

**Approval of the Application**  
**by QANU - Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities**  
**(QANU)**  
**for Re-inclusion on the Register**

**Register Committee**  
18/19 June 2019

Ref. RC24/A86  
 Author Colin Tück  
 Ver. 1.0  
 Date 26/06/2019  
 Page 1 / 4

<b>Application of:</b>	13/10/2018
<b>Agency registered since:</b>	14/05/2011
<b>Focused review report of:</b>	25/04/2019
<b>Review coordinated by:</b>	ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education
<b>Review panel members:</b>	Maria E. Weber (chair), Vincent Wertz (academic), Hermann Blum (student)
<b>Decision of:</b>	19/06/2019
<b>Registration until:</b>	31/12/2021
<b>Absented themselves from decision-making:</b>	Karl Dittrich, Ann Verreth
<b>Attachments:</b>	<a href="#">QANU Focused Review Report, 25/04/2019</a>

1. The application of 13/10/2018 for re-inclusion on the Register adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. Following the Register Committee's decision of 16/11/2017 to reject the application for renewal of registration, QANU made use of the possibility to undergo a focused review according to §3.21 of the EQAR Procedures.
3. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 16/10/2018.
4. The Register Committee considered the focused review report of 25/04/2019 addressing those issues that led to the rejection of QANU i.e. the agency's compliance with ESG 2.4, ESG 2.7, ESG 3.1 and ESG 3.4.

**Analysis:**

5. In considering QANU's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee only took into account assessments of degree programmes and assessments of research units where they concern PhD training programmes and the supervision of PhD candidates. Assessments in sectors outside higher education and consultancy activities are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to registration on EQAR.

6. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on QANU's level of compliance relating to ESG 2.4, ESG 2.7, ESG 3.1 and ESG 3.4.

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

### **ESG 2.4: Peer-review experts**

8. The Register Committee noted that QANU has, since its last review, taken steps towards the inclusion of students in the assessment of research units/PhD programmes. QANU agreed with VSNU, KNAW and KWO (the organisations who developed the Standard Evaluation Protocol for these assessments) to include students on the experts panels in the form of a pilot scheme, starting in 2019.

9. The Register Committee found that QANU has so far finalised one assessment of a research unit/PhD programme in 2019 (report published as of 15 March 2019), but that the expert panel for that review did not include a student.

10. While the Register Committee recognised and welcomed the clear steps taken by QANU so far, it considered that the involvement of students on research unit/PhD assessment panels is so far at the stage of a pilot and not yet implemented in practice. The Committee was therefore unable to concur with panel's conclusion of (substantially) compliant but found that QANU still complies only partially with ESG 2.4.

11. The Register Committee further underlined the review panel's recommendation to ensure that students become a constituent element of the research units/PhD programme assessments panels. The Committee further added that students involvement should not be limited to the assessment of specific aspects, but that they are to be fully involved along all expert panel members.

### **ESG 2.7: Complaints and appeals**

12. The Register Committee noted that QANU has revised its complaints and appeals procedure and established an independent committee to consider its appeals.

13. The panel noted that institutions can now submit an appeal against all external quality assurance activities of QANU and the decisions are taken by an Appeals Committee, instead of QANU's director.

14. The panel's analysis further show that QANU offers the possibility to institutions to express their dissatisfaction about the conduct of the external quality assurance activity carried out by QANU or misbehaviour of people acting on behalf of the agency. The agency has also established different processes in the handling of complaints i.e. if a complaint refers to the behaviour of a staff member of QANU this is processed by the director; if a

complaint is about the director of the agency, the complaint is processed by the chair of the Board etc.

15. Having considered the changes put in place by QANU since its last external review, the Register Committee was able to follow the panel's judgement that QANU now complies with ESG 2.7.

## Register Committee

18/19 June 2019

Ref. RC24/A86  
Author Colin Tück  
Ver. 1.0  
Date 26/06/2019  
Page 3 / 4

### ESG 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

16. The Register Committee noted that the agency put in place a policy regarding the separation of the agency's consultancy and assessment activities which dictates that if a project coordinator is involved in providing consultancy services to a higher education institution, he/she is not allowed to act as a secretary in an assessment procedure for a period of at least five years. The panel further commented that QANU's management have shown high awareness of the need to avoid conflicts of interest and to ensure QANU's independence in its activities.

17. With regards to the stakeholder involvement in the governance and work of the agency, the panel found that QANU has formalised the involvement of students in the Board of the agency following its change in Statutes. While the Register Committee welcomed the involvement of students, the Committee further underlined the panel's recommendation of ensuring a broader stakeholder involvement in the agency's governing structure.

18. In view of the changes introduced by the agency the Register Committee was able to follow the panel's conclusion that QANU complies with ESG 3.1.

### 3.4 – Thematic analysis

19. The Register Committee learned that QANU approved a new policy for thematic analysis in October 2018, which defines explicit aims and objectives for various analysis.

20. The panel stressed that QANU acknowledged its responsibility for producing thematic analysis as a way of contributing to the further development of the university research sector in the Netherlands. The panel further added that QANU has demonstrated capacity to use the experiences it gathered, to reflect on them, to share them and to publish outcomes through thematic analysis.

21. Following the evidence and analysis provided by the panel, the Register Committee concurred with the panel's conclusion that QANU now complies with ESG 3.4.

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

ESG	Review panel conclusions		Register Committee conclusions	
	<i>December 2016</i>	<i>April 2019</i>	<i>November 2017</i>	<i>June 2019</i>
2.1	Substantial compl.	n/a	Compliance	n/a
2.2	Full compliance	n/a	Compliance	n/a
2.3	Full compliance	n/a	Compliance	n/a
2.4	Substantial compl.	Substantial compl.	Partial compliance	Partial compliance
2.5	Full compliance	n/a	Compliance	n/a
2.6	Full compliance	n/a	Compliance	n/a
2.7	Substantial compl.	Full compliance	Partial Compliance	Compliance
3.1	Partial compliance	Substantial compl.	Partial Compliance	Compliance
3.2	Full compliance	n/a	Compliance	n/a
3.3	Full compliance	n/a	Compliance	n/a
3.4	Partial compliance	Full compliance	Partial Compliance	Compliance
3.5	Substantial compl.	n/a	Compliance	n/a
3.6	Substantial compliance	n/a	Compliance	n/a
3.7	(not expected)		Compliance (by virtue of applying)	

**Register Committee**  
18/19 June 2019

Ref. RC24/A86  
Author Colin Tück  
Ver. 1.0  
Date 26/06/2019  
Page 4 / 4

23. The Register Committee considered that while QANU only achieved partial compliance with one standard (ESG 2.4), the agency has nevertheless taken steps to resolve this matter and it is expected to do so before its next renewal of registration. For the remaining standards the Register Committee reached the conclusion that the issues have been satisfactorily addressed.

24. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee thus concluded that QANU now complies substantially with the ESG as a whole.

25. The Register Committee therefore approved the application of QANU's re-inclusion on the Register. QANU's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 31/12/2021<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Inclusion is valid for five years from the date of the external review report, see §4.1 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.