

Annex I: Terms of Reference for a focused review of the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC)

This document is to agree on the Terms of Reference (ToR) that address the request of the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) to undergo a focused review against the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The request follows EQAR Register Committee's decision to reject the application by THEQC (Ref. RC29/A90, 18 March 2021, annex I).

Chapter 1: Background and request of THEQC for a focused review

THEQC approached ENQA to coordinate a focused review addressing those issues that led to the rejection of THEQC's application for inclusion on the Register. EQAR's 'Procedures for Applications' (§3.21) allow the agency to undergo such a focused review, and to reapply within 18 months based on this review. In addition, the Register Committee further underlined in their rejection letter that the implementation of the Institutional Accreditation Programme is yet to be externally reviewed as an activity on its own. The Committee was confident that this could be done in a focused review organised once the issues mentioned in their decision have been addressed.

Subsequently, on 1 March 2022 THEQC officially approached ENQA to coordinate the abovementioned focused review and prepare a review report that will be considered for the purpose of EQAR-registration. On 7 March 2022, ENQA agreed to coordinate the focused review. The review follows ENQA methodology for partial reviews (see ENQA Rules of Procedure, article 7, and ENQA's policy on partial reviews of members under review) that is aligned with the requirements of a focused review for the purposes of EQAR-registration. In case of provisions not covered by ENQA's policy on partial reviews of members under review, the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews (for full reviews) are to be followed.

Chapter 2: Purpose and scope of the focused review

Chapter 2.1: Activities within the scope of the ESG

The focused review will address the abovementioned ESG standards through the following external QA activities of THEQC:

1. Institutional External Evaluation (IEE)
2. Institutional Accreditation Programme (IAP).

The following standards were judged as partially compliant (see EQAR Register Committee's decision not to include the agency on the Register, ref. RC29/A90, 18 March 2021):

- ESG 2.6 – Reporting
- ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals
- ESG 3.1 – Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance
- ESG 3.3 – Independence
- ESG 3.6 – Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

In addition, the review should also address the standards of ESG Part 2 (ESG 2.1-ESG 2.7) for the activity Institutional Accreditation Programme (IAP) to the extent the procedure differs from THEQC's Institutional External Evaluation (IEE) activity, i.e. criteria, consistency in decision making, panel composition, decision making body etc.

The report should also confirm whether the other findings (in regard of those standards not covered in depth now) of the full review report of April 2020 generally remain valid in light of the changes in THEQC's activities.

Chapter 2.2: Content and preparation of the review report

The agency is expected to produce a self-assessment report on the points raised above, indicating in particular changes that have taken place since the last full review. In addition, the agency will indicate any eventual changes and developments in the agency's activities beyond those listed under the criteria under scrutiny, and that might be relevant in view of the agency's ESG compliance. This requirement follows ENQA's policy on partial reviews of members under review, Content, p. 2, and EQAR's Procedures for Applications¹.

The focused review foresees a site visit to the agency.

Following the site visit, a review report will be drafted in consultation with all review panel members and correspond to the purpose and scope of the review as defined above. In particular, the review report will concentrate on the same criteria as in a full review and assess how the compliance has evolved since this last review. Furthermore, it will provide a clear rationale for its findings concerning each ESG. When preparing the report, the review panel should bear in mind the EQAR Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG to ensure that the report will contain sufficient information for the Register Committee for application to EQAR. Finally, the report will also assess any eventual changes that have been brought to the attention of the panel in the self-assessment report.

Chapter 3: Panel composition

The ENQA Agency Review Committee will nominate three external reviewers to complete the task. The composition of the panel for the THEQC full review in 2019 was as follows:

Fiona Crozier	Chair (ENQA nominee), quality assurance professional
Simona Lache	Secretary (EUA nominee), academic
Luis Carlos Velón Sixto	Panel member (ENQA nominee), quality assurance professional
Ignas Gaižiūnas	Panel member (ESU nominee)

For the focused review, ENQA will use **one member** of the panel which carried out the last full review in order to ensure consistency, sufficient background knowledge on the agency, and the external trust in the outcomes (independent of the Agency Review Committee). The two other panel members will be selected so to complement the panel with altogether three viewpoints, that of a student, an academic and a quality assurance professional.

The proposal is to employ:

Fiona Crozier	Chair (ENQA nominee), quality assurance professional
Brian Norton	Panel member (EUA nominee), academic
Stanimir Boyadzhiev	Panel member (ESU nominee)

¹ <https://www.eqar.eu/about/official-documents/#procedures-for-applications>

One of the two members (the academic or the student) will be appointed by the Chair as a secretary, should the Chair not cover the secretary tasks.

The panel members will be asked whether they are willing and able to carry out the work within the timeline as listed in chapter 4 of the terms of reference.

Chapter 4: Timeline

	Deadline
Terms of Reference agreed with THEQC and EQAR	31 March 2022
Completion of focused review SAR by THEQC	15 April 2022
Appointment of focused review panel members and agreement on reviewer contracts, setting the date for the completion of the focused review report	29 April 2022
Site visit to THEQC	End June/July 2022
Delivery of draft report to ENQA Secretariat	End August 2022
Draft report to THEQC for a factual check	First week of September 2022
Completion of report and submission to ENQA	September 2022
Report validation by ENQA Agency Review Committee	October 2022
EQAR Register Committee meeting and decision on the application	December 2022

Chapter 5: Costs

ITEM	COST
Expert fee - Chair	€ 2 000
Expert fee - panel member	€ 1 500
Expert fee - panel member	€ 1 500
Coordination fee ENQA	€ 2 500
Site visit (estimate, full actual cost to be covered by the agency) ²	€ 2 500
TOTAL	€ 10 000

Chapter 6: Annexes

Annex 1: EQAR Register Committee's decision not to include the agency on the Register, ref. RC29/A90, 18 March 2021

² Calculation is based on four European return flights (three experts and a review coordinator), and two nights in a hotel as proposed by the agency under review.