

Approval of the Application
by Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences
(AHPGS)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

Register Committee
 1-2 July 2024

Ref. RC43/A145
Ver. 1.0
Date 2024-07-03
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Application of:	2023-03-22		
Agency registered since:	2009-03-01		
Type of review:	Targeted	Site visit:	2024-01-19
External review report of:	2024-04-24	Submitted:	2024-05-17
Review coordinated by:	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)		
Review panel members:	Almantas Šerpataukas, Caty Duykaerts, Damon Mohebbi, Terhi Nokkala		
Decision of:	2024-07-02		
Registration until:	2029-04-30		
Absented themselves from decision-making:	n/a		
Attachments:	1. External Review Report, 2024-04-24 2. Minuted clarification with AHPGS (eligibility) 2023-04-21 3. AHPGS Statement on the report 2024-05-17		

1. The application of 2023-03-22 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 2023-05-16 having considered clarification from AHPGS on 2023-04-21.
3. The Register Committee considered the targeted external review report of 2024-04-24 on the compliance of AHPGS with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).
4. The Register Committee further considered the statement and supporting documentation provided by the agency on the report from 2024-05-17.

Analysis:

5. In considering AHPGS's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account the following activities:

- *Programme Accreditation of HEIs in Germany*
- *System Accreditation of HEIs in Germany*
- *Programme Accreditation of HEIs outside of Germany*
- *Institutional Evaluation of HEIs outside of Germany*

6. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on AHPGS's level of compliance with the ESG.

7. With regard to the specific European Standards, the Register Committee considered the following:

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ESG 2.1 – Consideration of internal quality assurance

8. In its last decision for renewal of registration on EQAR (of 2020-03-16), the Register Committee found that AHPGS only partially fulfilled the requirements of the standard, as the ESG Part 1 was not properly addressed in their external reviews outside Germany.

9. The Committee understood that in order to address these issues, AHPGS revised its handbooks for reviews abroad. Nevertheless, the Committee understood by the analysis of the panel, that the Handbook for Institutional Evaluations does not address standards 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9 sufficiently.

10. Furthermore, the Committee understood from the analysis of the panel, that programme accreditation reports were in line with ESG Part 1, except one which did not follow AHPGS's own criteria in full.

11. In a statement of the report (of 2024-05-17), AHPGS explained that in order to address the shortcomings underlined by the panel, it revised its handbooks for programme and institutional accreditation outside Germany.

12. The Committee welcomed the changes made by AHPGS. The Committee was, however, unable to conclude whether the adopted changes are implemented in practice without further panel insight and therefore they remain to be reviewed within the next external review of the agency. The Register Committee, therefore, concurred with the panel's conclusion and found that the agency remains partially compliant with the standard.

ESG 2.4 – Peer-review experts

13. In its previous decision of registration on EQAR (of 2020-03-16), the Register Committee found AHPGS to be partially compliant with the standard due to ambiguity in whether the agency ensured that all experts received training. Additionally, the criteria and process for recruiting reviewers were not clear.

14. From the report, the Register Committee learned that the training process has been improved, and ensures inclusivity and accessibility for all

experts. Furthermore, as underlined by the panel, the format was made more adaptable and personalised.

15. Following the improvements made by the agency, the Committee was able to follow the panel’s conclusion that the agency now complies with the standard.

ESG 3.4 – Thematic analysis

16. In its previous decision of registration on EQAR (of 2020-03-16), the Register Committee found the agency to be partially compliant with the standard, as the publications prepared by the agency did not analyse the outcomes of the review processes.

17. Based on the analysis of the review panel, the Register Committee understood that, since its last review in 2020, the agency published several thematic analyses. Conducting additional studies is also now part of the agency’s strategic documents.

18. The Register Committee was able to follow panel’s conclusion that AHPGS is now compliant with the standard. The Committee, further highlighted the panel’s recommendation that the agency should secure adequate dissemination of its thematic analysis, keeping in mind the various target audiences.

19. For the remaining standards, the Register Committee was able to concur with the review panel’s analysis and conclusion without further comments.

Conclusion:

20. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that AHPGS demonstrated compliance with the ESG (Parts 2 and 3) as follows:

Standard	Previous decision (2020-03-16)	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Partial compliance	Partial compliance	Partial Compliance
2.2	Compliance	Inherited	Inherited
2.3	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.4	Partial compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.5	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.6	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.7	Compliance	Inherited	Inherited
3.1	Compliance	Inherited	Inherited
3.2	Compliance	Inherited	Inherited
3.3	Compliance	Inherited	Inherited

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3.4	Partial compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.5	Compliance	Inherited	Inherited
3.6	Compliance	Inherited	Inherited
3.7	Compliance	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

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21. **AHPGS therefore continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.**

22. **The Register Committee considered that AHPGS only achieved partial compliance with some standards. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee concluded that these are specific and limited issues, but that AHPGS continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.**

23. **The Register Committee therefore renewed AHPGS's inclusion on the Register. AHPGS's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 2029-04-30¹.**

24. The Register Committee further underlined that AHPGS is expected to address the issues mentioned appropriately and to resolve them at the earliest opportunity.

¹ Inclusion is valid for five years from the date of the external review report, see §3.25 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

Application by Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS) for Renewal of Registration

Minutes of Online Conversation

Register Committee

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Date 2023-04-26
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Date of the conversation:	21/04/2023
Representative of AHPGS:	Jennifer Grünewald, Georg Reschauer, Eva Pietsch
Representative of EQAR:	Blazhe Todorovski, Colin Tück

1. AHPGS has submitted on 2023-03-22 an application for renewal of registration on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).
2. In order to prepare the deliberations of the Register Committee on the eligibility of the application and AHPGS's activities within the scope of the ESG, EQAR contacted AHPGS via Zoom to clarify the matter(s) below.
3. AHPGS agreed to clarify the matter(s) by means of an online conversation.
4. EQAR Secretariat requested a clarification for the external quality assurance activities outlined in AHPGS application form, as the same were not corresponding to the external quality assurance activities in the agency's Register entry profile.
5. AHPGS representatives clarified that the agency decided to simplify and group the activities as indicated on the official website of the agency and group the activities that have been listed separately on the agency's profile on EQAR. They have clarified that in total they have 4 types of activities, two for procedures offered for HEIs in Germany and two for HEIs outside of Germany.



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17th May 2024

Renewal of EQAR Registration

Dear Annelies Traas,

I am writing to submit the attached documents for the purpose of extending our registration with EQAR. Please find attached the agency's Self-Assessment Report, the Targeted Review Report, the Declaration of Honor and the validation letter of ENQA's Agency Review Committee.

As indicated in the Review Report by ENQA, the panel has made two recommendations regarding ESG 2.1 that concern procedures abroad:

1. "The agency is recommended to work further on the Handbook for Institutional Evaluation to ensure that criteria fully cover all ESG Part I standards.
2. "The agency is recommended to ensure that evaluation reports reflect all elements of the agency's criteria."

We have already conducted revisions on both the Handbook for Institutional Evaluation and the Handbook for Program Accreditation to more clearly ensure adequate consideration of ESG 1.7, ESG 1.8, and ESG 1.9. To accomplish this, the handbooks now provide more detailed coverage of these standards in various sections, and corresponding text blocks have been added to the evaluation report

templates to ensure a proper representation of the results. The revisions are highlighted in the attached handbooks.

The changes to enhance the visibility of ESG Part 1 have already been implemented in international procedures, and the corresponding reports were discussed and decided upon at the commission meeting on May 14, 2024. Upon request, we can provide links to the exemplary reports published on our website.

During the site visit, the panel kindly provided recommendations and suggestions aimed at the further development of the agency. We are very thankful for a productive exchange with the panel, that will help us to enhance the quality of our work. The implementation of the panel's recommendations and suggestions began immediately after the site visit; some of the developments have already been completed, while others are still in progress. We would like to name two examples:

- A closer collaboration with the German Student Accreditation Pool has been resumed, and students from the pool have already been appointed as reviewers in various procedures.
- For the procedures completed in 2024, the reports will be published on our website including the year of completion, to facilitate easier access and filtering for the latest reports.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Eva Pietsch

Managing Director

Attachments:

Declaration of Honor

Self Assessment Report AHPGS

Targeted Review Report ENQA

Letter of Validation ARC ENQA

Handbook Institutional Evaluation

Handbook Program Accreditation