

## Approval of the Application by Fundación para el Conocimiento Madrimasd (madri+d) for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

**Register Committee**

26 - 27 June 2025

**Ref.** RC47/A159

**Ver.** 1.0

**Date** 2025-07-08

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<b>Application of:</b>	2023-12-20		
<b>Agency registered since:</b>	2015-06-08		
<b>Type of review:</b>	Targeted	<b>Site visit:</b>	2024-09-26
<b>External review report of:</b>	2025-02-24	<b>Submitted:</b>	2025-03-18
<b>Review coordinated by:</b>	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)		
<b>Review panel members:</b>	Arnoldas Solovjovas, Carmen Fenoll, Tue Vinther-Jørgensen, Yvonne Overdevest		
<b>Decision of:</b>	2025-06-27/2025-06-27		
<b>Registration until:</b>	2030-02-28		
<b>Absented themselves from decision-making:</b>	n/a		
<b>Attachments:</b>	<a href="#">1. External Review Report (external link), 2025-02-24</a> <a href="#">2. Statement on the external review report, 2025-03-17</a>		

1. The application of 2023-12-20 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 2024-01-19.
3. The Register Committee considered the targeted external review report of 2025-02-24 on the compliance of madri+d 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 on the external review report prepared by madri+d of 2025-03-17.

### Analysis:

5. In considering madri+d's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account the following activities:
  - Accreditation of official degree programmes
  - Assessment of the programmes' development plan

- CUALIFAM programme
- DOCENTIA
- Ex-ante evaluation of master programmes in the arts
- Institutional Accreditation
- Joint programme evaluation
- Modification of official degree programmes
- Monitoring of official degree programmes
- SISCAL madri+d – Internal Quality Assurance Certification
- SOFIA programme
- Validation (ex-ante accreditation) of official degree programmes

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6. The activities *Scientific Culture and Communication Area, Technology Transfer and European Programmes Area* and *Technology Based Entrepreneurship Area* are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the application inclusion on the Register.

7. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on madri+d's level of compliance with the ESG.

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

### ESG 2.2 – Designing methodologies fit for purpose

9. The Register Committee concurred with the panel's conclusion and found the agency compliant with the standard. It, however, highlighted panel's recommendation that the agency should pay further attention to the systemic involvement of students at all times when developing and updating its methodologies.

### ESG 2.6 – Reporting

10. In the last decision for renewal of registration of madri+d (of 2020-06-22), the Register Committee found the agency to be partially compliant with the standard as it did not publish reports from one of its activities. From the review report, the Committee learned that madri+d now publishes the outcomes of that procedure too.

11. The Register Committee further learned that the agency differentiates between a site visit report prepared by the expert panel and a final report prepared by the technical committees. The former not being disclosed neither to the higher education institutions subjected to the evaluation, nor the public.

12. In its response to the external review report (Annex 2), madri+d explained that the reports by the technical committees build on the work done by the panels. While the review experts could intervene regarding the

terminology and the consistency of use of agency's criteria, the final reports, however, are not subjected to approval by the panel prior to being published.

13. The Register Committee welcomed the steps made by the agency to publish the reports from the assessment of institutions' programmes development plans and considered this issue addressed. **The Register Committee, however, found that the standard entails that the full reports by the experts are published and accessible to the public – a requirement that the agency is currently not fulfilling. Because of this, the Register Committee was not able to concur with the panel's conclusion and found the agency to be partially compliant with the standard.**

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### ESG 3.4 – Thematic analysis

14. In the last decision for renewal of registration, madri+d was found partially compliant with the standard due to the lack of regular publishing of thematic analyses.

15. Since then, madri+d has established a department within the organisation focussing on thematic analysis with two dedicated staff members and now allocates specific budget for hiring experts in the areas of interest for the analysis. The work of the department resulted with four thematic analyses since the last review, with four more being in development.

**16. The Register Committee welcomed the steps taken by madri+d to advance its work in the field of thematic analysis. The Register Committee found that the concerns raised in the last renewal of registration have been addressed and concurred with the panel's conclusion that madri+d is compliant with the standard.**

### ESG 3.6 – Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

17. In the last decision for renewal of registration, madri+d was found to be only partially compliant with the standard, as it did not sufficiently demonstrate how ESG compliance is ensured when relying on reports from quality assurance agencies that are not registered on EQAR, particularly when these reports are used as the basis for accrediting international higher education institutions.

**18. The panel explained in its review report that madri+d revised its procedures for international accreditation, and now it only accepts reports from EQAR-registered agencies, hence ensuring full ESG compliance of the procedures involving recognition of decisions taken by other agencies. The Register Committee found that the concerns leading to the earlier judgement ceased to exist and was able to concur with panel's conclusion of compliance.**

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 madri+d demonstrated compliance with the ESG (Parts 2 and 3) as follows:

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Standard	Previous decision (2020-06-22)	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.2	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.3	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.4	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.5	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.6	Partial compliance	Compliance	Partial compliance
2.7	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.1	Compliance	<i>inherited</i>	Compliance
3.2	Compliance	<i>inherited</i>	Compliance
3.3	Compliance	<i>inherited</i>	Compliance
3.4	Partial compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.5	Compliance	<i>inherited</i>	Compliance
3.6	Partial compliance	Full compliance	Compliance
3.7	<b>Compliance</b>	(not expected)	<b>Compliance</b> (by virtue of applying)

21. **The Register Committee considered that madri+d only achieved partial compliance with one standard. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee concluded that this is specific and limited issue, but that madri+d continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.**

22. **The Register Committee therefore renewed madri+d's inclusion on the Register. madri+d's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 2030-02-28<sup>1</sup>.**

23. The Register Committee further underlined that madri+d is expected to address the issue mentioned appropriately and to resolve them at the earliest opportunity.

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

Madrid

17<sup>th</sup> March 2025

EQAR Register Committee,

The Fundación para el Conocimiento madri+d (madri+d) has applied to its third independent external review process to confirm the compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). This review has been coordinated by ENQA, based on the Terms of Reference agreed by madri+d, ENQA and EQAR at the beginning of 2024. The review process has recently been completed with the publication of the External Review Report (ERR), following its approval by the ENQA Agency Review Committee.

Both the management team and all the staff of madri+d would like to express their gratitude for the work done by the panel of experts, as well as the ENQA secretariat and the officer responsible for coordinating the process. The review team demonstrated great professionalism, meticulousness in the evaluation, and exceptional personal treatment, particularly during the interviews with stakeholders' representatives during the site visit. All the participants, both from madri+d and external stakeholders, have informed us of their satisfaction with the work done.

We believe that the External Review Report issued faithfully reflects the work we do at madri+d, and recognizes the efforts and results achieved in our mission to guarantee the quality of Higher Education in Madrid.

However, we dissent with the conclusion reached by the panel regarding the issue of the review reports, which has been specified in the following recommendation:

- The panel recommends that the final version of the provisional report be presented to the president of the expert panel for endorsement prior to finalisation and publication.

We would like to express the following nuance regarding this recommendation.

- The recommendation is based on the analysis carried out by the panel regarding Criterion 2.6 Reporting. The panel acknowledges the rationale of the procedure established in madri+d, where the reports of the multiple panels working on each quality assurance activity need to be analysed by a Commission to ensure consistency and homogeneity in the application of the criteria in the results of the evaluations issued by madri+d. However, the panel expresses doubts about whether the published reports reflect the panels' assessment and analysis. In other words, whether the panels assume authorship of the evaluation reflected in the reports.

In this regard, we would like to state the following:

- The quality assurance procedures carried out by madri+d have significant consequences on the activity of the institutions, and in many cases, they can decide the extinction of the degrees or their continuity. It is therefore critical that the results of madri+d evaluations were consistent, and that in all cases the same evaluation criteria were applied.

- The general procedure established by madri+d for its quality assurance activities sets forth that the panel's report be examined by a Commission. The analysis carried out by the panels is assumed by the Commission in most cases. However, to ensure consistency and homogeneity in the application of the criteria, the Commission can make adjustments or changes in the editing of the report.
- When any of these adjustments occur, if any doubt arises about their implementation, the Commission consults the president of the panel to define such change.
- Panel members have access to these reports when they are published. To date, we have not received any complaints from panel members because they consider that the published reports do faithfully reflect the evaluation carried out, or that any modification made by the commissions, in the exercise of their powers, has not been appropriate.
- We believe that the concept of validation by the president of the panel may be misleading or reverse the logic of the process. It would imply modifying the process that serves to guarantee the consistency of the evaluations. It is the Commission that validates the work of the panel, not the other way around.
- We consider it necessary to clarify that the concept of "endorsement" included in the recommendation should be understood as informing the panel, through its president, about the reports that are going to be published, in order to confirm that they faithfully reflect its work. Furthermore, in the event of any reason for discrepancy, it can be communicated, and its contribution must necessarily be taken into account in the published reports.

We hope that these clarifications will be considered when reading and analysing the External Review Report, with which we reiterate our satisfaction.

Sincerely.

Federico Morán

Director  
Fundación para el Conocimiento madri+d