

**Approval of the Application
by Evaluation Agency Baden-Württemberg (evalag)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register**

Register Committee
4/5 November 2019

Ref. RC25/A74
Ver. 1.0
Date 8/11/2019
Page 1 / 5

Application of:	12/04/2018
Agency registered since:	25/05/2010
External review report of:	20/06/2019
Review coordinated by:	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)
Review panel members:	Fiona Crozier (Chair), Terhi Nokkala (Secretary, academic), Mark Frederiks, Philipp Schulz (student)
Decision of:	05/11/2019
Registration until:	30/06/2024
Absented themselves from decision-making:	none
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation of eligibility, 14/05/2018 2. External Review Report, 20/06/2019 3. Applicant's statement on the report, 9/7/2019

1. The application of 12/04/2018 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 14/05/2018 having considered clarification received from evalag on 7/5/2018.
3. The Register Committee considered the external review report of 20/06/2019 on the compliance of evalag with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).
4. The Register Committee further considered evalag's statement on the external review report.

Analysis:

5. In considering evalag's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account:
 - Evaluation of fields of study

- Accreditation of study programmes in Germany (before 2020)
- System accreditation in Germany (before 2020)
- Programme assessment procedures in Germany
- Institutional assessment procedures in Germany
- International programme accreditation
- International institutional accreditation
- Audits of quality management in Austria
- Institutional accreditation in Switzerland
- Institutional certification of advanced study programmes

Register Committee

4/5 November 2019

Ref. RC25/A74

Ver. 1.0

Date 8/11/2019

Page 2 / 5

6. Consultancy services, the offering of further education courses, science support and higher education research projects are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the application inclusion on the Register.

7. As regards evalag's other types of evaluations of institutions, programmes, projects or strategies, the Register Committee noted that the "three conditions" referred by the review panel (p. 12 of the external review report) do not correspond exactly to the four characteristics mentioned in the EQAR Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG (p. 3).

8. The Committee, however, concluded that evalag's other evaluations do not follow a pre-defined process (characteristic a) and generally do not concern teaching and learning in higher education (characteristic b). Moreover, some evaluation projects do not match characteristic d. The Register Committee therefore reconfirmed that these evaluations are not within the scope of the ESG, as confirmed in the eligibility confirmation of 14/05/2018.

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

10. With regard to the specific European Standards and Guidelines, the Register Committee considered the following:

ESG 2.1 – Consideration of internal quality assurance

11. When evalag's registration was last renewed, it was flagged for attention whether all standards of Part 1 of the ESG are consistently addressed in evalag's accreditations and evaluations.

12. The Register Committee noted the panel's comprehensive analysis, based on evalag's SAR and mapping tables, of how Part 1 of the ESG is reflected in the agency's different sets of criteria. The Committee concluded that the flag has been addressed.

ESG 2.2 – Designing methodologies fit for purpose

13. The Register Committee noted that the processes and criteria for evalag's work outside of the German accreditation system are designed by the Foundation Board. Based on the analysis by the review panel the Committee understood that students have little involvement in designing evalag's own processes and are also not involved in the Foundation Board (see p. 30).

14. The involvement of students in developing the international accreditation and evaluation processes was a recommendation from the previous ESG review of evalag in 2014, but has not yet been addressed.

15. While the Register Committee welcomed evalag's commitment expressed in its statement on the review report, no changes have been made as yet. The Committee was therefore unable to concur with the panel's conclusion of substantial compliance, but considered that evalag only partially complies with the standard.

ESG 2.3 – Implementing processes

16. For accreditation in Germany, the Register Committee underlined that evalag retains responsibility for follow-up to take place, even if GAC makes the accreditation decisions under the new legal framework. This does not exclude that GAC actually implements the follow-up processes, as long as evalag has assured itself that this indeed happens.

17. Given the small number of accreditations under the new legal framework thus far, it was not possible to analyse the actual practice at this point. The Register Committee therefore noted that this is a matter for further attention in future reviews of evalag.

18. While the German legal framework potentially allows for an accreditation procedure to be carried out without a site visit, the panel understood from evalag that the agency did not plan to make use of that option. The Register Committee underlined that it might be helpful if evalag would point that out in its official documentation.

19. Notwithstanding the above remarks, the Register Committee concurred with the panel's conclusion that evalag complies with the standard.

ESG 2.6 – Reporting

20. When evalag's registration was last renewed it was flagged for attention whether evalag has moved to publish reports where the accreditation decision was negative.

21. The review panel observed that evalag has had no negative decisions so far. The panel nevertheless confirmed that evalag's clear policy is to publish all reports regardless of the outcome; the panel had no doubts that a

Register Committee

4/5 November 2019

Ref. RC25/A74

Ver. 1.0

Date 8/11/2019

Page 3 / 5

negative report will be published. The Register Committee therefore concluded that the flag has been addressed.

ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals

22. In the previous decision to renew evalag's registration the Register Committee flagged for attention how evalag has followed up the recommendation to separate the bodies in charge of appeals from the bodies deciding on accreditation, and to rule out parallel memberships.

23. The review panel confirmed the independence of the appeals committee from the evalag decision-making body for accreditation. The panel further reported that parallel memberships are now ruled out.

24. The Register Committee therefore concluded that the flag has been addressed.

ESG 3.1 – Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

25. The review panel found that evalag had no clear overarching strategy, bringing together planning, budgeting and risk assessment.

26. The review panel noted stakeholders are formally involved in evalag's governance through the Foundation Board, while the Board does not include a student member. Stakeholders are further involved in evalag's work through participation in workshops and similar activities. The panel recommended that a student be appointed to the Foundation Board.

27. Considering the concerns re. the lack of an overarching strategy and that one important stakeholder group is not represented in evalag's governing structure, the Register Committee was unable to concur with the panel's conclusion of substantial compliance, but considered that evalag only partially complies with the standard.

ESG 3.4 – Thematic analysis

28. When evalag's registration was last renewed, the Register Committee noted that the current review should address whether evalag produced analyses of the general findings of all reviews carried out by the agency.

29. The review panel described clearly how evalag conducts thematic analyses based on the findings from its reviews. The Register Committee therefore concluded that the flag has been addressed.

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

Register Committee

4/5 November 2019

Ref. RC25/A74

Ver. 1.0

Date 8/11/2019

Page 4 / 5

Conclusion:

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

Standard	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Full compliance	Compliance
2.2	Substantial compliance	Partial compliance
2.3	Full compliance	Compliance
2.4	Substantial compliance	Compliance
2.5	Full compliance	Compliance
2.6	Full compliance	Compliance
2.7	Substantial compliance	Compliance
3.1	Substantial compliance	Partial compliance
3.2	Full compliance	Compliance
3.3	Full compliance	Compliance
3.4	Full compliance	Compliance
3.5	Full compliance	Compliance
3.6	Full compliance	Compliance
3.7	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

Register Committee
4/5 November 2019

Ref. RC25/A74
Ver. 1.0
Date 8/11/2019
Page 5 / 5

32. The Register Committee considered that evalag only achieved partial compliance with standards 2.2 and 3.1, on matters that closely relate to each other. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee concluded that this was a specific and limited issue, but that evalag continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.

33. The Register Committee therefore renewed evalag’s inclusion on the Register. evalag’s renewed inclusion shall be valid until 30/06/2024¹.

34. The Register Committee further underlined that evalag 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 §4.1 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

EQAR | Aarlenstraat 22 Rue d'Arlon 22 | BE-1050 Brussels

Evaluation Agency Baden-Württemberg (evalag)

M7, 9a-10

Anke Rigbers

68161 Mannheim

Germany

Brussels, 14 May 2018

Confirmation of Eligibility: Application for Inclusion on the Register

Application no. A74 of 12/04/2018

Dear Anke,

We hereby confirm that the application by evalag for renewal of registration is eligible.

Based on the information and draft terms of reference provided, the external review coordinated by ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education fulfils the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

In order to clarify one activity within the portfolio of evalag, EQAR contacted the agency on 07/05/2018 (see attached minutes).

We confirm that the following activities of evalag are within the scope of the ESG:

- *evaluation of fields of study;*
- *accreditation of study programmes in Germany (before 2020);*
- *system accreditation in Germany (before 2020);*
- *programme assessment procedures;*
- *institutional assessment procedures;*
- *international programme accreditation;*
- *international institutional accreditation;*
- *audits of quality management in Austria;*
- *institutional accreditation in Switzerland.*
- *(institutional) certification of advanced study programmes*

European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education
(EQAR) aisbl

Aarlenstraat 22 Rue d'Arlon
1050 Brussels – Belgium

Phone: +32 2 234 39 12
Fax: +32 2 230 33 47

info@eqar.eu
www.eqar.eu

VAT BE 0897.690.557

EQAR Founding Members:



Please ensure that evalag's self-evaluation report covers all the aforementioned activities carried out by evalag including the activities carried out abroad, within and outside the EHEA.

In the application form, evalag stated that it did not consider *evaluations* (of institutions, programmes, projects, strategies) to be within the scope of the ESG. Considering the additional clarification provided (see attached minutes) we came to the conclusion that *evaluations*, are not activities within the scope of the ESG as far as they do not employ predefined criteria that concern the teaching and learning in higher education. The review of evalag should nevertheless address how the agency demonstrate that the terminology 'evaluation' is clearly defined, and that there is no risk of confusion with the external quality assurance within the scope of the ESG.

The report should also address the way in which evalag separates between the services offered to higher education institutions such as (1) *evaluations* (institutions, programmes, projects, strategies), (2) *consultancies* (i.e. customised service offerings to higher education), (3) *further education activities* (i.e. advanced training courses for HEIs) and evalag's regular external quality assurance activities taking into account Annex 5 to the Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG¹.

Furthermore, the self-evaluation report and external review report should also address evalag's processes for the recognition of the external QA activity of other quality assurance agencies in cases where the agencies are not registered in EQAR.

We further remind you that the following issues were flagged when evalag's registration was last renewed and should be addressed in your self-evaluation report and the external review report:

ESG 2.1: Consideration of internal quality assurance [ESG 2005: standard 2.1]

It should be addressed in detail whether all standards of Part 1 of the ESG are consistently addressed in evalag's accreditations and evaluations.

ESG 2.6: Reporting [ESG 2005: standard 2.5]

It should receive attention whether evalag has moved to publish reports where the accreditation decision was negative.

ESG 3.4: Thematic analysis [ESG 2005: standard 2.8]

It should be addressed whether evalag produced analyses of the general findings of all reviews carried out by the agency.

¹See :

https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2018/04/UseAndInterpretationOfTheESGv2_0.pdf

ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals & ESG 3.3: Independence [ESG 2005: standard 3.7]

It should receive attention how evalag has followed up the recommendation to separate the bodies in charge of appeals from the bodies deciding on accreditation, and to rule out parallel memberships.

We confirm that the following activities are not within the scope of the ESG:

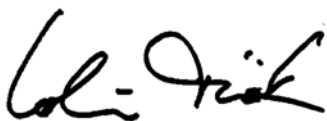
- *science support (coordination of peer reviews and funding procedures for research projects);*
- *higher education research;*

While these activities are not relevant to your application, it is evalag's choice – in agreement with the review coordinator – whether those activities should be commented upon by the review panel.

We will forward this letter to ENQA in its capacity of the coordinator of the external review. At the same time we underline that it is evalag's responsibility to ensure that the coordinator and review panel take account of the present confirmation, so as to ensure that all activities mentioned are analysed by the panel.

This confirmation is made according to the relevant provisions of the EQAR Procedures for Applications. evalag has the right to appeal this decision in accordance with the Appeals Procedure; any appeal must reach EQAR within 90 days from receipt of this decision.

Yours sincerely,



Colin Tück
(Director)

Cc: ENQA (coordinator)

Statement of evalag to the report of the ENQA Panel and the review outcome

July 9th 2019

evalag is very pleased about the very carefully prepared report, which is based on an equally careful analysis of the SAR and other documents. The whole procedure was experienced as very thorough and at the same time very helpful for the further development. **evalag** will take up the suggestions as described below, with the exception of one where difficulties could arise (see below).

3.4 Thematic analysis

The ENQA board suggests evalag to expand the scope of thematic analyses by focusing on best practices and recommendations, such as the ones that evolve from the follow-up of the agency's QA procedures.

evalag will adopt this suggestion.

3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

evalag is recommended to appoint a student to the Foundation Board.

The Foundation Board will discuss these suggestions and will discuss this also with the ministry which decides about the statutes.

2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

evalag is recommended to broaden the active involvement of stakeholders (including the representatives of higher education institutions, employers, and students) in the design and development of the review methodologies. This includes the representation of all relevant stakeholders, including students, on the Foundation board, but should also go beyond just the representation that is provided through the Foundation Board, the Accreditation Commission and the Appeals Commission and include active and regular discussions on procedures and methodology in the agency's bodies.

evalag will pick out the active involvement of stakeholders as a central theme at the next staff retreat and will develop a more formalised procedure to involve stakeholders in the design and development of review methodologies.

2.4 Peer-review experts

evalag is recommended to further strengthen the experts' skills by providing training seminars for each type of the review. The agency should seriously consider making such training compulsory for every expert panel member involved in evalag activities.

For years **evalag** advocated the professionalization of the expert system and thus also obligatory training for inexperienced peers.

The German accreditation system is structured in a competition-oriented way. With a compulsory training for experts, which is only offered by **evalag**, **evalag** would suffer competitive disadvantages (increasing costs of the procedures for the higher education institution, higher expenditure of time for experts) if not all other agencies also introduce compulsory training. In addition, experts who participated already in more than two review procedures will not accept compulsory training. This would therefore only be enforceable for inexperienced experts.

2.7 Complaints and appeals

evalag is recommended to reconsider the complaints and appeals policy with a view to making the document shorter and clearer. The document should clarify what is meant by the terms 'complaints' and 'appeals.' The panel also recommends evalag to ensure that the policy is clearly accessible on the website in German and English."

evalag will reconsider the complaints and appeals policy in order to make the procedure more transparent. The documents will be positioned more accessibly on the website (as a subitem of <https://www.evalag.de/en/services/>).