaluation to the operation of postgraduate study programmes, and also to the possibility of participation in research programmes;
- (d) Understanding the importance of connecting quality assurance with the International relations of the institution and/or the academic unit.

Finally, it should be noted that the founding law 3374/2005 stipulates that the external evaluation is intended for improvement, meaning that the outcome of the external evaluation and the Committee's advice are clearly of a supportive and not punitive nature.

1.3. STANDARD 2.3 CRITERIA FOR DECISIONS

STANDARD

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

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.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 2.3)

All external evaluation reports undertaken by HQA are based on the standard [HQA External Evaluation template](#) along with [guidelines](#) which are given by HQA to the experts and is known to the academic unit undergoing evaluation.

Also Guidelines for the [external evaluation process](#) are provided by HQA ahead of time to the academic unit undergoing evaluation, and are furthermore published on the HQA's website.

This standard Guide and the template are based on the ESGs, and they are detailed in examining the quality of the academic unit under evaluation, against formal requirements that must be met.

The evaluation report shall include analyses, findings, recommendations, and suggestions of the independent experts regarding measures to improve the quality of teaching, research or other work, to address any deficiencies and discrepancies which were identified in relation with the profile, the objectives, and the tasks of each academic unit.

Following notification of the draft external evaluation report, the academic units have the right to express their comments and observations on the content of the report, which are subsequently forwarded to the experts. The Committee of experts reserves the right to accept or reject the substantiated comments and the other remarks that were made.

At the end of each report, the strengths, the weaknesses, as well as the other particular characteristics of each academic unit undergoing evaluation are stated. In addition, the experts make recommendations for the improvement of the delivery of quality.

HQA does not intervene in the work of the Committees. Just, through HQA the Committee communicates with the academic unit under evaluation.

HQA is fully conscious about the issue of consistency in the work of the various expert panels. For this reason, HQA forwards to the experts all the relevant information material (i.e., instructions for completing their report, explanatory documents and code of conduct, and evaluation timetable instructions) before their arrival to Greece.

Furthermore, during their first day in Athens, HQA organizes a mandatory briefing with each panel. This briefing is organized by – at least - one member of the Agency's Board. After a general presentation, the main HQA's concern is to give to the members of the panel the

opportunity to ask about the aims and procedures of the external evaluation, and to clarify issues.

After the completion of the evaluation of an academic unit, HQA asks for feedback and so it develops a questionnaire, which is sent to the experts; 65, 5% of them consider HQA's information and preparation as "excellent" (see more about this questionnaire in the criterion 2.4). Additionally, the fact that there is an initial division by academic fields, and based on that all academic units in each field have the same responsible person from HQA's Board, has contributed to an increased tuning of the panels by academic field.

Nevertheless, as HQA is really concerned about the consistency of the reports it receives, it has undertaken a detailed and systematic analysis of these reports. From this analysis, it was revealed that, among reports, there exist some differences in quality.

The Agency, in order to ensure the independence of the work of the committees and achieve greater consistency among the reports at the next phase (accreditation), has decided to include in its Standard Guide a series of benchmarks, which should be clearly and obligatory completed by all committees.

1.4. STANDARD 2.4 PROCESSES FIT FOR PURPOSE

STANDARD

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

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.

HQA compliance with the criteria ESG II (2.4)

Experts — Selection of experts

One of the key actions of HQA was, and still is, the creation and enrichment of the register of external experts. This was based on the provisions of existing legislation (Law 3374/2005, Article 8). Presently, there are 5.317 entries in that register. A central concern of HQA is to ensure the absence of conflict of interest in the composition of Committees.

As regards the external evaluation of institutions (programmed for the 1st semester of 2015), the Agency intends to use experts with experience in University governance. Hence, this will be a key factor in selecting experts from the Registry. Moreover, HQA has come into contact with the EUA, requesting a list of experts with the appropriate profiles.

Finally, the HQA, in an attempt to obtain feedback from both experts, as well as from the academic units, has formulated specialized questionnaires (see *Annex Part II doc.5a, 5b*) in order to derive useful information about the process.

Here are some facts to illustrate this point: we have sent questionnaires to 627 external experts, of which 436 replied, i.e. a response rate of 69.5 %. Given the involvement of these experts in more than one evaluation, the weighted number of external evaluators who received questionnaires is 1.069, which corresponds to 356 external evaluations of academic units whereas the weighted number of respondents is 812, which corresponds to 308 external evaluations of academic units.

From their response, it is evident that, in most of the cases, the time periods foreseen for, both,

- the on-site visit in the academic unit undergoing evaluation, and
- the completion of the external evaluation report,

were considered satisfactory.

The preparation for the external evaluations that were underway in the academic units undergoing the process of external evaluation were considered adequate and/or excellent to some extent, regarding:

- The information contained in the internal evaluation report that was prepared by the academic unit; and
- The collaboration of the academic units during the on-site visit of the external evaluation Committees.

The performance of HQA was considered adequate and/or excellent to a great extent for all the services provided in the context of the external evaluation process, i.e.:

- The template of the external evaluation report that HQA prepared;
- The instructions HQA prepared and distributed to the external evaluators for their drafting the External Evaluation Report;
- The level and quality of the information HQA disseminated to the external evaluators prior to the initiation of the evaluation process; and
- The quality of communication between HQA and the external evaluators before the initiation of the formal evaluation process.

The first two questions relate mainly to the vital contribution and guiding of the members of the HQA Council, while the last two questions concern the very effective cooperation with the HQA staff which, in spite of its small number, showed commitment and reached

performance levels of high quality (as shown by the 65.5 % ‘excellent’ evaluation rate in response to the last question).

As a result of the above, 96.8 % of the external evaluators said they would like to work again with the HQA for the purposes of improving higher education (*for more information, see the Annual Report 2014, pp. 66-73 and Annex, Part II, Doc 6*).

Information and Briefing of Experts

Each Committee of external experts receives timely, and before its arrival in Greece, relevant information material. During the first day of their stay in Greece, the members of the Committee participate in a briefing seminar organized by one or more members of the Plenary/Council in HQA headquarters. The briefing procedure is obligatory for all experts. The seminar consists of a [presentation by HQA](#); the objective of this presentation is to create a dialogue with members of the Committee. The main target of HQA is to offer clarifications and provide detailed answers to all the questions posed by the members of the Committee. At the same time, HQA has the opportunity to state clearly what is expected from the Committee.

Following up on the end of the evaluations of academic units, HQA has developed a questionnaire addressed to the experts in order to test their satisfaction from the HQA’s work. Based on the responses so far received by the experts (see *experts feedback, Annex Part II, doc.6*), they seemed to be satisfied from the information HQA provided.

International experts

On the basis of an earlier decision taken by HQA, all experts will come from foreign institutions. They may be Greek citizens, foreign citizens of Greek origin, Cypriots, as well as international scientists.

This choice of the HQA’s past administration, even since the legislation does not prohibit other solutions (L. 3374/2005, Articles 8 and 10), was based on and justified by the intense reactions of a part of academic community towards evaluation. Namely, the HQA reported on this point the following:

“As guarantee of transparency, objectivity and independence, during the first phase of implementation of the evaluation, HQA has decided to exclusively use experts, academics or researchers, who serve in foreign educational institutions”.

Of course, the experts in question should not have any problem of conflict of interest with the academic unit under evaluation (based on the definitions of the current relevant legislation) during the last 5 years, and they also have to sign an appropriate form.

Student Participation

There is no provision in the two basic laws governing the operation of HQA for student participation in the external evaluation Committees. HQA is very sorry for this, but it is not possible to go beyond this current legislation.

By contrast, as regards the procedures for internal evaluation, the legislation foresees the participation of students within both OMEA (Law 3374/2005, Article 5, par. 2), and MODIP (undergraduate and postgraduate/PhD candidate representatives, Law 3374/2005, Article 2, par. 4), as well as in the Plenary/Council of the HQA.

Nevertheless, in the HQA Council, as we have already noted, students have not sent their representative, due to problems relating to the internal operation of their union organizations. The same problem in general exists also at the MODIP level. On the contrary, at academic-unit level, the representation of students has been systematic.

Recognizing the importance of this deficiency, especially as regards the participation of students in the external evaluation Committees, HQA has been trying to find ways that would allow students to get involved, without infringing the applicable legislation. An example might be the decision of HQA to create a register of interested students (those having acquired experience mainly through OMEA or MODIP), in cooperation with ESU, in the course of setting up committees for determining the subject - benchmark statements for the new process of accrediting programmes of studies.

In preparing the setting up of a committee that would develop specific criteria for the accreditation of the first study programmes, the Agency made a public invitation and has already received the participation of a student from ESU (*see Annex, Part I Doc.7*).

Ensuring of the Review Procedures

The role of HQA as a supervisory and coordinating agency for the quality assurance system in Greece involves specific and formalized procedures, designed to achieve its objectives. In particular, the quality assurance system is composed of three procedures:

1. Annual evaluation and recording of the work undertaken by the academic units (annual internal reports);
2. Periodic, i.e., every four years, critical evaluation of the academic units (internal evaluation or self-evaluation); and, finally,
3. Aggregation of results of internal evaluation, with additional and independent judgment by independent experts coming from outside the academic unit, through an on-site visit (external evaluation).

The HQA ascribes to the following standard format:

- | |
|---|
| 1. An internal evaluation report (with participation of students) |
| 2. External evaluation by experts |
| 3. Visit on the spot (prior information of members of committees for the procedures and evaluation forms before initiation by HQA) |
| 4. Drafting and publication of external evaluation report |

Monitoring (follow-up) Procedures

Law 3374/2005 foresaw no procedures for follow-up. The legislator decided to develop an institutional evaluation as a tool for improvement. So, the main concerns were, on one hand, to have a detailed picture of the academic units of the Greek higher institution system, and on the other hand, to offer recommendations for improvement to the academic units.

However, it is true that the external evaluation of all academic units was only completed in the spring of 2014. Therefore, the evaluation results are quite recent for the majority of academic units to consider them as a basis for follow-up actions.

Nevertheless:

(A) HQA is in the process of analyzing the results of external evaluations, and setting up a database detailing the strengths and weaknesses of academic units, as recorded in the evaluation reports (see *Ref. MIS link* <https://portal.adip.gr/exteval/results.php>). Also, the agency publishes an Annual Report, which is an essential tool for follow-up actions, either by the Greek State or by the higher education institutions.

(B) MODIPs are in the process of drafting or re-drafting the self- evaluation reports of their institutions (institutional evaluation). According to the standard form of [Self Evaluation Report Institutions](#) sent by HQA, there is a specific section in the text, where institutions are requested to indicate the actions already undertaken, or planned to be taken, in order to improve what has been stated as comments in the external evaluation report on their academic units.

(C) Each academic unit, as stipulated in the law, is obliged to submit to the respective MODIP, and also to HQA, short versions (charts) of their annual reports, where they are asked to describe any improvements that have made following the relevant advice of the external experts. So, it is clear that continuous contact does exist between HQA and institutions.

Finally, it should be noted that Law 4009/2011 does not foresee follow-up procedures. Nevertheless, and in contrast to the previous law, it provides clear procedures for monitoring, including the case of accreditation with positive marks (Article 71, par.2).

Admission and recognition that the enhancement of HEIs and their improvement policies are fundamental elements of quality assurance

The improvement of academic institutions and their policies aiming at such improvements are fundamental elements of quality assurance, in accordance with the governing legislation (Law 3374/2005, Article 1, par. 2, Law 3685/2008, Article 1, par 2). The Agency, through its work, implements these legislative provisions. More specifically:

With the completion of the procedures of their external evaluation, the academic units were subjected to a process, which highlighted their strong and weak points in the operation of the units. The evaluation report - with its conclusions presented therein have highlighted the good and the weak aspects of each unit.

HQA, both through its Annual Reports to the Parliament, and its setting up of the MIS database, plans to proceed to publications aiming at highlighting and disseminating the overall conclusions and the findings of the evaluation reports, with a view of nurturing a general culture of evaluation and quality assurance.

As regards accreditation, it will result in a 3-tier evaluation outcome: Positive, Conditional positive, Negative. It is evident that in the case of the last two outcomes the minimum standards required are not met (to varying degree); therefore, a series of recommendations are in order for achieving them. Law 4009/2011 does not preclude any recommendations for a positive evaluation outcome. Nevertheless, a recommendation section will be included in the HQA's standard form that will be given to the Committees.

1.5. STANDARD 2.5 REPORTING

STANDARD

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.

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.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 2.5)

The external evaluation report

HQA has created a standard Guide with instructions for the preparation of the external evaluation reports. Parts of the reports are entirely distinct and are divided into respective sections: Curriculum; teaching; research; other services; strategic planning, perspectives for improvement, and dealing with potential inhibiting factors; final conclusions and recommendations.

The first four sections are each divided into four subsections: Approach; implementation; results; and improvement. Strengths and weaknesses and the Committee's recommendations are usually found in the conclusions of the reports. This enables the reader to easily identify the key findings of a report.

The reports shall be written in plain, intelligible language, in accordance to the proper academic standards, as well as academic ethics.

Although the majority of reports are relatively recent, HQA has addressed a questionnaire to the Chairs of the academic units, in an attempt to flesh out the opinion of stakeholders on the usefulness of evaluation (*see Annex, Part II, doc 6b*).

Publication of the external evaluation report

The external evaluation reports are made public, both on the HQA's website and the website of the academic units, in a manner that allows visitor's free use. The text of the report is published in the language in which it was written.

For better dissemination of the results of the reports throughout Greek Society, HQA intends to translate the reports in Greek and upload them on its website.

1.6. STANDARD 2.6 FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

STANDARD

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.

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.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 2.6)

Most of the relevant information has already been given on the standard 2.4, as above. The existing procedure (as determined by the law) does not in general provide for follow-up procedures. If we try an interpretation of the laws, the legislator had in mind that this target could be achieved through periodic evaluation rounds, an idea to which is given a prominent place in the legislative texts.

1.7. STANDARD 2.7 PERIODIC REVIEWS

STANDARD

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.

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.

HQA's compliance with the criteria (ESG 2.7)

The legislative framework within which HQA operates clearly and explicitly provides for periodic evaluations, although we should notice the change in the type of evaluation. Indeed, whereas the founding law referred to evaluation of academic units for improvement, the new law deals with the accreditation of programmes of studies. However, it is worth recalling that in Greece the School-type academic unit is identical with an undergraduate study programme.

The periodic evaluations are:

1. The annual evaluation and recording of the work undertaken by the academic units (annual internal reports);
2. The periodic, and every four years, critical evaluation of the academic unit (internal evaluation or self-evaluation); and, finally,
3. Aggregation of the results of internal evaluation with additional and independent judgment by independent experts coming from outside the academic unit, through on-site visit (external evaluation).

1.8. STANDARD 2.8 SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSES

STANDARD

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

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.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 2.8)

HQA is obliged to deliver each year a report on the quality of higher education. This report is based on data derived from the evaluation reports, the specific studies undertaken by the HQA, and from its other activities.

The Annual Report includes:

- (A) A reference in the work of HQA, as defined by law;
- (B) Statistical data on the state of the evaluation process in higher education institutions;
- (C) The operating data of the institutions and, in particular, a reference to their strengths and weaknesses, as contained in the reports of the external evaluators;
- (D) A comparison with good practices in other countries; and
- (E) Conclusions and suggestions or comments on the necessary measures, and the formulation of indices and parameters for improving the quality of higher education.

These reports are published in paper and electronic format.

Apart from this annual HQA obligation, the Agency has invested heavily in the database of MIS. It is hoped that the MIS will become in the future the basis for conducting a series of specialized studies on the system of higher education in Greece. In addition, MIS will be used to improve HQA's standard forms and templates.

An initial overall analysis of the Greek system of higher education, with comparative figures of strengths and weaknesses, has already been published as part of the 2014 Annual Report. From this work, it clearly appears that the panels have stressed their comments on three levels: Academic unit, Institution, Country. Therefore, the existing problems can be related to the academic unit, or to the more general functioning of the institutions, or emanating from the State.

Moreover, HQA has already published the study titled “Operating Costs of Universities” (**see 3.4.3 “other actions HQA A module**). At the same time, HQA has published three documents where HQA outlines its principles regarding the reform “ATHINA” Project These documents, which cover issues of methodology, outline approach, offer opinion and additional comments on “ATHINA” Project, have been posted on the website of HQA.

CHAPTER 2

HQA COMPLIANCE WITH THE ESG CRITERIA- (PART III)

2.1. STANDARD 3.1 USE OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERION 1)

STANDARD

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.

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.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 3.1)

The related data and all relevant information have already been given in Part 2 of this report.

2.2. STANDARD 3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS (ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERION 2)

STANDARD

Agencies should be formally recognized 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.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 3.2)

The laws that govern the operation of HQA on broader as well as on individual issues are the following: 4115/2013, 3374/2005, 3577/2007, 3794/2009, 3848/2010, 4009/2011 the first is the founding law.

HQA is an independent administrative agency (ADA) with headquarters in Athens, which has administrative autonomy, and is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs to control the legality of its actions.

HQA has been renamed by Law 4009/2011 (GG I 195), to HQA (Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency).

Specifically, the independent administrative authorities/agencies (ADA) in Greece were established with the 2001 revision of our Constitution, and have the following main characteristics:

- They are State bodies, but stay beyond the hierarchical control or supervision of the Central Government, and are subject only to judicial review of their legality. To this end, they are under no obligation of obedience to the institutions with executive function.
- Their members have personal and functional independence, similar to that of judges. Personal independence means that they do not take orders, but are bound by the law. Functional independence means that other functional bodies of the state, particularly those of executive function, cannot intervene in the way in which they exercise their functions.
- Have wide-ranging, decision-making powers (particularly, regulations and sanctions) in order to regulate critical and sensitive sectors of the political, economic and social life in general. Moreover, their decisions are binding on the other bodies of the State.
- According to the Greek Constitution, members of Independent Administrative Authorities are appointed for a specific term; the Constitution also guarantees that they enjoy personal and operational independence.

2.3. STANDARD 3.3 ACTIVITIES (ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERION 1)

STANDARD

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

Guidelines

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

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 3.3)

HQA has, according to the legislative framework, assumed:

- External quality assurance activities, both at institutional and at study-programmes level;
- The above activities are undertaken on a regular basis;

- The above activities involve evaluation, review and accreditation, and they constitute the core functions of the Agency.

(I) More specifically, under its founding law, HQA has completed the external evaluation of all academic units of higher education institutions. Analytically, the procedure was the following:

Step 1: Initially, the academic units (Schools or Faculties) are divided into broader scientific fields. For each discipline, a Council Member was nominated to undertake and coordinate the evaluation process in the particular fields of his/her expertise.

Step 2: The external evaluation process starts soon after the internal evaluation procedure is completed. Factors, such as the time pressure for priority integration of internal evaluation within an academic unit, the readiness/availability of an academic unit to be reviewed, and the consideration of other, local conditions (e.g., the existence of protests) create the priority list for evaluation of academic units.

Step 3: The responsible Council Member communicates with the Chairperson of the academic unit under evaluation and consults with him in order to start the external evaluation process at the relevant time period. The Head of academic unit has the right to ask for deferred evaluation on grounds of temporary local conditions. If consented, then the process begins with the establishment of the Committee of external experts.

Step 4: The responsible Member of the HQA Board, after taking into account the profile of the under evaluation academic unit, looks for the most appropriate experts from the Register of HQA based on their CVs (*for conflict of interest, see below*). If an interdisciplinary academic unit is under review or if there are not enough available persons, then experts are sought from the nearest field of expertise. Finally, a short list of experts is selected.

Step 5: The responsible Council Member makes the first contact with the selected experts by e-mail and/or telephone. The main purpose of this communication with the expert is the initial information on the upcoming evaluation, and the investigation of the expert's availability in the scheduled time period.

In addition, during the first contact, the responsible Member has to inquire the expert to declare [according to the provisions of Law 3374/2005, Article 8(5)] the existence (or not) of a possible conflict of interest, before the experts sign the papers and the related acceptance letter form (see *Annex, Part II Doc. 8*).

Step 6: In case of refusal or conflict of interest, the Board Member will search for another available expert, through the Register, and by mail or telephone.

Step 7: Once the responsible Member finds all the appropriate experts, he/she will put together the external evaluation Committee, between 3 and 5 members, and get ready to announce the composition of the Committee to the HQA's Council.

Step 8: The composition of the Committee is approved or not by the Council. Objections can be raised on issues, such as the compatibility of specializations, the presence of experts with the same specialty, or the spatial origin of experts (i.e., all members of a Committee cannot come from the same country or the same University).

Step 9: The respective administrative department of HQA is responsible to take care of the organization and coordination of the Committee's visit.

Step 10: Both MODIP and the academic unit concerned are being informed by the HQA on the dates of their site visit and, after that, are being asked to draft the programme of the site visit, based on local features, with an [indicative programme](#) being sent to MODIP.

Step 11: HQA takes care of sending to experts all the relative information material (File: Evaluation timetable instructions, instructions for completing the report, fees/financial explanatory document and code of conduct. Access to the file on the internal evaluation report of the department under review is given through password).

Step 12: Prior to the evaluation, the final synthesis of the External Evaluation Committee is posted on the website “Transparency”. This is an official web site, where all Greek public documents have to be posted for reasons of transparency.

Step 13: Arrival of the Committee in Athens/Thessaloniki. The members of the External Evaluation Committee are briefed by a Member of the HQA Board on the process of the external evaluation, on the work of the Committee, as well as on HQA

Step 14: Evaluation process, with a total duration of one week; the draft schedule of site visit as follows:

(A) First day: Arrival — information — transport to the place of evaluation;

(B) Second and third day: On-site visit (1 ½ day);

(C) Fourth and fifth day: Drafting of the report in premises provided by HQA

(D) Sixth day: End of the process - return journey

Step 15: Submission of the draft report, either before departure or immediately thereafter. (It should be noted here that the experts cannot be paid before the submission of their report, therefore there is a high incentive for quick drafting and delivery of the report).

Step 16: HQA announces the draft external evaluation report at the MODIP of the Higher Education Institution concerned. A deadline of 15 days is given by law in order for the academic unit to submit, through MODIP, any comments and other feedback, throughout the whole external evaluation report contents.

Step 17: In case that HQA receives comments by the academic unit with regards to a report, it is responsible to notify the members of the evaluation committee, and inform them by sending the relative document with the comments.

Step 18: According to the procedures, it is totally up to a Committee to accept or not the comments of an academic unit. After a decision of the Committee, the report is being made public by posting it to the HQA web-site.

Step 19: HQA communicates the final report (as an electronic document) to MODIP of a HEI, which is then obligated to post the report on their web-site.

Step 20: If necessary, a translation of the report can be made (NB: the reports are usually written in English). If otherwise, it is important to mention the specificity of the academic unit. So, in cases such as of Schools of Greek, English, French, Spanish or Italian Literature, the reports might be written in the corresponding language.

(II) The external evaluation of institutions is currently in full development. HQA has already developed the [Implementation Guide](#) of the internal evaluation process, in accordance with ESG, and after consultation with the institutions

(III) Based on the new law (4009/2011), HQA has completed all groundwork, and has initiated the process of accreditation of study programmes e.g., [the templates of the accreditation](#) of both under- and post-graduate study programmes have been prepared

More specifically, the work planning of the accreditation of study programmes is as follows:

(i) Establishment of a Committee in order to prepare the subject specific benchmark statements of the similar study programmes or study programmes under the same title. The aim of each Committee is to establish subject-benchmark statements to be used in the accreditation process. The composition of each Committee shall be under the responsibility of the responsible Member of the Council who will also chair the Committee. The Committee will consist of the academic unit's Chairpersons, stakeholders' representative, students, and two international experts.

As for stakeholders, all study programmes are divided into programmes leading to:

- Regulated professions:
Seven (7) professions (P.D. 38/10): doctor, nurse, dentist, veterinarian, midwife, pharmacist and architect, of which there is an extensive description of the conditions that must be met by the education provided, i.e., duration, courses, internships in specific forms and results etc. (Articles 24-49, P.D. 38/2010).
- Professions controlled by Chambers, Professional Associations (authorization required to engage in the occupation): engineers, lawyers, accountants, etc.
- Other Professions: academic units' chairpersons will be invited to identify stakeholders for those possible profession fields.

Regarding students' attendance, the HQA services are in contact with the ESU (see **Annex, Part II, Doc. 9**) while at the same time, a register is being setup of all interested students in order to eliminate the problem of the non-attendance of students in the external evaluation committees. The interested students will be supposed to have experience of attendance in the OMEA or in the MODIP of their institution.

(ii) Preparation of the internal evaluation of each study programme, in relation with the corresponding subject specific benchmark statements.

(iii) Control of the quality of each internal evaluation report from the MODIP of the institution.

(iv) Control of the quality of each internal evaluation report from HQA.

(v) Final acceptance of the internal evaluation report.

(vi) Establishment of the panel of external evaluation.

(vii) External evaluation procedure.

(viii) Final report.

(ix) Decision of HQA about accreditation.

The Accreditation Committees will evaluate programmes of studies according to the appropriate subject benchmark statements. In the end of the process, a justified rating will be given. Taking into account this rating, the HQA will state its final decision on each particular programme of studies, as follows:

- Positive (valid up to 8 years);
- Positive, subject to stated conditions (with listing of the criteria that are not met, and a specific timetable to be set for their satisfaction);
- Negative.

In case of a negative evaluation, the Ministry of Education may take the decision to reduce the funding of the institution, as well as the admission of new students in the particular study programme or in the institution, depending on the subject matter of the accreditation (study programmes or an institution's internal quality assurance system). By the same decision, the students of those study programmes or institutions will have the possibility to continue their studies in another accredited programme of studies or institution, with all relevant issues to be regulated in accordance with the law (L. 4009/2011, Art. 71).

We have to note that in the accreditation process, the following priorities have been set:

- New study programmes resulting from the project "ATHENA";
- Study programmes which have not completed their evaluation process;
- Study programmes for which four years have elapsed since their external evaluation.

All relevant documentation, standards, directives etc. have been posted on the Agency's website and have been sent to MODIPs.

(IV) Finally, the accreditation of the internal quality assurance system of institutions will be conducted after the completion of the internal and external evaluation of the institutions.

2.4. STANDARD 3.4 RESOURCES (ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERION 3)

STANDARD

Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organize 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.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 3.4)

A. Human resources

The HQA staff consists of:

- The President,

- 11 board members,
- 13 members of administration staff, and
- 1 scientific staff member, allocated by the Technological Education Institution of the Ionian Islands.

At the same time, and to strengthen its administrative capacity, HQA has issued a call for administrative and scientific fixed-term staff positions, through the NSRF.

Indicatively, from September 2013 to March 2014, 27 freelance experts were recruited, following a public announcement, in order to assist in the implementation of the external evaluations. In the near future, 15 external experts will be recruited, following another public announcement, for supporting the work on accreditation.

However, and despite the occasional external expert being hired for assisting the HQA's personnel through the NSRF, the lack of sufficient staff remains a major issue. This problem has increased since the establishment of the Council, since now Board members cannot be full time members in HQA, in accordance with the provisions of Law 4009/2011. The Council members are now considered full time members in their home institutions. This problem has become a pressing priority, demanding immediate resolution.

Given these specific circumstances, HQA has learnt to be flexible, inventive and efficient, also capable of exploiting its staff competencies to the fullest.

B. Financial resources

In Section 2.3.3, *HQA FINANCING*, it was demonstrated in detail that the Agency has adequate and proportional financial resources in order to organize and run the external quality assurance and accreditation processes in an effective and efficient manner within the time period up to 2014. This has been achieved so far with two sources of funding: The regular budget from the State (RBS), and European Funding (NSRF).

In the current Section, we will present how financial resources of HQA will ensure its sustainability for the following years. Table 3 presents the proposed budget within the new RBS 2015, as compared to the budget in 2014. It is clear that, despite serious economic difficulties in the State budget, there exists a preliminary agreement with the Leadership of the Finance Ministry that HQA could submit a budget of the same amount as that of 2014. The 2015 budget is expected to be approved by the end of December 2014. Once again, nearly 98% of the RBS is going to be allocated to cover the salaries of the HQA staff, with only a limited financial support (~2%) for property expenses and equipment supplies.

Table 3: HQA's RBS 2015 budget to be approved vs. 2014 approved budget

Code	Definition of Expenditures	2014	2015
		Approved Budget	Budget to be approved
0000	Service Provision	518.160,18	519.700,00
	0200 Personnel Costs (Administrative Staff) *1*	206.310,18	250.700,00
	0300 Special Personnel Costs (President, Board's members, Executive Director.) *2*	242.000,00	122.000,00
	0500 Additional Services (Insurance and other contributions) *1*	45.000,00	50.000,00
	0700 Travel expenses of the Board's Members (from their Institutions to HQA)	19.350,00	81.000,00
	0800 Other Services	5.500,00	16.000,00
1000	Property and Equipment Supplies *3*	14.670,00	24.500,00
	1100 Supply equipment	900,00	1.000,00
	1200 Health, medical and cleaning supplies	0,00	1.000,00
	1300 Maintenance and repair equipment	2.700,00	3.000,00
	1500 Supply of fuel and lubricants	0,00	0,00
	1600 Miscellaneous supplies	1.395,00	1.500,00
	1700 Capital equipment	9.675,00	18.000,00
	Total Budget	532.830,18	544.200,00

1 Based on the new Law, all administrative staff costs must be paid by HQA.

2 Since July 1st, 2014, this category covers the salary of the President and of the Agency's General/Executive Director; the salaries of the members of the Board are covered by their Institutions, in which they belong.

3 This particular category (1000) has been mostly covered by the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF, 2007 - 2013) funds.

In Table 4, we present the proposed budget, within the new NSRF 2015 - 2020, for implementing a national evaluation system for assessment and accreditation. The budget is expected to be approved by the end of December 2014. The majority of the total budget (7.675.000 Euro) will be allocated to the implementation of the external assessment and accreditation in Higher Education Institutions. Emphasis also will be given to the support of the national integrated information system (200.000 Euro), dissemination, publicity and assimilation of the Greek quality operating system (200.000 Euro), development, operation and promotion of HQA (860.000 Euro) and, finally, on studies concerning the quality, excellence and financing of HEIs (250.000 Euro).

Table 4: Proposed Budget in new NSRF 2015 - 2020 for the Implementation of a National Evaluation System for Assessment and Accreditation

Projects and Activities	Proposed Budget 2015-2020
1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	5.715.000,00
1.1. Travel Expenses for External Assessment and Certification of Quality System in the Greek Higher Education Institutions	350.000,00
1.2. Travel Expenses of the External Evaluation Committee for accreditation of curricula in all Greek Higher Education Institutions	5.000.000,00
1.3. Technical Support and services to accreditation process	65.000,00
1.4. Scientific and Administrative Support to accreditation process	300.000,00
3. SUPPORT THE NATIONAL INTEGRATED INFORMATION SYSTEM	200.000,00
4. DISSEMINATION, PUBLICITY AND ASSIMILATION OF THE GREEK QUALITY OPERATING SYSTEMS IN HIGH EDUCATION	200.000,00
6. DEVELOPMENT, OPERATION, AND PROMOTION OF HQA	860.000,00
6.1. Operational cost and general expenditures of HQA	500.000,00
6.2. Monitoring and updating the quality management system (ISO9001:2008)	15.000,00
6.3. Subscriptions	25.000,00
6.4. Travel Expenses for the purpose of enhancing knowledge about the strategy of quality in HE	70.000,00
6.5. HQA external evaluation by ENQA	50.000,00
6.6 Support operation of HQA with external partners	200.000,00
8. HQA OFFICE RENT	450.000,00
11. EXPENDITURE ON STUDIES CONCERNING THE QUALITY, EXCELLENCE AND FINANCING OF HIGHER EDUCATION	250.000,00
TOTAL	7.675.000,00

2.5. STANDARD 3.5 MISSION STATEMENT (ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERION 4)

STANDARD

Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

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.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 3.5)

The mission statement of HQA is clearly described in the legislation framework.

Moreover, the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the Agency and is carried out on the basis of a systematic approach to achieve its goals.

Furthermore, despite the changes in the legislation, HQA address its mission by a systematic approach, demonstrated through the way it is implemented, step by step, to achieve the objectives which have been legally attributed (**see Part I of this report**).

As regards to the HQA's strategic development plan, the Agency has demonstrated that under strenuous conditions, it manages to flexibly and effectively operate, towards implementing its objectives. Through the so far analysis, the following steps of the management plan have been put into practice:

1. Applying for membership in ENQA, following the completion of the external evaluation of the academics units of higher education institutions, and the ongoing external evaluation of the institutions themselves, with the aim to strengthen its foundation, both domestically and internationally.
2. Applying for membership in the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), for the same reasons.
3. Full preparation and submission for approval of the organizational structure of the legislative agency.
4. Constant pressure to the Ministry for both the publication of the post of the General Director, and the employment status of the Members of its Council.
5. Multilevel preparation for future actions of the Agency (preparation for the accreditation, public announcement for strengthening the administration staff, etc.).

Admittedly, the Agency is fully aware of the country's overall dire economic situation and, despite the intentions of both the President and the Council members, has understanding that many of its pressing issues do need patience and perseverance to be completed.

2.6. STANDARD 3.6 INDEPENDENCE (ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERION 5)

STANDARD

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.

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
- 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.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 3.6)

HQA independence

In accordance to Article 10 of Law 3374/2005, HQA was established as an independent administrative agency. Information on the importance of the Independent Administrative Agencies (ADA) is given in detail, in criterion 3.2.. The HQA is not the sole ADA in Greece. Other Administrative Agencies are, for example, the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP), the Hellenic Data Protection Authority (HDP), the Ombudsman (COP), the Regulatory Authority for Energy (RAE), the Hellenic National Radio and Television Council (ESR), the Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy (ADAE), the Commission for the Protection of Competition (CPC), etc.

Selection of HQA President

The President of the Agency is appointed by the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, after consulting with the Parliament's Committee of Educational Affairs; this is in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Parliament's Rules of Procedure. Following the law 4009/4011, the HQA President "is a scientist with a high, internationally recognized scientific work and proven international academic experience, preferably with experience in management and quality assurance in higher education, and appointed by the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, after the competent by the House Rules Committee" (Article 64.2).

Selection of members of HQA

The procedure concerning the selection of the Agency's members is as following (Law 4009/2011, art.67.2 and 3):

The selection process is carried out in accordance to the provisions of Law 4009/11, Article 67 (B, C and D), according to which: *“The evaluation of candidates, delegated by the President of the Council, with the agreement of the body, to three-member committees (...), composed by full professors of domestic or foreign HEI, of relevant expertise, which prepare evaluative ranking lists of the candidates who have the competences and the qualifications, based on their scientific, research and educational work. The classification shall take into account experience in matters of quality assurance and accreditation in higher education, resulting from participation in quality assurance bodies of HEIs and relevant scientific and research works, and administrative experience, especially in universities (...) the President of the HQA shall communicate these judgmental league tables of candidates to: (aa) the Rectors of all Universities for applicants concerning Universities; (bb) to the Presidents of all TEIs for applicants concerning TEIs; and (cc) at the synod of the Directors of research centers, supervised by the General Secretariat of Research and Technology for applicants concerning the research centers. If for a particular candidate, the ¾ of the Rectors or the Presidents of TEIs or the members of the synod of the Directors of research centers, respectively, express objections, the candidate is excluded from the ranking list (...). The Board of the HQA shall be established by the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, on the proposal of the president of the HQA”.*

Members of the administrative staff of HQA

Concerning the 13 members of the administrative staff of HQA, an extensive reference has been made in the first part of the report (2.2.2.1. human resources).

At the same time, through public notices, HQA is seasonally reinforced with temporary administrative staff.

Members of the scientific staff of HQA

The HQA does not possess regular scientific staff. Nevertheless, thanks to the Technological Institution of Ionian Islands, HQA has managed to house a scientist, for a limited period of time, who is in charge of creating the database on which the meta-analysis of the external credit evaluation reports (MIS) is based.

At the same time, through public notices, HQA is seasonally reinforced with temporary scientific personnel.

Independence of experts

The existing legislation gives utmost importance to the independence of experts, and sets clear and strict criteria for determining conflict of interest. Committee members before selected and communicated are asked to sign a declaration that they have no conflict of interest with the academic unit for evaluation during the last 5 years. The selection of experts is described in detail in the first part of the report (**see Part I. Ref. 3.2.2.1**).

2.7. STANDARD 3.7 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA AND PROCESSES USED BY THE AGENCIES (ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERION 6)

STANDARD

The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes
- 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.

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.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 3.7)

All procedures and criteria used by HQA are predetermined and available to the public through the Agency's website. For each action, detailed instructions exist, in addition to a standard form, assisted by FAQ (see webpage www.adip.gr).

The evaluation process, as defined in the legislation, consists of the self-evaluation (internal evaluation) and the external evaluation. HQA publishes the reports on its website. Detailed information is given in the first part of this report.

The accountability and consistency in the implementation of HQA project is more evident after the processing of the questionnaires, which were completed by experts and chairpersons of academic units, following the completion of the respective external evaluations.

It is reminded that the performance of HQA was regarded by the questionnaire responses as adequate and/or excellent at a very high rate, with respect to all the services offered under the external evaluation process. In addition, 97% of the responding experts wish to collaborate again (see more details in section 1.5 on criterion 2.4 of the second part of this report). The same rate of positive responses was received by the chairpersons of the evaluated academic units (see also section 1.6, criterion 2.5).

Finally, all information concerning the follow-up procedures is described in the relevant section 1.7 (criterion 2.6).

2.8. STANDARD 3.8 ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES (ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERION 7)

STANDARD

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

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
 - a mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years.

HQA compliance with the criteria (ESG 3.8)

Social accountability

As part of its social accountability, HQA publishes its annual activity report, presenting both the results of its work and the progress made since 2006.

These reports describe both the principles and the framework actions of the Agency, and include processed results of evaluations, complete with strengths and weaknesses (especially in the 2014 report). The results are presented and addressed at three levels: academic units, institutions, and State.

The Agency's reports have a strong impact, both in the public debate on higher education through a series of press articles (**see Annex Part II, doc 10**), and the dialogue between HQA - Ministry, and HQA - Institutions. As regards the former, for instance, the Minister of Education recently stated that, after the presentation of the annual report to the Parliament on 27/8/2014, he will take a decision on the postgraduate programmes of the Greek higher education (**see 9th reference in doc. 10**).

As regards the second, one must view the indicative documents of the Universities of Crete and Patras submitted to HQA and the Ministry, regarding the determination of their proposed number of new students by academic unit, for the academic year 2014-15 (see **Annex, Part II doc.10b**).

Qualitative adequacy

One of the initial tasks of the first administration of HQA (March 1st, 2006) was to develop a quality assurance system (QAS) according to ISO 9001: 2000.

This was deemed necessary, firstly, as a guarantee to HQA's work, the quality of which plays an important part to its relations with higher education institutions; and secondly, to enable HQA to acquire managerial adequacy, as a necessary step for the Agency's integration into European funding programmes.

So, HQA designed and installed a QAS in accordance to the requirements of standard ISO 9001:2000, with the assistance of external consultants. That QAS was certified by the Certification Body of British URS on June 25, 2008, and HQA received the ISO Certificate 31399/B/0001/GR, being in force until June 24, 2011.

In 2010, HQA acquired new premises, and also made several changes to both its governing body and administrative staff. Given that opportunity, and with respect to these new developments, HQA redesigned its QAS in early 2011, in line with the new standard ISO 9001:2008, also with the help of an external consultant.

The Agency was certified on July 29, 2011 by the external Certification Body TUV AUSTRIA HELLAS, obtaining a Certificate with registration number 01011203, which was valid until July 28, 2014. The administration of HQA decided on July 4, 2014 to maintain and update the QAS, in accordance with Law 4009/2011, as amended and in force today, with the help of an external consultant.

The external inspection of the same certification body, TUV AUSTRIA HELLAS, is expected to take place at the end of September 2014, and the anticipated renewal of the new certificate will be valid until 2017.

It is clear that the existence of an ISO certification is not part of ESG of ENQA. In any case, it is associated with the Agency's ability to properly and systematically manage European Commission funds, in the frame and under the strict criteria of NSRF. Nevertheless, the greater part of those funds concerns the implementation of the evaluation (see Table in criterion 3.4.).

Consequently, the full completion of the evaluation of all the academic units constitutes a strong presumption for the quality of the completed project. However, all criteria and procedures for the implementation of the evaluation are fully harmonized with the ESG of ENQA. Therefore, there is strong evidence that the evaluation, which was designed on the basis of the ESG, was successfully completed through reliable and rigorous procedures.

Policy of no conflict of interest

HQA follows a clear policy of non-conflict of interest as regards to the experts. Those coming from abroad, and in accordance with the law "cannot belong to or have, in the last five years, any kind of relationship, either educational or concerning research, with the higher education institution, whose academic unit is under evaluation" (Law 3374/05, Article. 8, par. 4.).

Furthermore, and for the sake of greater assurance, before their arrival in Greece, the experts are required to sign a code of conduct document, indicating no relationship to the academic unit under evaluation during the last 5 years

Internal feedback procedures

The HQA was and is a unique Agency. It consists essentially of its President, its 11 Board members, and its 13 administrative staff. Therefore, because of its size, the Agency is not yet in need of parallel processes of internal feedback. The primary mechanism for discussion, processing, and formulation are the Board meetings, twice (2) per month. Usually, the formation of a topic, and seeking for solutions or improvements to applied actions are assumed by small, thematic working groups, consisting of, either entirely, Council members or one or more Board member(s) plus administrative staff. These committees prepare proposals, which are then discussed at the Council meetings.

Finally, HQA has not yet developed an internal feedback mechanism, because it does not yet participate in relevant procedures.

External feedback procedures

As regards external feedback mechanisms, we should mention that HQA has drafted the relevant questionnaires for experts and chairpersons of academic units. These questionnaires have so far functioned as an external feedback mechanism for evaluation of the external evaluation process applied by HQA.

Questionnaires drafted by members of the Board in cooperation with the administrative staff are available through the international platform <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>. The relevant results have been presented earlier in this report. More specifically:

In April 2014, HQA drew up and sent a questionnaire to virtually all Chairpersons of the academic units that underwent evaluation during the 2013 - 2014 period, in total 210 persons. It has received replies from 134 (64 %) of them. For the question regarding the relevance and the potential for exploitation of the conclusions of the external evaluation report, 44 % responded that it is very useful, 37 % found it fairly useful, and 19 % less useful.

Also to the question how the conclusions will become useful, most responses pointed towards improving the academic unit (57 %), and offering opportunities for more effective dialogue (34 %) (*see Annex Part II, doc.6b* - For more details see also the 2014 Annual report, p. 73-79, in Greek).

Evaluation of the Agency

HQA, until now, has never requested its evaluation. The unstable legal, institutional and economic environment, in which it has operated, as well as the significant problems in its internal functioning did not enable its external evaluation. Nevertheless, since 2006, HQA is an affiliate of ENQA

Presently, after the completion of the external evaluations of all the academic units, the ongoing institutional internal evaluation procedure, and the launch of the accreditation stage, HQA feels and is prepared and confident enough to request its external evaluation.

2.9. COMPLIANCE WITH ENQA MEMBERSHIP CRITERION 8 (MISCELLANEOUS)

Consistency of judgments, appeals systems and contributions to the aims of ENQA

PRINCIPLES:

I. The Agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgments and decisions are in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups.

II. If the Agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeal procedure. The nature and form of the appeal procedure should be determined in the light of the Constitution of the Agency.

III. *The Agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.*

COMMENTS TO PRINCIPLES

I. Indeed, the Agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures that both its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgments and decisions are in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups.

This is already proven by, on one hand, the satisfaction of experts and the chairpersons of the evaluated units, and, on the other hand, by the ISO certification, which guarantees the professionalism and the reliability of HQA.

II. Until now, the work of HQA was based on the provisions of L. 3374/2005. In this Law, the legislator had given priority to the institutional evaluation for improvement. So, the main aims were for information and recommendations. For this reason, the law has not promoted an appeal system. However, HQA has not prevented the evaluated academic units from having the right to express their opinion about the content of the draft report of their external evaluation, this type of feedback acting as a substitute appeal mechanism.

For the future, as the accreditation may have formal consequences for the institution and/or the study programmes, HQA notes that missing point in the law. Indeed, the law 4009/2011 does not prevent any appeal system, either. HQA, conscious of the absence, will inform the Ministry, and it hopes that, by the time of accreditation results, a proper appeal system will be adopted.

III. Last, but not the least, HQA requests to join the ENQA, and is willing to actively contribute to the attainment of its objectives.

PART THREE — ANNEXES

ANNEXES PART I

DOC. 1: [The “ATHENA” Project: Short Report](#)

DOC. 2: [List of Accreditation Workshops during the period 2013/14](#)

DOC. 3: [List of Participation in International Conferences](#)

DOC. 4a: [Example of HQA Communication with the Academic Units](#)

DOC. 4b: [Letter to MODIP on Internal Evaluation Report Audits](#)

ANNEXES PART II

DOC. 5a: [Questionnaire for Experts on external evaluation process](#)

DOC 5b: [Questionnaire for Dept. Head on external evaluation process](#)

DOC. 6a: [Feedback from Experts - Analysis of Questionnaires](#)

DOC. 6b: [Feedback from Dept. Heads - Analysis of Questionnaires](#)

DOC.7: [Sample Letter - Communication with ESU](#)

DOC. 8: [Invitation Letter & Code of Conduct](#)

Doc. 9: [Nomination from ESU for the accreditation procedure](#)

Doc. 10a: [Press](#)

Doc. 10b: [Determination of the proposed number of new students by academic unit](#)