

Substantive Change Report
by Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education
(EKKA)

Register Committee

Ref. RC34/C75

Ver. 1.0

Date 2022-03-15

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Decision of:	2022-03-15
Report received on:	2022-01-26
Agency registered since:	2013-10-23
Last external review report:	
Registration until:	2023-02-28
Absented themselves from decision-making:	
Attachments:	1. Substantive Change Report

1. The Register Committee considered the Substantive Change Report of 2022-01-26.
2. The Register Committee took note of the following changes:
 - a) Simplifying the procedure for accrediting joint programmes that have been accredited by an EQAR registered agency by recognizing the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.
 - b) Discontinuation of the activity “Quality Assessment of Joint Programmes”.
 - c) Discontinuation of the activity “Quality Assessment of study programmes in the third cycle”.

A) Simplification of the procedure for accrediting joint programmes and recognition of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes and B) Discontinuation of the activity “Quality Assessment of Joint Programmes”
3. The Register Committee noted that EKKA has discontinued the activity “Quality Assessment of Joint Programmes”, and instead is using a simplified procedure for accrediting joint programmes which already hold a valid accreditation by an EQAR registered agency. EKKA is now recognizing decisions made by agencies using the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.
4. The Committee further understood that the agency will be using the procedure for “Initial assessment and re-assessment of study programme groups” for accrediting joint programmes that have not been accredited by an EQAR registered agency and are offered by HEIs

that do not yet have the right to offer programmes in the respective study programmes group . The next review should look into whether the guidelines of the activity are fit for purpose in the case of assessment of joint programmes too (ESG 2.2).

5. The Register Committee welcomed the recognition of the accreditations issued according to the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes by EKKA and the agency's efforts to support the development of joint programmes by making the external quality assurance of these programmes easier.

C) Discontinuation of the activity “Quality Assessment of study programmes in the third cycle”

6. By a change in legislation in 2019, the assessment of study programmes in the third cycle was integrated into the institutional accreditation procedure. Hence, the activity “Quality Assessment of study programmes in the third cycle” has been discontinued.

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EQAR Substantive Change Report

Reference #	21776023
Status	Complete
Login Username	EKKA_karin2
Login Email	karin.laansoo@harno.ee
Agency #1	Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education
Agency acronym	EKKA
Expiry date #1	28/02/2023
Contact #1	Karin Laansoo
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Other organisations?	No
A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed?	No
B. Has the organisational structure changed?	No
C. Changes in EQA activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2. Substantive changes carried out to one or several existing external QA activities (e.g. changes to their methodology, criteria or procedures)• 3. One or several existing activities were discontinued
Description new/changed	Because of the discontinuation of assessment of joint study programmes, amendments were made into the procedure/guidelines for initial and re-assessment of study programme groups that allow for the use of a simplified procedure for joint study programmes, provided that the joint study programme has already undergone an assessment by a competent EQAR-registered

foreign assessment entity and earned a positive result.

2. Changed EQA activity

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Initial assessment and re-assessment of study programme groups

ESG 2.1

The procedure was not changed in substance, only a simplified procedure was added for joint study programmes that have already been assessed by an EQAR-registered entity. A mapping of the procedure before the introduction of the amendments was carried out for the previous agency review of EKKA. For the simplified procedure introduced in January 2022 procedural safeguards are foreseen in the form of references to requirements stipulated in the Higher Education Act.

ESG 2.2

The amendments serve the purpose of simplifying the procedure for higher education institutions wishing to launch new joint study programmes. Any such study programme would need to undergo a rigorous examination against the ESG by an assessment entity registered with EQAR. So the amendments in essence are not a change in methodology per se, but an indication of trust in the soundness of assessments conducted by EQAR-registered entities.

ESG 2.3

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https://ekka.edu.ee/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines-for-initial-and-re-assessment-of-SPG_ENG01_22.pdf

ESG 2.4

None

ESG 2.5

The agency ensures the consistency of application of the criteria through a three-tier system:

- The use of competent and experienced experts in assessment committees.
- A comprehensive support system employed by EKKA: each assessment committee is supported by a competent coordinator familiar with the requirements and criteria. Each assessment report is read by the coordinator as well as at least two experienced EKKA staff members before submitted to the Assessment Council for a decision.
- The ultimate decision is adopted by the Assessment Council, comprising independent representatives of higher education institutions and stakeholders.

ESG 2.6

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<https://ekka.edu.ee/oppekavagrupi-esma-ja-kordushindamise-otsused-ja-aruanded/>

3. Discontinued EQA activity

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Quality assessment of joint programmes and
Quality assessment of study programme groups
in the third cycle

Context

The quality assessment of study programmes in the third cycle of higher education was discontinued due to legislative changes adopted in 2019, which resulted in the phasing out of this assessment type. The assessment of doctoral studies now takes place in the context of institutional accreditation. By now the last assessment of its kind has been carried out and the regulation for the assessment type has been repealed.

The assessment of joint study programmes was merged with the initial and re-assessment of study programme groups. A higher education institution already having the right to provide

instruction in a study programme group is not required to submit a study programme (domestic or joint) for assessment. If the HEI does not have the right to provide instruction in the study programme group, undergoing an initial assessment is mandatory. The procedure for initial and re-assessment is applied also in the context of joint study programmes being submitted for assessment with a derogation foreseen for programmes which have already undergone an assessment by an EQAR-registered entity.

D. Activity outside the scope of the ESG	No
Submit form?	I am ready to submit the change report form
Last Update	2022-01-26 09:35:41
Start Time	2022-01-26 09:34:45
Finish Time	2022-01-26 09:35:41
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Device	Desktop
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