ANNEXES to the Self-Assessment Report
June 2021

Agence pour l'Évaluation de la Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur (AEQES)
[Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education]
www.aeqes.be

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ANNEX 1 RECOMMENDATIONS AND MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE 2016 ENQA REVIEW AND AEQES' RESULTING FOLLOW-UP

Timeline

February 2017	**ENQA review report**
	ENQA Board letter – membership reconfirmed
June 2017	EQAR registration renewed (> 28 February 2022)
February 2019	*Follow-up report* sent to ENQA
April 2019	ENQA Board letter
September 2019	*Progress visit* d'ENQA

Overview of the 2016 review results: conclusions of the ENQA panel and EQAR' judgments

		COMMEN-DATIONS	RECOM-MENDATIONS	ENQA panel conclusions	EQAR judgments
ESG 3.1.	Activities, policy and processes for QA			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 3.2.	Official status			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 3.3.	Independence			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 3.4.	Thematic analysis			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 3.5.	Resources			Partial compliance	Partial compliance
ESG 3.6.	IQA and professional conduct			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 3.7.	Cyclical external review of agencies			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 2.1.	Consideration of IQA			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 2.2.	Designing methodologies fit for purpose			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 2.3.	Implementing processes			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 2.4.	Peer-review experts			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 2.5.	Criteria for outcomes			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 2.6.	Reporting			Full compliance	Compliance
ESG 2.7.	Complaints & Appeals			Full compliance	Compliance

Different recommendations were made by the panel of the 2016 review and highlighted in the letter from the President of ENQA to AEQES. Here's how AEQES addressed them:

Recommendations made by ENQA (2016)	Follow-up
1 ESG 3.1. *The recommendation on the length of time between full programme evaluations made by the panel who conducted the ENQA review in 2011 remains valid, and the Agency should continue negotiations with the government to shorten the 10-year interval between external evaluations.*	<u>October 2017</u> Adoption by the Steering Committee of the « Methodological Proposal » introducing the concept of institutional review and the six-year cycles of evaluations Dissemination of the Methodological Proposal <u>20 December 2017</u> : Amendments to the 2008 AEQES Decree

	- Pilot institutional review - 6-year cycles - 8th mission added (methodological developments adapted to the needs of HE) - Increased endowment (+22%) [see also rec 4]
AEQES is recommended to continue supporting students and promoting quality assurance among students, in cooperation with the relevant student organisations.	Welcome session to new Students Steering Committee members <u>February 2020</u> Speed-dating session organised for students <u>February 2021</u> Specific session with representatives of the student union (FEF) in the context of the SAR [see also rec 5]
2 ESG 3.3. *It is recommended that the Agency defines, in a clearer way than at present, the role of the Steering Committee in the description of the evaluation process, and in particular place emphasis on the approval process (without any interference by the SC) of the external evaluation reports.*	<u>April 2018</u> System-wide analysis: removal of the summary note drafted by the Steering Committee, replaced by a summary drafted by the evaluation panel.
3 ESG 3.4. *It is recommended that the Agency further enhances the dissemination process of its thematic analyses in such a manner that the analyses become a useful tool for all interested stakeholders.* *Furthermore, it might be useful for AEQES to further develop its communication strategy and its management data system.*	<u>Since 2017</u> More stakeholders are invited at the presentation sessions of system-wide analyses (increased participation online) Focus information on the pilot phase - during the AEQES study days - new website dedicated to the pilot phase www.aeqes-coconstruction.be <u>2020</u> decision of the Steering Committee to recruit a Communication Officer 1 March 2021 : takes office and starts developing a communication plan <u>2020-2021</u> Participation in the DEQAR-Connect project
4 [ALSO STRESSED BY THE BOARD DECISION LETTER] ESG 3.5. *It is recommended that the Agency continues its discussions with policy-makers on its financial situation, in order to ensure the continuation of its activities while maintaining the same level of responsibility and quality standards.*	<u>20 December 2017</u> – amended AEQES Decree Increased endowment (+22%) <u>January 2020 and July 2020</u> (updated version), the Board addresses a detailed Explanatory Note to the Minister of HE, the Minister of Budget and of Public Service
5 [ALSO STRESSED BY THE BOARD DECISION LETTER] ESG 2.2.	

It is recommended for the Agency continue the process of involving students in its activities, and in cooperation with the relevant student organisations, to support the capacity building of student experts in quality assurance.	Welcome session to new Students Steering Committee members February 2020 Speed-dating session organised for students February 2021 Specific session with representatives of the student union (FEF) in the context of the SAR [see also rec 1]
6 [ALSO STRESSED BY THE BOARD DECISION LETTER] ESG 2.4. *AEQES would benefit from involving students in the follow-up evaluation process and panels. In this way, AEQES would further ensure the continuity of the evaluation process in a consistent manner.* *[In its letter to AEQES the President of ENQA added that] AEQES should make sure that students are involved in all quality assurance processes.*	From 2019-2020 on : students are systematically included in all evaluation panels
7 ESG 2.5. *The Panel recommends that AEQES should pay more attention to the training of experts involved in the evaluation process in the German-speaking community.*	N/A The German-speaking Community has no longer asked AEQES to evaluate its 3 study programmes (reason given : absence of accreditation EQA)
8 [ALSO STRESSED BY THE BOARD DECISION LETTER] ESG 2.6. *The Panel recommends that the Agency reconsiders the implementation of the proposal made by the ENQA Review Panel in 2011 concerning the issuing of summary reports on the evaluations that are easier to read and understood by non-professionals.* *[In its letter to AEQES the President of ENQA added that] AEQES should put more focus on issuing of summary reports of its evaluations.*	In 2017 AEQES revised the format of its evaluation reports inserting in a visible layout the summary of the report.
9 ESG 2.7. *The Panel recommends that AEQES considers the complaints and appeals procedures as part of the evaluation process.*	October 2018 The complaints procedure information is introduced in the « guidelines for HEIs », in the section describing the different phases of each EQA activity.

Furthermore the Panel recommends that the Agency pays attention to updating the English versions of documents on the web-site so that they are correct and align with the documents published in French.	<u>June 2021</u> : the updated version of the Quality Handbook, the updated version of the Joint Note on the roles and missions of ARES & AEQES, the reference framework for the continuous evaluation of programmes, the Self-Assessment report 2021 are posted on the website of the Agency.

September 2019, ENQA progress visit
[note by Fiona Crozier and Bryan Maguire]

Introduction

The one-day follow-up visit to AEQES organized by ENQA, took place in Brussels on the 3rd September 2019. It was carried out by Bryan Maguire, Director of Quality Assurance (QQI) and Fiona Crozier, Independent (formerly QAA UK). The visit was a follow-up to the ENQA review of AEQES in 2016; the ENQA representatives spent a full day at the agency and participated in a programme of discussion with a wide range of stakeholders, both internal and external. Discussions were open and focused on improvement and on the medium to long term strategies that AEQES is considering.

Feedback

Following the day's discussions, the ENQA representatives summarized their findings under the following three headings:

1. THE DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AEQES AND L'ACADÉMIE DE LA RECHERCHE ET DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR (ARES)

Although ARES was created by decree in 2013, it appears that the relationship between the two organisations is still developing (and that this will continue as both organisations move into the next stages of strategic planning). The follow-up visit seemed to demonstrate that both organisations were valued, especially by the universities and other higher education institutions. It seemed to us that both had specific expertise and experience and that AEQES could add value to joint projects that might run between the two. We feel, therefore, that it would be useful for the current agreement that exists between AEQES and ARES to be revisited and updated, in particular to include an activity plan that could be updated each year with concrete deliverables. In this way, the value of both organisations and of their partnership working will be transparent to external stakeholders, in particular to the HE sector.

2. GOVERNANCE

Governance structures play an important role in steering an agency, as well as providing mechanisms for demonstrating public accountability. The structures which serve at the early stages of a higher education system's introduction of external quality assurance may serve less well over time. AEQES has

a large[1] and highly representative steering committee. This has helped to ensure that the agency's methods and decisions are accepted by the higher education community in FWB. ESG 3.1 indeed requires that stakeholders are involved in the governance of the agency. But involvement does not mean control. The governance structures must also ensure the independence of the agency, not just in its decisions but in the strategy and processes that it adopts. The steering committee must act in the interests of the agency as independent entity as called for under ESG 3.3 and not simply as a lowest common denominator of what is acceptable to the stakeholders represented. We recognize that governance structure is laid down in law, but law can and sometimes should be reviewed and changed ensure an agency has effective governance that enables it to be responsive and efficient. In that context a smaller, competence-based, steering committee, augmented by wider, representative advisory groups might be considered.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Several matters that were raised by agency staff, by all stakeholders and in the ENQA review report seemed to us to be matters that should be considered by AEQES as it moves into its next strategic planning period. They include:

- *Communication about the agency and its functions to all stakeholders (a further example of this might be that AEQES could work with ENIC/NARIC to help explain the EQA system of francophone Belgium internationally);*
- *Ensuring that staff are updated to maintain technological currency;*
- *Budget allocation.*

AEQES might wish to use these, and other examples, in its planning to ensure that the agency is 'future-proofed' – i.e. that it is ready to face challenges in the medium and long term. How it decides to allocate budget will be key to the decisions resulting from such planning. It should be pointed out that the governance structures referred to above under (2) will allow for an easy discussion of this matter.

Conclusion

We saw an agency that is well-regarded by all stakeholders, and whose staff enjoy a formidable reputation as quality assurance professionals.
We found a leadership team that was alive to the actions necessary for establishing itself in a changing landscape.
AEQES has a solid basis for future development as evidenced in ENQA review report and the actions taken since then.

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[1] While dealing with professional regulators as a opposed to HE QA agencies, and in a different legal tradition, the UK Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence has published an informative review of board size and effectiveness https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/publications/advice-to-ministers/board-size-and-effectiveness-2011.pdf?sfvrsn=d1c77f20_12

Latest updated version (07-07-2021) on http://aeqes.be/documents/StrategicPlan202125.pdf

FOREWORD

This strategic plan is the second produced by the *Agence pour l'Évaluation de la Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (AEQES) [Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education]. Drafted by a working group, discussed and approved by the Steering Committee in November 2020, it follows the 2016-2020 plan and aims to identify the priorities that AEQES will pursue in the years 2021-2025.

The strategic plan is complemented by annual action plans adopted by the Agency's Board to chart the actions and expected results that will meet and, where necessary, adjust the priorities of the strategic plan.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

THE ENDURING AEQES MISSIONS

Created in 2008, the AEQES is an autonomous public service agency which carries out independently formative evaluation of higher education programmes organised in the *Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles* (FWB) [Wallonia-Brussels Federation]. It reports on the quality of higher education and endeavours for its constant improvement.

To that end, it aims to encourage the development of a quality culture in institutions, disseminate good practices and promote the establishment of synergies by and among higher education stakeholders.

Indeed, since its creation and during the period covering the strategic plan 2016-2020, AEQES has maintained its support for higher education institutions in the development of their quality approach and has constantly sought to improve its evaluation practices for that purpose. These methodological developments are continuing with the current implementation of a pilot phase of institutional evaluations.

AEQES has developed its information activities towards higher education stakeholders in FWB, notably by conducting studies and analyses and organising annual study days.

The Agency is part of a European process by integrating the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) in its evaluations, working together with other external agencies or organisations, and raising awareness of European developments in higher education.

Finally, the Agency works to consolidate its international visibility through its involvement in international networks and its frequent participation in events dedicated to quality assurance in higher education.

AEQES, A COMPANION AND DRIVER OF CHANGE

The second decade of the 21st century presents the citizens of the world - and to a certain extent those of FWB - with multiple challenges in many areas: the climate, the economic crisis, the digital divide, the political crisis, and so on. Higher education actors have a role to play in addressing these societal challenges: they are expected to participate in solving these problems and to contribute to greater social justice. They use multiple levers to that end: the contribution to the growth of knowledge and the development of innovation; the development of critical thinking and support for the cultural and intellectual development of students; the consideration of the Sustainable Development Goals; the implementation of socially inclusive education; the combination of excellence and inclusion; the commitment to lifelong learning; the defence of the fundamental values of higher education (academic freedom, institutional autonomy, increased student participation in the governance of institutions); the engagement in cooperation arrangements, etc.

AEQES's strategic plan was developed in this context. An in-depth methodological reflection initiated in 2015 with the Agency's stakeholders led to the design of a pilot phase of institutional evaluation and the Government entrusted the Agency with its implementation. Institutions from the four forms of higher education are participating. The successful completion of this pilot phase will make it possible to attain the three priorities identified: an agency that is more effective, higher education institutions with adequate quality systems that are embedded in a recognised and shared quality culture, and a clear and explicit quality policy at the FWB level.

Therefore, in the spirit of co-construction which has been its driving force from the outset, AEQES is committed to pursuing, with confidence and determination, all the phases of the pilot project; namely to carry out experimental institutional evaluations of the 17 volunteer institutions, draw lessons from this exercise, share them widely with all the stakeholders, and define the outlines of the future methodology, which will be at the centre of a future legal framework.

In conclusion, the actions set out under the three priorities of the strategic plan constitute essential levers and the concrete means for achieving the ambitious objective of "putting external evaluation fully at the service of the quality of higher education."

VISION, MISSIONS and VALUES

Vision

The AEQES pursues its actions geared to making a tangible impact on the quality of higher education and takes part in the collective effort to develop a better and fairer society so as to ensure the emancipation and well-being of its inhabitants and respect for the environment. It encourages the development of robust and sustainable management systems for the continuous improvement of the quality of higher education in FWB through the dissemination of its knowledge, the professionalism of its evaluations and its cooperation with stakeholders. It confirms its status as one of the key actors in quality at the regional, national and international level.

Mission

The mission of AEQES comprises four objectives pursued through a formative approach to evaluation, namely to:

- promote the strengthening of continuous quality improvement processes in higher education in the FWB in cooperation with higher education institutions and stakeholders;
- ensure the sustainability of the systems put in place for all actors involved in this process;
- promote innovation in external quality evaluation and support innovative approaches to internal quality assurance;
- encourage the networking of quality actors, including at the international level.

Values

Dialogue and co-construction	The Agency operates on the basis of dialogue and co-construction practices with/among all stakeholders.
Independence	AEQES is an autonomous public service agency that carries out independently formative evaluation of higher education programmes in the FWB. It is responsible for the way it operates. It guarantees the impartiality of the evaluation results, without external influence.
Fairness	The Agency treats all institutions with consistency, professionalism, objectivity and integrity, while respecting the diversity of the many components of higher education.
Transparency	The Agency's operating rules, evaluation procedures and the results thereof are public.
Respect for diversity	The Agency respects the diversity of the higher education institutions' projects and curricular objectives, within the overall aims of higher education and quality.
Reflexivity and continuous improvement	The Agency is in a posture to question the needs of higher education; it monitors international practices, is open to continuous improvement and is a source of proposals to that end.

THREE PRIORITIES

In order to encourage and stimulate improvement in the quality of higher education in FWB and to meet its overall missions, the Agency has set the following three strategic priorities, namely to:

1 Improve its effectiveness by strengthening its organisational independence, its operational independence and the independence of evaluation results and by ensuring stakeholder involvement.

2 Support institutions of higher education to develop an adequate and efficient quality system, embedded in a meaningful quality culture of their own.

3 Participate, alongside the other quality actors in FWB, in the definition of a comprehensive and transparent quality policy, where the respective roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and synergies possible.

Each of these priorities comprises several lines of action and is accompanied by indicators to measure their impact, namely to:

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1 Improve its effectiveness by strengthening its organisational independence, its operational independence and the independence of evaluation results and by ensuring stakeholder involvement.

- *AEQES analyses how its governance structure functions and proposes reforms to the legislator.*

- *AEQES ensures that the Executive Unit's human resources and the Agency's budget are adequate for its activities.*

- *AEQES develops its targeted communication strategy. It designs and implements an appropriate and relevant communication plan.*

- *AEQES consolidates its internal quality assurance system and professional attitude.*

2 Support institutions of higher education to develop an adequate and efficient quality system, embedded in a meaningful quality culture of their own.

- *AEQES supports the development of the institutional dimension of quality assurance in higher education institutions and continues to adapt its methodology to ensure the proper articulation between programmatic and institutional evaluation.*

- *AEQES encourages training in quality methods, endeavours for the recognition of the professional character of quality management in higher education and supports the adequate consideration of the workload involved. AEQES raises awareness of the importance of using data and indicators to monitor the quality of programmes.*

- *AEQES ensures that all higher education actors are treated fairly, while being attentive to their specific needs.*

- *AEQES develops its expertise in research on quality and its evaluation.*

3 **Participate, alongside the other quality actors in FWB, in the definition of a comprehensive and transparent quality policy, where the respective roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and synergies possible.**

- *AEQES informs the public about its activities through communications at quality events and various publications. It is strengthening its role as a contributor of expertise and knowledge in quality assurance.*

- *AEQES continues its involvement in the work and events of its Belgian, European and international partners. In so doing, it shares and enriches its experience and expertise and consolidates its reputation at the national and international levels.*

- *Together with ARES, AEQES is pursuing a reflection in FWB on identifying and specifying a quality policy, and clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of all actors in matters of quality and quality assurance (AEQES, ARES, higher education institutions - including students - the minister for higher education, the administration, academic centres, the Adult Education inspectorate, the organising authorities, etc.). The common objective is to make these known to all.*

- *AEQES participates in the drafting of a new decree on the quality and quality assurance mechanisms of higher education in FWB. It ensures that it is consistent with its values and vision.*

1 Improve its effectiveness by strengthening its organisational independence, its operational independence and the independence of evaluation results and by ensuring stakeholder involvement.

1.1. AEQES analyses how its governance structure functions and proposes reforms to the legislator.

ACTIONS / ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE – DEADLINE	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
1.1.1 DRAFT AN ANALYTICAL NOTE :FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS – SEE ALSO 3.4 1.1.2 START WRITING THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PILOT PHASE (SECTIONS 2 - 3) 1.1.3 LIAISE WITH THE CABINET (HE MINISTER) AND THE ADMINISTRATION 1.1.4. MONITOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN BY DEVELOPING KEY STRATEGIC INDICATORS (ACHIEVEMENT AND IMPACT)	THE AGENCY'S BODIES "COPIL" EXECUTIVE UNIT BOARD STEERING COMMITTEE (+AD HOC WG)	ANALYTICAL NOTE SEE ALSO 3.4. DRAFT (SECTIONS 2/3) CONSIDERATION OF THE ANALYSES

1.2. AEQES ensures that the Executive Unit's human resources and the Agency's budget are adequate for its activities.

1.2.1. CARRY ON REGULAR FEASIBILITY STUDIES OF THE ACTIVITIES 1.2.2. SUPPORT THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STAFF 1.2.3. PURSUE THE DIALOGUE WITH THE CABINET OF THE MINISTER AND THE ADMINISTRATION TO MAKE THE POSITIONS ATTRACTIVE WITHIN THE AEQES EXECUTIVE UNIT	DIRECTOR EXECUTIVE UNIT BOARD	CFR. ESG 3.5.

1.3. AEQES develops its targeted communication strategy. It designs and implements an appropriate and relevant communication plan.

3.3.1. ANALYSE THE NEEDS, SET PRIORITIES AND DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION PLAN 3.3.2. IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR IT	BOARD COMMUNICATION OFFICER	COMMUNICATION PLAN

1.4. AEQES consolidates its internal quality assurance system and professional attitude.

1.4.1. ASSURE OWNERSHIP OF THE QUALITY HANDBOOK BY ALL MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE UNIT 1.4.2. ANALYSE AND SUMMARIZE THE SURVEYS, COMPLETE THE SCOREBOARD AND, IF NEEDED, BRING CHANGES 1.4.3. CONTINUE TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE OF THE PROCEDURES WITH THE GDPR OF THE MINISTRY	EXECUTIVE UNIT	CFR. ESG 3.6.

2 Support institutions of higher education to develop an adequate and efficient quality system, embedded in a meaningful quality culture of their own.

2.1. AEQES supports the development of the institutional dimension of quality assurance in higher education institutions and continues to adapt its methodology to ensure the proper articulation between programmatic and institutional evaluation.

ACTIONS / ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE DEADLINE	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
2.1.1. FINALIZE ALL THE PILOT INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS AND PRODUCE - 17 REVIEW REPORTS + 8 DECISIONS (SUMMATIVE JUDGEMENT) - A SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSIS OF THE PILOT PHASE 2.1.2. LEARN THE LESSONS OF THE 17 REVIEWS :	EXPERTS « CAM » EXECUTIVE UNIT	PUBLICATION OF THE REPORTS, THE DECISIONS AND THE SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSIS
- INVOLVING THE PILOT HEI (AND NON-PILOT HEI FOR THE CONTINUOUS EVALUATION) AND THE EXPERTS (SURVEYS AND FOCUS GROUPS) - PRODUCING THE DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THE PILOT PHASE ROADMAP - GIVING "FOOD FOR THOUGHT" TO THE SC, THE VARIOUS WG AND THE « CAM » 2.1.3. SHARE THE RESULTS WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS (FOR INSTANCE VIA THE COCONSTRUCTION PLATFORM) 2.1.4. START WRITING THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PILOT PHASE (SECTION 1)	« COPIL » EXECUTIVE UNIT *AD HOC* WG	DEVELOPMENT, OWNERSHIP AND VISIBILITY OF THE INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE DISSEMINATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE PILOT PHASE

2.2. AEQES encourages training in quality methods, endeavours for the recognition of the professional character of quality management in higher education and supports the adequate consideration of the workload involved. AEQES raises awareness of the importance of using data and indicators to monitor the quality of programmes.

2.2.1. SHOW THE RESULTS OF THE EVALUATIONS (INSTITUTIONAL AND CONTINUOUS) IN TERMS OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT (QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK OF QUALITY OFFICERS, MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES, INDICATORS FOR ENHANCEMENT, IMPACT AND ADDED-VALUE, CONSIDERATION OF THE LEVEL OF WORKLOAD, …) 2.2.2. HIGHLIGHT THE EXPERTS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CULTURE AND DISSEMINATE THEM 2.2.3. FINALISE THE SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSES OF A NEW FORMAT	*ADHOC* WG EXECUTIVE UNIT (COMMUNICATION OFFICER)	

2.3. AEQES ensures that all higher education actors are treated fairly, while being attentive to their specific needs.

2.3.1. CARRY ON THE EXPERTS TRAINING (AEQES VALUES AND FEATURES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN FWB) 2.3.2. ACCOMPANY AND SUPPORT THE EXPERTS IN THEIR MISSION	EXECUTIVE UNIT	ABSENCE OF COMPLAINTS

2.4. AEQES ensures that all higher education actors are treated fairly, while being attentive to their specific needs.

2.4.1. USE THE RESULTS OF THE PILOT PHASE TO PROPOSE COMMUNICATIONS/PAPERS 2.4.2. CONSOLIDATE THE EXECUTIVE TRAININGS IN THAT FIELD	EXECUTIVE UNIT	COMMUNICATIONS SELECTED

3 Participate, alongside the other quality actors in FWB, in the definition of a comprehensive and transparent quality policy, where the respective roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and synergies possible.

3.1. AEQES informs the public about its activities through communications at quality events and various publications. It is strengthening its role as a contributor of expertise and knowledge in quality assurance.

ACTIONS / ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE - DEADLINE	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
3.1.1. ORGANISE ONE OR MORE QUALITY EVENTS AND/OR TAKE PART IN QUALITY EVENTS 3.1.2. ASSURE, IF POSSIBLE WITH PARTNERS, ONE OR MORE COMMUNICATIONS ON THESE TOPICS 3.1.3. PRODUCE DOCUMENTATION (VIDEO, …) – DISSEMINATE	BOARD EXECUTIVE UNIT	DEC 2021 – PRESENTATION OF THE SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSIS OF THE PILOT PHASE

3.2. AEQES continues its involvement in the work and events of its Belgian, European and international partners. In so doing, it shares and enriches its experience and expertise and consolidates its reputation at the national and international levels.

3.2.1. INVOLVEMENT OF AEQES IN THE NETWORK QAN, IN FRAQ-SUP, ETC. 3.2.2. INVOLVEMENT OF THE DIRECTOR IN AVEPRO 3.2.3. TAKE PART IN QUALITY EVENTS, CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, …	EXECUTIVE UNIT	BENCHLEARNING EXPERTISE CONSOLIDATION

3.3. Together with ARES, AEQES is pursuing a reflection in FWB on identifying and specifying a quality policy, and clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of all actors in matters of quality and quality assurance (AEQES, ARES, higher education institutions - including students - the minister for higher education, the administration, academic centres, the Physical Education inspectorate, the organising authorities, etc.). The common objective is to make these known to all.

3.3.1. IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ARES
   - CONTRIBUTE TO A MAPPING OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL ACTORS IN QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN FWB
   - EMPHASIZE COMMUNICATION ON THESE MATTERS
	EXECUTIVE UNIT	UPDATED ARES-AEQES JOINT NOTE

3.3.2. CONTINUE THE PARLIAMENTARY WATCH ON ISSUE RELATED TO QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE		

3.4. AEQES participates in the drafting of a new decree on the quality and quality assurance mechanisms of higher education in FWB. It ensures that it is consistent with its values and vision.

3.4.1. PRODUCE ANY MILESTONE[2], NOTE TO THE GVT, NOTE TO THE STAKEHOLDERS, MID-TERM SYNTHESIS, ETC. NEEDED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ELABORATION OF THE NEW DECREE	THE AGENCY'S BODIES	

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[2] the assessment of the whole pilot phase is expected in 2022

JOINT NOTE on the roles, missions and actions of the
Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur (ARES) [Academy for Research and Higher Education]
and the *Agence pour l'Evaluation de la Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (AEQES) [Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education] for quality in higher education

1 BACKGROUND

1 Motivation

With due respect for the autonomy of the institutions and in order to support the steps for the permanent development of the quality of the entire higher education sector in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, ARES and AEQES have jointly[3] drawn up this note which, for the sake of optimal organization, defines an arrangement for cooperation and for complementary activities by and between the two bodies in the areas for which they are responsible respectively, exclusively and jointly.

In the constantly developing context of higher education (HE), this note gives ARES and AEQES the opportunity to affirm their commitment to work together effectively and efficiently in the interest of all, particularly of all students. More specifically, both ARES and AEQES are committed to working for excellence in higher education within the framework of the relevant legislation of FWB (Wallonia-Brussels Federation), in particular the so-called Landscape Decree of November 2013[4]. This note aspires to foster trust between the organisations and to build coherence between their actions so as to simplify the procedures relating to quality assurance.

The adoption of this decree has altered the environment in which the Agency operates. The changes brought about by the creation of ARES include a repositioning of the stakeholders involved. In this context and in support of the missions entrusted to it by the legislator, it is necessary for the Agency to be seen as a partner of ARES in terms of support for quality. In this context, the note is also intended to provide a better understanding of the interrelations between ARES and AEQES. Both organisations will support its dissemination to all relevant stakeholders.

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[3] A joint working group consisting of Julien Nicaise, Freddy Coignoul, Arielle Bouchez, Cécile Dujardin and Christiane Cornet for ARES, and Elfriede Heinen, Philippe Lepoivre and Caty Duykaerts, for AEQES met on 8 December 2015, 25 February 2016, 14 March 2016, 19 April 2016 and 23 June 2016 to draft a note. The joint note was approved by both organisations.
[4] *Decree of 7 November 2013 defining the landscape of higher education and the academic organization of studies.*

This note defines the principles and a modus operandi that respect the provisions of application and the spirit of the legal frameworks. The signatories undertake to draw up an annual review of the cooperation and to proceed to the necessary adjustments and developments.

2 Frame of reference

The legal responsibilities and missions of both organisations are spelled out in the following pieces of legislation:
- The Decree of 7 November 2013 defining the landscape of higher education and the academic organisation of studies;
- The Decree of 22 February 2008 on various measures relating to the organisation and functioning of the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education organised or subsidised by the French-speaking Community.

The repeated commitment - through the signing of Conference communiqués - of the European ministers for higher education to support the Bologna Reform, as it is known, and in particular the development of quality assurance should also be mentioned. In point of fact, in 2005 (Bergen Communiqué), the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) were adopted and the decision to establish a European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) was taken. In May 2015, a revised version of the ESG was adopted at the Yerevan conference. This version takes into account developments in higher education and strengthens the responsibility of institutions for the quality assurance of all their activities.

3 Missions and role of the ARES

The *Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur* (ARES) [Academy for Research and Higher Education] is a public interest organisation[5] which brings together higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. It is responsible for guaranteeing the exercise of the various missions of higher education, research and service to the community, and for encouraging cooperation by and between HEIs. The ARES carries out its various missions without prejudice to the autonomy of HEIs.

Article 21 of the Landscape Decree describes the 25 missions of ARES. These can be summarised around six action lines:
- Academic action line (in particular to ensure the coherence of higher education provision and to encourage consultation and cooperation by and between higher education institutions);
- "Research and development" action line (promotion of joint research, management and dissemination of statistical data, promotion of good practices, development of studies and analyses);
- Institutional action line (submission of statements and proposals to the government, particularly as regards the coherence of the higher education provision and proposals for new study programmes (to be authorized), liaison work between the institutions and various bodies);
- "Information" action line (information on studies, qualifications and professions);
- "Cooperation for development" action line (coordination of HEIs participating in development cooperation projects);
- International action line (promotion of international visibility of higher education and coordination of HEIs, particularly in terms of HE provision and joint degrees).

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[5] Public interest body of category B within the meaning of the Control of Certain Public Interest Bodies Act of 16 March 1954 (see Article 20 of the Landscape Decree).

4 Missions and role of AEQES

An autonomous service without legal personality, AEQES is the public service quality agency for higher education of FWB. Active since 2008-2009, it has been a full member of ENQA since 2011 and has been registered in the EQAR register since 2012. Its missions are defined by the Decree of 22 February 2008 (Article 3).[6] This decree entrusts it in particular, with *making suggestions to policy makers on improving the overall quality of higher education* (mission 5), *making any proposal it deems useful for the accomplishment of its missions, on its own initiative or at the request of the Government* (mission 6) *and ensuring that it develops and implements, in consultation with stakeholders, methodological approaches to quality assessment adapted to the needs of higher education and to changing contexts* (mission 8).

As regards its external evaluation activities (missions 1, 2, 4), AEQES pursues two main missions, namely to report on the quality of higher education and to work towards its continuous improvement.
AEQES offers an external and formative evaluation to HEIs and produces and disseminates the results of the evaluations carried out, in the form of reports, analyses and meta-analyses (diagnoses and recommendations) through the development of a specific methodology and an evaluation framework, and the involvement of experienced national and international evaluators. In carrying out these activities (mission 2), AEQES keeps a methodological monitoring by analysing European and international quality assurance practices so as to develop approaches for the FWB institutions that are in line with the changing contexts of higher education.

It moreover supports cooperation by and between higher education stakeholders (mission 3), in particular by organising events for the benefit of and in partnership with stakeholders to share practices on quality and quality assurance issues.

The Agency contributes to the international visibility of the FWB higher education (mission 7) by developing its position at European and international level and by establishing international collaborations.

5 Concepts: internal and external quality assurance, quality culture

Internal quality assurance is the responsibility of the institutions. They are in fact required *to monitor and manage the quality of all their activities and to take all measures to ensure an effective internal self-evaluation and follow-up* (Article 9 of the Landscape Decree). The institutions are responsible for defining their strategies, modes of governance, quality policies, objectives and the means to be deployed to attain them, in alignment with part 1 of the ESG.

ARES endeavours through the Commission for the Quality of Education and Research (CoQER) to promote and improve the dialogue between HEIs and to support them in strengthening their quality culture. In so doing, it acts as a link between the external quality assurance (developed and implemented by AEQES) and the internal quality assurance (managed individually by the institutions). In this way, ARES aims to facilitate capacity building for HEIs to develop their own internal quality assurance and to respond to the evaluations conducted by AEQES.

For its part, AEQES is responsible for the external quality assurance of higher education (with reference to Part 2 of the ESG) and for the methodological mechanisms used in evaluation. External quality assurance takes into account in particular the effectiveness of internal quality assurance processes. It also aims to provide stakeholders - including ARES - with independent information on the quality of higher education.

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[6] See Annex 2 of this note.

The (internal or external) evaluations, which are the most visible part of QA activities, are nonetheless only a tool, as the ultimate aim is to support the development of a quality culture enabling the improvement of quality of higher education. This quality culture is reflected in the reflexivity and strong commitment of the stakeholders. The latter rely on shared values and visions, as well as on fit for purpose quality assurance and contribute to the continuous improvement of higher education. This quality culture is aimed at the FWB level as a whole and within each institution in particular.

2 SHARED OBJECTIVES and ACTIONS

1 Objectives

On the basis of their respective missions and in order to ensure that internal and external quality assurance (which are inseparable) are implemented in a coherent manner on the FWB scale, the two organisations share the following objectives, namely to:

i. Make publicly available up-to-date information on the range, coherence and quality of the higher education provision and the quality assurance developed in the FWB higher education institutions;
ii. Support HEIs to develop a sustainable quality culture for their missions;
iii. Define, maintain and improve the articulation between internal and external quality assurance;
iv. Define and implement operational procedures for the conduct of external evaluations;
v. Inform, document and prepare studies and analyses on all matters relating to the quality of higher education for decision-makers and stakeholders;
vi. Ensure that no conflict of interest arises.

2 Actions

The two organisations carry out actions in an articulated manner, a non-exhaustive list of which is provided in Annex 3.

3 Implementation and follow-up of the note

For the proper implementation of this note, the two organisations undertake to facilitate communication through the ARES Administrator and the AEQES Executive Unit Director and to hold at least one extended annual meeting to take stock of the situation and make any necessary adjustments and developments.
Depending on the topic, joint ARES/AEQES meetings will be organised to carry out joint reflections and implement this joint note.

Brussels, 22 March 2017
Reviewed on 8 June 2021

For ARES,	For AEQES,
Mrs Annemie Schaus, President of the Board	Mrs Anne-Joëlle Philippart, President Mrs Karin Van Loon, Vice-President

| M. Laurent Despy, | Mrs Caty Duykaerts, |
| Administrator | Director of the Executive Unit |

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Extract relating to the missions of ARES

Decree defining the landscape of higher education and the academic organisation of studies (D. 07-11-2013 – *Moniteur Belge* [Belgian Official Gazette] 18-12-2013)

(…)

Amended by Judgment of the Constitutional Court of 21-04-2016
Article 21. –The missions of the ARES shall be to:

1° issue an opinion to the Government, on its own initiative or at the request of the Government, a higher education institution or an Academic Hub, on any matter relating to one of the missions of institutions of higher education;

2° respond, with a reasoned opinion, to any proposal from an inter-cluster academic zone concerning the provision of the professionally-oriented higher education and to propose the authorisations to the Government, taking due care to limit competition between institutions, forms of education and academic clusters;

3° for the rest, propose to a change in the educational provision to the Government, after the opinion of concerned thematic Chambers concerned, upon request of one or several institutions or following the opinion of the Advisory Board;

4° ensure the coherence of the provision and the content of studies and training in its opinions by avoiding any unjustified redundancy, option or specialisation;

5° take charge of the material organisation of common admission tests or examinations;

6° organise consultations on all matters relating to its missions and promote cooperation by and between higher education institutions or Academic Hubs, as well as with other institutions or associations of higher education or research institutions outside the French-speaking Community, in particular with federal institutions or bodies and other Belgian federated entities;

7° be the link of these Academic Hubs and institutions with Community, regional or federal institutions or bodies, in particular the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AEQES), the Higher Council for Student Mobility (CSM), the Science Policy Councils (CPS), and the Scientific Research Fund (FRS-FNRS);

8° coordinate, in cooperation with the services of the Ministry of the French-speaking Community, the representation of higher education institutions in the French-speaking Community within the framework of inter-community and international missions and relations;

9° promote the international visibility of higher education in the French-speaking Community and coordinate the international relations of the Hubs and institutions, in particular as regards the provision of higher education and joint degrees;

10° distribute the participation of the Hubs and institutions in academic cooperation for development and all similar and humanitarian projects;

11° promote joint research activities and draw up opinions and recommendations on the orientations of scientific policy, on the means to be implemented so as to encourage the development and improvement of scientific or artistic research in HE institutions and on the participation of the French-speaking Community and its institutions in national or international research programmes or projects;

12° organise, in consultation with the doctoral schools at the FRS-FNRS, the thematic doctoral schools and the doctoral training courses and establish the rules for the boards of examiners responsible for conferring doctorates in the universities;

13° accredit continuing education studies leading to the granting of credits;

14° set the amount of tuition fees which are not determined by the legislation;

15° develop and coordinate collective structures dedicated to lifelong learning activities in higher education;

16° define, on the proposal of commissions created for this purpose by ARES and the institutions concerned, the competences reference frameworks corresponding to the academic degrees awarded, and certify their compliance with the study programmes proposed by the institutions, as well as their conformity with the other provisions concerning professional access for graduates;

17° provide and disseminate complete and objective information on higher education in the French-speaking Community, on the degrees awarded and on the professions to which they lead, as well as on the skills and qualifications profiles at the end of these studies;

18° manage a statistical data compilation system relating to all the missions of higher education and to the future of its graduates, publish synthetic analyses and a detailed overview concerning students and staff members, and ensure the interoperability of the systems for a permanent confidential follow-up of the personal pathway of students in higher education;

19° collect information on the social situation and welfare of students, on the services and support provided to them, on study grants and loans and on activities to help them succeed, on remedial measures, on education follow-up and on advice and support for personalised study paths;

20° identify the most effective measures and good practices in terms of helping students succeed, provide educational support to teachers, and promote their implementation within the academic clusters and institutions;

21° serve as a source of information for the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the Higher Council for Mobility, the Academic Hubs and the institutions of higher education, as well as for the Government Commissioners and Delegates to said institutions;

22° implement the provisions contained in the Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning for higher education in the French-speaking Community in cooperation with its administration,

23° carry out or commission scientific studies and research relating to higher education and particularly to student populations, study paths, conditions of success and diplomas awarded, on the initiative or at the request of the Minister responsible for higher education;

24° more generally, contribute to the development of tools for analysis and evaluation of higher education, keep an inventory of studies and scientific research carried out in this field and ensure a monitoring function for such instruments developed in the French-speaking Community as well as at the European or international level;

25° provide administrative and logistical support for any mission of the higher education institutions or the Academic Hubs, at their request and with the agreement of their Board of Trustees, or entrusted thereto by the relevant legislation.

(…)

Annex 2: Extract relating to the missions of AEQES

Decree on various measures relating to the organisation and functioning of the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education organised or subsidised by the French-speaking Community (D. 22-02-2008 – *Moniteur Belge* [Belgian Official Gazette], 23-04-2008, amended by D. 20-12-2017 – *Moniteur Belge* [Belgian Official Gazette], 25-01-2018)

(…)

Article 3. – The Agency's mission shall be to:

1° ensure that the curricula organised by the institutions are regularly evaluated, highlighting good practices, shortcomings and problems to be solved;

2° ensure the implementation of the evaluation procedures described in Chapter 4;

3° promote, through cooperation by and between all components of higher education, the implementation of practices that improve the quality of education provided in each institution. For adult education, this cooperation shall also be carried out with the relevant inspectorate;

4° inform the Government, the actors and beneficiaries of higher education about the quality of higher education provided in the French-speaking Community;

5° make suggestions to policy makers in order to improve the overall quality of higher education;

6° make any proposal that it considers useful for the accomplishment of its missions, on its own initiative or at the request of the Government;

7° represent the French-speaking Community before national and international bodies in matters concerning the evaluation of the quality of higher education;

8° ensure in consultation with the stakeholders, the development and implementation of methodological approaches to quality assurance adapted to the needs of higher education and to changing contexts.

(…)

Annex 3: Actions relating to the general objectives

i) Make public up-to-date information on the range, coherence, and quality of the higher education provision as well as the quality assurance developed in the FWB higher education institutions:

Each organisation is required to provide information to all Belgian and international stakeholders, including the general public (presentation of the FWB higher education, its provision and quality, etc.). AEQES and ARES are determined to work together in this process for the sake of coherence. They will pay particular attention to coordinating communication with all higher education stakeholder - a dimension they consider to be of the utmost importance.

Thus, ARES undertakes to:
- provide objective information on higher education provision, the nature of the providers (e.g. public or private), the qualifications awarded and the professions to which they lead;
- constitute a consultation platform (to share objectives and projects, implement the Landscape Decree, develop solutions);
- serve as a source of updated information for the Agency (updated register of HE provision, including changes in programmes and new authorisations, statistical data, opinions on specific issues, contribution to updating of the AEQES higher education syllabus for experts, etc.);

For its part, AEQES undertakes to:
- communicate and disseminate the results of the evaluations (publication on its website of the reports and system-wide analyses, presentation and dissemination)
- invite representatives of ARES to the presentations of the system-wide analyses;
- disseminate studies (carried out by AEQES or in partnership with other stakeholders) related to quality assurance activities;
- respond to invitations from ARES to present any issues relating to its activities or methodological developments.

The two organisations aim to use information produced by each of them and made accessible or disseminated by them and to harmonise reporting data so as to reduce the burden on institutions, particularly in terms of statistical collection. For the rest, E-Paysage constitutes the reference tool for data collection and access.

ii) Support institutions in developing a sustainable quality culture for their missions:

ARES undertakes to:
- analyse, in particular with the authorities and management of the institutions, the reports, studies, analyses and surveys drawn up by AEQES or other bodies which are of interest for the promotion of quality in FWB;
- support the development and strengthening of quality assurance capacity in institutions;
- organise regular training and reflective activities on topics of common interest to quality officers and managers.

AEQES undertakes to:
- advise and guide the institutions participating in the pilot institutional review phase;
- develop the continuous evaluation procedure (with its specific reference framework), as well as the procedure for mid-term progress record;
- organise a regular study day for quality managers and authorities in the institutions.

The two organisations can support each other in carrying out their respective activities. They may also carry out joint activities in the field of quality.

iii) Define, maintain and improve the link between internal and external quality assurance:

ARES undertakes to:
- inform the AEQES of the follow-up actions carried out or envisaged following the external evaluations;
- invite members of the Executive Unit to the activities it organises in relation to quality.

AEQES undertakes to:
- keep ARES informed of methodological developments (participation of an ARES member in the Steering Committee of the pilot phase; response to invitations from CoQER, etc.);
- collect and analyse with the institutions the feedback on the pilot institutional review and the programmatic evaluation methods;
- use this information to feed the assessment report to be drawn up at the end of the pilot phase and to contribute to this objective iii.

Finally, with a view to continuous training and for a better understanding of the issues relating to quality and quality assurance and the context of FWB, the two organisations implement training courses for the ARES teams (quality assurance for HE, issues and prospects, etc.) and for AEQES (evolution of the regulatory framework for HE, etc.) on a regular basis.

iv) Define and implement certain operational procedures for the conduct of external evaluations:

ARES undertakes to:
- provide AEQES with proposals for the development of the six-year plan of programmatic evaluations according to the development of the provision and to their strategic analysis for clustering programmes (impact on the system-wide analyses);[7]
- provide AEQES with one or more lists of potential experts in addition to those available to the Agency from other sources (unsolicited applications, pool of experts from the Agency or partner agencies, etc.) for analysis, selection and validation by AEQES;

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[7] The choice of programme groupings has an impact on the content of the system-wide analyses drawn up by the expert panels at the end of the evaluation process.

- participate in training seminars for AEQES experts (by invitation and in accordance with the terms of reference defined by AEQES);
- provide AEQES with statistical data.

AEQES undertakes to:
- provide the "HOPS" database with evaluation reports;
- indicate to ARES its needs in terms of experts and the desired skills for the planned evaluations;
- provide ARES with an annual report on the recruitment of experts.

v) Inform, document and prepare studies and analyses on all matters relating to the quality of higher education for decision-makers and stakeholders;

ARES undertakes to:
- Share the results of studies, projects and work related to quality.

AEQES undertakes to:
- collect and analyse feedback on the pilot phase in order to prepare and produce a report for the Government [Article 9bis, AEQES decree];
- share the lessons learned from the pilot phase with ARES.

In general, the two bodies undertake to share information relating to this type of issues. With a view to the needed changes of the legal framework concerning quality, they are to inform each other of the reflections carried out in their own organisation and envisage joint work as and when necessary.

In addition, they cooperate when hosting international delegations interested in the FWB higher education and its quality assurance.

Finally, they work together in the Quality working group set up by the body responsible for the French-speaking Qualifications Framework.

vi) To avoid any conflict of interest:

Both organisations undertake to choose the persons to be appointed in the various working structures with care. Thus, pursuant to Article 5 of the AEQES decree, the members of the Steering Committee are appointed by the Government on the basis of double lists submitted by the ARES and various bodies.

	Free translation
CHAPITRE II – Création et missions de l'Agence Article 2 Il est créé un service autonome, non doté de la personnalité juridique, dénommé « Agence pour l'évaluation de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur organisé ou subventionné par la Communauté française », ci-après « l'Agence ». La gestion budgétaire et comptable de ce service est séparée de celle des services d'administration générale de la Communauté française, conformément à l'article 140 des lois coordonnées sur la comptabilité de l'Etat. […]	*CHAPTER II - Creation and missions of the Agency* **Article 2.** *An autonomous service, without legal personality, is hereby created, called 'Agence pour l'évaluation de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur organisé ou subventionné par la Communauté française', [Agency for the evaluation of the quality of higher education organised or subsidised by the French-speaking Community], hereinafter referred to as "the Agency". The budgetary and accounting management of this service is separate from that of the general administration services of the French-speaking Community, in accordance with article 140 of the consolidated State Accounting Acts.* *[…]*
Article 3 [modifié par D. 25-06-2015 ; complété par D. 20-12-2017] L'Agence a pour mission de : 1° Veiller à ce que les cursus organisés par les établissements fassent l'objet d'une évaluation régulière mettant en évidence les bonnes pratiques, les insuffisances et les problèmes à résoudre; 2° Veiller à la mise en œuvre des procédures d'évaluation décrites au chapitre 4; 3° Favoriser, par la coopération entre toutes les composantes de l'enseignement supérieur, la mise en œuvre de pratiques permettant d'améliorer la qualité de l'enseignement dispensé dans chaque établissement; Pour l'enseignement de promotion sociale, cette coopération s'effectue également avec le service d'inspection concerné ; 4° Informer le Gouvernement, les acteurs et les bénéficiaires de l'enseignement supérieur de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur dispensé en Communauté française; 5° Formuler aux responsables politiques des suggestions en vue d'améliorer la qualité globale de l'enseignement supérieur; 6° Faire toute proposition qu'elle juge utile dans l'accomplissement de ses missions, d'initiative ou à la demande du Gouvernement; 7° Représenter la Communauté française auprès des instances nationales et internationales en matière d'évaluation de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur ; 8° Veiller à développer et à mettre en œuvre, en concertation avec les parties prenantes, des approches méthodologiques d'évaluation de la qualité adaptées aux besoins de l'enseignement supérieur et aux contextes en mutation.	*Article 3* *[modified by D. 25-06-2015; completed by D. 20-12-2017]* *The Agency's mission shall be to:* *1° ensure that the curricula organised by the institutions are regularly evaluated, highlighting good practices, shortcomings and problems to be solved;* *2° ensure the implementation of the evaluation procedures described in Chapter 4;* *3° promote, through cooperation by and between all components of higher education, the implementation of practices that improve the quality of education provided in each institution. For adult education, this cooperation shall also be carried out with the relevant inspectorate;* *4° inform the Government, the actors and beneficiaries of higher education about the quality of higher education provided in the French-speaking Community;* *5° make suggestions to policy makers in order to improve the overall quality of higher education;* *6° make any proposal that it considers useful for the accomplishment of its missions, on its own initiative or at the request of the Government;* *7° represent the French-speaking Community before national and international bodies in matters concerning the evaluation of the quality of higher education;* *8° ensure in consultation with the stakeholders, the development and implementation of methodological approaches to quality assurance adapted to the needs of higher education and to changing contexts.*

CHAPITRE III – Composition et fonctionnement de l'Agence	*CHAPTER III – composition and functioning of the Agency*
Article 4 Les organes de l'Agence sont le comité de gestion, le bureau et la cellule exécutive. Sauf les tâches qui sont confiées au bureau ou à la cellule exécutive par le présent décret ou par délégation, les décisions de l'Agence sont prises par le comité de gestion.	*Article 4.* *The bodies are of the Agency are the Steering Committee, the Board and the Executive Unit.* *Apart from the tasks entrusted to the Board or the Executive Unit by Decree or delegation, the decisions of the Agency shall be made by the Steering Committee.*
Article 5 [modifié par D. 30-04-2009 ; D. 25-06-2015 ; D. 09-02-2017] Le comité de gestion est composé de 24 membres effectifs avec voix délibérative. Les membres effectifs sont : 1° Le directeur général de l'Enseignement non obligatoire et de la recherche scientifique; 2° Quatre représentants des corps académique et scientifique des universités proposés collégialement par les Recteurs; 3° Quatre représentants du corps enseignant des Hautes Ecoles, sur proposition des Directeurs-Présidents; 4° Deux représentants du corps enseignant des Ecoles supérieures des Arts, sur proposition des Directeurs des Ecoles supérieures des Arts ; 5° Deux représentants du corps enseignant des établissements d'enseignement de promotion sociale organisant un enseignement supérieur, proposés par le Conseil général de l'enseignement de promotion sociale; 6° (...) 7° Un représentant du personnel administratif des universités, proposé par le Conseil interuniversitaire de la Communauté française; 8° Un représentant du personnel administratif des Hautes Ecoles proposé par le Conseil général des Hautes Ecoles; 9° Trois représentants des étudiants, proposés par les organisations représentatives des étudiants; 10° Trois représentants des organisations syndicales représentées au Conseil national du Travail et qui affilient dans le secteur, proposés par celles-ci; 11° Trois personnalités issues des milieux professionnels, sociaux et culturels. Les membres du comité de gestion sont désignés par le Gouvernement. Les membres visés à l'alinéa 2, 2° à 10°, lui sont présentés par les instances respectives sur la base de listes doubles. Le mandat des membres du comité de gestion est de quatre ans, renouvelable une fois à l'exception du mandat des représentants étudiants qui correspond à une année académique et est renouvelable. Chaque membre effectif a un suppléant, proposé et désigné dans les mêmes conditions. Il n'aura voix	*Article 5. [modified by D. 30-04-2009; D. 25-06-2015; D. 20-12-2017]* *The Steering Committee is composed of 24 full members with voting rights.* *The full members are:* *1° the director of higher education, lifelong learning and scientific research;* *2° Four representatives of the academic and scientific staff of the universities, designated collegially by the Rectors;* *3° Four representatives of the teaching staff of the university colleges, designated by the Directors-Presidents of the latter;* *4° Two representatives of the teaching staff of the Schools of Art, designated by the Directors of the latter;* *5° Two representatives of the teaching staff of adult higher education colleges, designated by the Conseil général de l'enseignement de promotion sociale [General Council of adult education];* *6° (...)* *7° One representative of the administrative staff of universities, designated by the ARES thematic chamber of universities;* *8° One representative of the administrative staff of the university colleges, designated by the ARES thematic Chamber of university colleges and adult higher education;* *9° Three student representatives, proposed by student organisations;* *10° Three representatives of the trade unions, designated by the latter;* *11° Three professional, social and cultural representatives, designated by the Government of the French-speaking Community.* *The members of the Steering Committee are appointed by the Government. Members listed from 2, 2° to 10° are presented for appointment to the Government on double lists.* *The mandate of members of the Steering Committee is 4-year long, renewable once. That of the students representatives is one-year long, renewable.* *Each full member has an alternate, presented and appointed in the same conditions. He may vote only if the full member is unable to attend.*

délibérative que si le membre effectif est empêché.

Le comité de gestion ne délibère valablement que si la moitié au moins des membres ayant voix délibérative sont présents et si la majorité des membres ayant voix délibérative visés à l'alinéa 2, 2° à 6°, sont présents.

En cas de décès ou de démission d'un membre, il est pourvu à son remplacement conformément à l'alinéa 3. Le remplaçant termine le mandat.

Un représentant de chaque ministre ayant l'Enseignement supérieur dans ses attributions y siège avec voix consultative.

In order for the Steering Committee deliberations to be valid, at least half the voting members must attend and the majority of full members listed under 2, 2° to 6° must attend.

In case of death or resignation of a member, he is replaced according to indentation 3. The new member finishes the mandate.

A representative of the Minister responsible for higher education sits on the committee in an advisory capacity.

Article 6 [modifié par D.25-06-2015]

Le comité de gestion élit en son sein un président et un vice-président pour un mandat de deux ans, renouvelable une fois. Le président est élu dans les catégories visées à l'article 5, alinéa 2, 2° à 6°. Le vice-président est élu soit dans la catégorie visée à l'article 5, alinéa 2, 3° à 6°, si le président a été élu dans la catégorie visée à l'article 5, alinéa 2, 2°, soit dans la catégorie visée à l'article 5, alinéa 2, 2°, si le président a été élu dans la catégorie visée à l'article 5, alinéa 2, 3° à 6°.

Le président et le vice-président ainsi que le fonctionnaire dirigeant la cellule exécutive forment le bureau. Le directeur général de l'Enseignement non obligatoire et de la recherche scientifique y siège avec voix consultative.
Le bureau prépare les décisions du comité de gestion et assure toutes les missions que ce dernier lui délègue dans son règlement d'ordre intérieur.

Article 6. [modified by D. 25-06-2015]

The Steering Committee elects a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman among its ranks, for a two-year mandate renewable once. The Chairman is elected among categories referred to in Article 5, indentation 2, 2° to 6°. The Vice-chairman is elected either in the category referred to in Article 5, indentation 2, 3° to 6° should the Chairman be elected in category referred to in Article 5, indentation2, 2°; or, in the category referred to in Article 5, indentation 2, 2°, should the Chairman be elected in the category referred to in Article 5, indentation 2, 3° to 6°.

The Board consists of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the director of the Executive Unit. The Director general for higher education, Lifelong Learning and Scientific Research sits in an advisory capacity.
The Board prepares the decisions of the Steering Committee and carries out all the missions that the latter delegates to it in its rules of procedure.

Article 7 [modifié par D.11-04-2014 ; D.25-06-2015]

§ 1er. L'Agence dispose d'une cellule exécutive chargée de mettre en œuvre les décisions du comité de gestion et du bureau. Cette cellule exécutive est placée sous la direction d'un fonctionnaire de rang 12 au moins et est composée, en outre, d'au moins trois agents de niveau 1 et deux agents de niveau 2.
Ces agents sont :
1° soit des membres du personnel des services de la Communauté française ;
2° soit des membres détachés pour une durée minimale de 2 ans du personnel des établissements d'enseignement supérieur conformément au décret du 24 juin 1996 portant réglementation des missions, des congés pour mission et des mises en disponibilité pour mission spéciale dans l'enseignement organisé ou subventionné par la Communauté française ;

Article 7. [modified by D. 11-04-2014; D. 25-06-2015]

§1. The Agency has an Executive Unit whose task is to implement the decisions of the Steering Committee and the Board. This Executive Unit works under the leadership of a minimum-level-12 civil servant and is composed of at least 3 officials (level 1) and 2 officials (level 2).
These officials are:
1° either members of the staff of the French-speaking Community services;
2° either staff members of HEIs assigned to a minimum 2-year mission according to the decree of 24 June 1996 on regulations of missions and assignments […];
3° either, by way of derogation from the royal decree of 22 December 2000 laying down the general principles of the administrative and pecuniary status of the civil servants applicable to the staff of the

3° soit, par dérogation à l'arrêté royal du 22 décembre 2000 fixant les principes généraux du statut administratif et pécuniaire des agents de l'Etat applicable au personnel des services des Gouvernements de Communauté et de Région et des Collèges de la Commission communautaire française ainsi qu'aux personnes morales de droit public qui en dépendent, des membres du personnel contractuel, engagés à charge de la dotation de fonctionnement de l'Agence et qui ne répondent pas impérativement à l'une des conditions listées à l'article 2, §1er, alinéa 2, 1° à 4°, de l'arrêté royal.	governments of Communities and Regions, and the members of the Board of the French-speaking Community Commission as well as legal persons under public law, staff members under contract, financed by the Agency's allocation and who do not comply with one of the conditions listed in Article 2, §1, indentation 2, 1° to 4° of the royal decree.
Le fonctionnaire dirigeant et les agents visés à l'alinéa 2, 1° et 2° sont désignés par le Gouvernement.	The civil servant director and the staff members referred to in indentation 2, 1° and 2° are appointed by the Government.
Le Gouvernement délègue au bureau, sur proposition motivée et documentée du directeur de la cellule exécutive, l'engagement des agents visés à l'alinéa 2, 3°	The Government delegates to the Board, on proposal of the resources needs analysis made by the director, the hiring of staff referred to in indentation 2, 3°.
Sous réserve des adaptations nécessaires définies par le Gouvernement, le statut administratif et pécuniaire des agents visés à l'alinéa 2, 1° et 2°, s'applique aux agents visés à l'alinéa 2, 3°.	Subject to the provisions of needed adaptations fixed by the Government, the administrative and pecuniary status of the officials referred to in indentation 2, 1° and 2°applies to the officials referred to in indentation 2, 3°.
§ 2. La fonction de direction de la cellule exécutive constitue une charge à temps plein. Le membre du personnel qui assure cette fonction participe avec voix consultative au comité de gestion et en assure le secrétariat.	§2. The position of director of the Executive Unit is a full time job. The staff member who holds that position sits in the Steering Committee in an advisory capacity and assures the secretariat of its plenary sessions.
La cellule exécutive a pour tâche principale de veiller à la bonne organisation et à l'exécution des évaluations programmées par l'Agence. Elle assiste l'ARES dans ce but.	The main task of the Executive Unit is to properly implement and monitor the external quality assurance activities as planned by the Agency. It collaborates with ARES in that purpose.
Article 8 Le Comité de gestion de l'Agence établit son règlement d'ordre intérieur et le communique au Gouvernement. Celui-ci doit notamment prévoir les règles relatives au dépôt des notes de minorité lorsque l'Agence est amenée à remettre un avis au Gouvernement.	Article 8. The Steering Committee adopts rules of procedure and communicates it to the Government. The rules of procedure must include rules on receiving minority notes whenever the Agency needs to deliver the Government an opinion/a notice.

ANNEX 6   ROADMAP OF THE PILOT PHASE

The table below describes the timeline of the main steps and milestones of the pilot-phase and their associated communication actions. It has been updated taking into account the delays due to the pandemic.

DATES	STEPS	COMMUNICATION ACTIONS
February 2018	Official launch of the pilot phase and call for pilot HEIs	Letter to all HEIs Specific meeting with the HEIs to explain the objectives and conditions of the pilot-phase
April 2018	Selection of the pilot HEIs (17) by the CAM	
June 2018		Plenary meeting with the selected pilot HEIs
Autumn 2018	WGs develop some guidelines	Dissemination of "Guidelines"
November 2018	Annual AEQES seminar	Further communication on the pilot-phase
November 2018	The "8 pilot HEIs" tour (year 1)	individual information meetings
December 2018	Launch of www.aeqes-coconstruction.be	Website devoted to the pilot-phase and inviting HEIs to contribute
January 2019	Meeting with all HEIs	Further communication on the pilot-phase "where are we now?" and feedback from the first 8 pilot HEIs information visits
From November 2018 to February 2019	Consultation of non-pilot HEIs on future 2022-2028 evaluations plans	
December 2018 – June 2019	Selection of the pilot experts by the CAM Planning of the site visits	Report to the Steering Committee only + answers to all applicants
September 2019	Pilot HEIs (year 1) deliver their SER and propose a schedule for the site visit	
October 2019	Training seminar for the experts of the pilot phase	One-hour preparatory meetings between HEIs representatives and the chair of the panel
November 2019	Annual AEQES seminar The "9 pilot HEIs tour" (year 2)	Further communication on the pilot-phase Individual information visits
Nov 2019 through April 2020	First institutional review site visits (8 HEIs)	
As detailed in the SAR [figure 15, page 25], the first 8 reviews were only 4 and the next 13 reviews took place between October 2020 and April 2021.		
January 2020	Meeting with all HEIs	Further communication on the pilot-phase "where are we now?"

June 2020 thru October 2020	Pilot HEIs (ex-year 2) deliver their SER and propose a schedule for the site visit Several HEIs asked for a delay	
From February 2020 to June 2020	Preliminary confidential review reports are sent to the 4 HEIs	
Summer 2020	The CAM and the chairs of the panels design a matrix of descriptors for the criteria of the "summative judgement procedure"	The Steering Committee approves the change of scaling and the use of the matrix as an internal tool.
September 2020	Training seminar for the experts of the pilot phase (if new experts)	One-hour preparatory meetings between HEIs representatives and the chair of the panel
November 2020	The Steering Committee adopts a NOTE from the Methodology and Standards WG concerning the future AEQES reference framework for institutional review The WG starts drafting the framework	Published on www.aeqes-coconstruction.be
Oct 2020 – April 2021	13 HEIs pilot reviews *all online* Preliminary confidential review reports are sent to the HEIs	
From Dec. 2020 to September 2021	The CAM and the chairs work on the "summative judgement procedure" for 8 HEIs.	
January – February 2021	Debriefing with the pilot HEIs	Results to disseminate Published on www.aeqes-coconstruction.be
February 2021	The Steering Committee adopts an Appeal procedure and appoints its potential members	
From November 2020 to July 2021	HEIs sent their right of reply Final review reports are being finalized	
October 2021	Another debriefing with the pilot HEIs	Results to disseminate Published on www.aeqes-coconstruction.be
October 2021	Publication of the 17 review reports Preparation of the analysis of the pilot phase by the experts	
Autumn 2021	Presentation of the system-wide analysis of the institutional reviews by the chairs of the panels	Dissemination of the system-wide analysis
2021-2022	Taking stock, debriefing & reporting Further consultation (including on new set of standards)	

ANNEX 7 COMPOSITION OF VARIOUS WORKING GROUPS AND BODIES SET UP FOR THE PILOT PHASE

The table below shows the 4 working groups of AEQES (mandated by the Steering Committee), their composition (at the present moment) and main tasks. Most members sit at the Steering Committee[8] (except those referred to in square brackets and chosen for their expertise) and are marked with an *

AEQES WG	COMPOSITION	main tasks
SELF-ASSESSMENT & STRATEGY	the BOARD:	Prepare and monitor ENQA reviews Elaborate and monitor Strategic Plans
	Anne-Joëlle PHILIPPART, Chair of the SC	
	Karin VAN LOON, Vice-chair of the SC	
	Caty DUYKAERTS, director of the Executive Unit	
	Angeline AUBERT-LOTARSKI*	
	Luc CANAUTTE*	
David Urban - AEQES	Lucien BOLLAERT* (alternate Stefan DELPLACE*)	
	Danielle MAES	
	[Andrée SURSOCK]	
	Dominique THEWISSEN*	
METHODOLOGY & STANDARDS	_Angeline AUBERT-LOTARSKI*, chair of the WG_	Design procedures and set of standards
	Véronique GERARD* , chair of the WG	
	Sandrine CANTER*	
	Dimitri DEFLANDRE*	
	Stefan DELPLACE* (alternate Lucien BOLLAERT*)	
	Caroline HOLLELA*	
	Cécile JOSSE*	
Alexis Vermote et Marie-Line Seret - AEQES	Clarence PITZ*	
	Maude REGNARD*	
	Dominique THEWISSEN*	
REPORTS & ANALYSES	[Arielle BOUCHEZ]	Elaborate meta-analyses or other studies
Claire Lefèvre - AEQES	[Catherine MATHELIN]	
	[Philippe LEPOIVRE]	
PLANNING	Christophe COETSIER*	Prepare the 6-year plans for the programmatic evaluations
	Manon LEDUNE*	
Romain PARMENTIER - AEQES	Maude REGNARD*	
	[Anne VANDENBROUCKE]	

colour code	
University colleges	
Universities	
Adult higher education	
Schools of Arts	
independent from FWB higher education institutions	

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[8] See the composition of the Steering Committee in detail http://www.aeqes.be/agence_composition_comite.cfm

THE MEMBERS OF THE PILOT PHASE COMMITTEE (CoPIL):

Angeline AUBERT-LOTARSKI, chair of the Methodology & Standards WG
Dimitri DEFLANDRE (representing Adult Education in the SC)
Michel STOCKHEM (representing Art Schools in the SC)
Kevin GUILLAUME (director ARES),
Anne-Joëlle PHILIPPART (president of AEQES), Karin VAN LOON (vice-president of AEQES),

Caty DUYKAERTS and Marie-Line SERET, responsible for implementing the institutional reviews,
AEQES staff.

THE MEMBERS OF THE METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT COUNCIL (CAM) FOR THE PILOT PHASE:

Mr Guy AELTERMAN (Flanders)
Mr Patrick BARANGER (France)
Mrs Bernadette CHARLIER (Switzerland)
Mrs Geneviève Le FORT (Switzerland)
Mr Jacques MOREAU (France)
Mrs Andrée SURSOCK (France)

THE POOL OF MEMBERS FOR AN APPEAL COMMISSION (summative judgement procedure):

Mr Stéphane BERTHET (Switzerland)
Mrs Cécile DURANT (QUEBEC)
Mrs Elfriede HEINEN (FWB)
Mr Ronny HEINTZE (Germany)
Mr Philippe LEPOIVRE (FWB)
Mrs Anja SCHULER (Switzerland)
Mr Ivan VEROUGSTRAETEN (Belgium)
Mr Vincent WERTZ (FWB)
Mrs Thérèse ZHANG (Belgium)

AEQES REFERENCE FRAMEWORKS FOR PROGRAMMATIC EVALUATIONS

REFERENCE FRAMEWORK FOR INITIAL PROGRAMMATIC EVALUATION

> **Criterion 1: The institution/the entity has defined, implements and keeps up-to-date a policy for supporting the quality of its study programmes.**

The Belgian French-speaking Community's legislation clearly refers to this criterion. As stipulated by the Article 9 in the Decree of 7 November 2013: '*The higher education institutions [HEIs] are required to assure quality management and assurance of all their activities, and to take all measures for effective self- evaluation and its follow-up.*'
This criterion aims to analyse the existence and effectiveness of a quality assurance policy and associated processes, which need to include an active role for students and other stakeholders.

Dimension 1.1: The HEI's governance policy

> The HEI has defined a governance policy in line with its missions and values. In this context, it develops and implements an organisation and processes designed to ensure that its governance is efficient. The institutional governance facilitates the articulation between quality management at institutional level and at programme level, thereby contributing to the quality of the assessed programme.

Dimension 1.2: Quality assurance at HEI, entity and programme levels

> The HEI/entity develops and implements a quality management policy and associated processes at HEI, entity and programme levels. These foresee an active role for students and other stakeholders. In doing so, the HEI explicitly commits to establish a culture recognising the importance of quality and its management through appropriate processes.

Dimension 1.3: Programme design, strategic planning and periodical review

> The HEI/entity develops and implements processes and mechanisms for designing, monitoring and periodically reviewing its study programme. These processes and mechanisms are effective, participatory, and contribute to improving the quality of the programme. The strategic planning takes into account the results of all the quality assessments of the programme.

> *In the case of a joint programme, the HEIs/entities develop and implement processes and mechanisms for designing, monitoring and periodically reviewing the joint study programme(s), in collaboration with their partner(s).*

Dimension 1.4: Internal information and communication

> The HEI/entity has defined and implements a communication policy as well as effective procedures for disseminating information on the assessed programme to internal stakeholders.

This criterion aims to examine to what extent the programme's intended learning outcomes meet current or foreseeable societal needs in terms of training and personal development. It also aims to explore how the objectives and content of the programme support the social and professional integration of graduates and/or their integration into a flexible learning path.

Dimension 2.1: Assessment of the study programme's relevance

> The HEI/entity develops and implements processes and mechanisms to ensure that the study programme complies with legal requirements and takes into account the stakeholders' needs and expectations. The study programme is regularly updated (with inputs from business practices, research results, link with research, link with professional contexts, scientific and technological knowledge, etc.). It contributes to the social and professional integration of graduates and/or their integration into a flexible learning path.

Dimension 2.2: External information and communication

> The HEI/entity regularly publishes up-to-date, impartial, objective, quantitative and qualitative information on the study programmes and diplomas offered.

Criterion 3: The HEI/entity has developed and implements a policy for ensuring the internal coherence of its study programme

This criterion aims to assess the coherence between the following aspects: the intended learning outcomes as stated by the study programme, the programme contents that are actually carried out, the learning provisions and activities, the overall design of the programme, the sequencing of learning activities or provisions, the time foreseen for achieving the intended learning outcomes; the assessed learning outcomes, and the criteria and modalities for assessing them.

Dimension 3.1: Learning outcomes of the study programme

> The HEI/entity selects, formulates and publishes the programme's intended learning outcomes. These are realistic, fit for purpose and communicated in an appropriate way.

Dimension 3.2: Study programme content, teaching & learning activities (including internships, projects, and final dissertations)

> The HEI/entity develops and implements learning provisions and activities designed so that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved.

Dimension 3.3: Study programme's overall implementation and time foreseen for achieving the intended learning outcomes

> The study programme is designed and implemented in a way that is appropriate for achieving the intended learning outcomes, within a reasonable period of time.

Dimension 3.4: Assessment of the achievement level for the intended learning outcomes

> The assessment criteria and modalities are designed in accordance with the intended learning outcomes and are applied in a systematic and consistent way. Moreover, the requirements are clearly formulated and communicated to students in due time.

Criterion 4: The HEI/entity has developed and implements a policy for ensuring the efficiency and equity of its study programme

The efficiency criterion relates to the extent the objectives of the programme are achieved, when considering the resources to carry them out. The criterion intends to check whether the study programme produces the expected results, i.e. whether students indeed achieve the intended learning outcomes at the end of their studies.

With this criterion, the HEI/entity is invited to track student paths, from the moment a student registers to the programme, and with attention to the learning outcomes achievement levels and completion rates. Assessment of a programme's effectiveness relates not only to the graduates' characteristics, but also to the HEI's ability to support the students admitted to the programme in completing their studies. The criterion also involves assessing effectiveness factors, such as resource allocation, teaching practices and organisational arrangements undertaken to support the quality of the programme.

The equity criterion relates to the provisions that the programme has set up so that the students, independently of their previous academic background or their personal, social or financial situation, are able to acquire, update and develop throughout their life the programme's intended learning outcomes, as well as the professional skills required for ensuring their employability, supporting their personal development, pursuing lifelong learning, and fostering active citizenship and intercultural dialogue.

Dimension 4.1: Human resources

> The HEI/entity ensures that the human resources are adequate and appropriate to the programme and to the students – including to different audiences of students. The HEI/entity makes available the means needed to ensure staff quality and skills, with a particular focus on teaching staff.

Dimension 4.2: Material resources

> The HEI/entity ensures that the resources allocated to teaching infrastructures and tools are adequate and appropriate for achieving the intended learning outcomes.

Dimension 4.3: Equity in terms of student welcome, progress monitoring and support

> The HEI/entity ensures that the arrangements set up for providing students with guidance, orientation and support in their learning paths are fair, adequate and appropriate for achieving the study programme's objectives.

Dimension 4.4: Analysis of data required for the programme's monitoring

> The HEI/entity ensures that it gathers, analyses and makes an appropriate use of data required for the programme's strategic planning.

Criterion 5: The HEI/entity has completed the analysis of its study programme and has developed an action plan for continuous improvement.

Dimension 5.1: Self-assessment methodology

The HEI/entity has carried out a self-evaluation of the study programme, in a participatory, in-depth and validated manner.

Dimension 5.2: SWOT analysis

The self-evaluation carried out by the HEI/entity includes an analysis identifying the programme's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats in its environment.
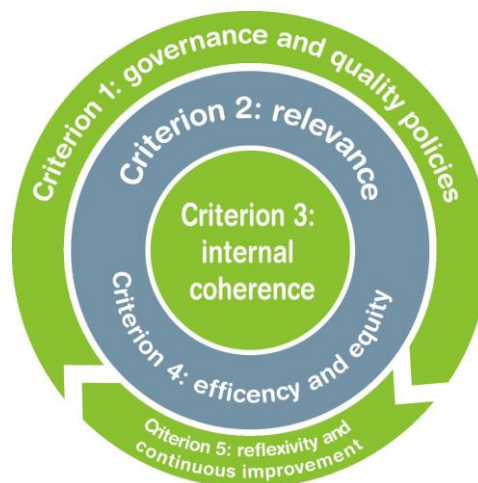
Dimension 5.3: Action plan and follow-up

On the basis of the self-evaluation, the HEI/entity has taken appropriate and considered decisions. It has drawn up an action plan defining priorities and performance indicators, and aiming at continuously improving the quality of the study programme. It regularly and systematically analyses the quality of its programme.

Note:
Complete and detailed Accompanying guidelines *(in French only) can be downloaded on the Agency's website: www.aeqes.be. These guidelines can be used by HEIs when working on their self-evaluation report as well as by experts mandated by AEQES for taking part in evaluations.*
The self-assessment reports are to be compiled in accordance with the following scheme: a succinct presentation of the study programme (part 1), followed by its self-evaluation against the five criteria specified in this reference framework (part 2).

AEQES REFERENCE FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUOUS PROGRAMMATIC EVALUATION

CRITERION A
The institution/entity is committed to a process of continuous enhancement adapted to its objectives and based on reasoned choices, in particular as regards the recommendations of the previous external evaluation. This approach is explicit and is carried out with the participation of the internal and external stakeholders of the institution/entity.

This criterion envisages the continuous enhancement process that is specific to the institution/entity, relevant and sustainable. It therefore aims to ensure that the institution/entity carries out a periodic, systematic, in-depth, participatory and validated analysis of its programme cluster. On this basis, and with a view to continuous quality enhancement, it takes appropriate and reasoned decisions by means of an updated, prioritised action plan with defined monitoring indicators. The process involves internal and external stakeholders.
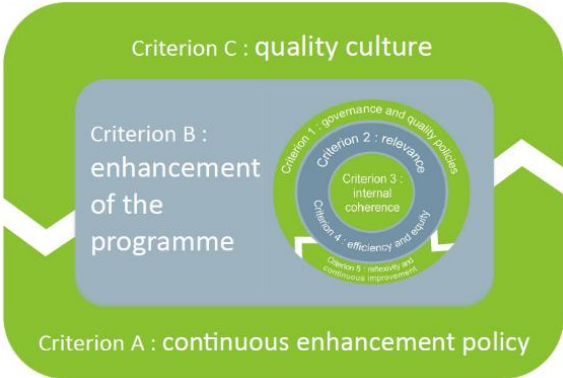
CRITERION B
The changes made by the institution/entity contribute to the dynamics for improving the programme cluster, in particular as regards its relevance, internal coherence, efficiency and equity. The communication of the institution/entity is updated accordingly.

This criterion takes into account the implementation of the initial action plan, in particular as regards criteria 2, 3 and 4 of the AEQES reference framework for the initial programmatic evaluation. It considers the extent to and the manner in which the planned actions have been carried out, taking into account the contextual parameters. It makes sure that the developments of the programme cluster are valued.

CRITERION C
In the service of the continuous enhancement of the entity's programmes, its quality culture is based as much on the individual and collective commitment of all stakeholders as on identified procedures and tools.

This criterion aims to analyse the quality culture at work in the entity. It considers how and to what extent the entity engages explicitly in the development of a culture that recognises the importance of quality and its management through appropriate procedures. These include a role for internal and   external stakeholders.

ANNEX 9   PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF THE EXECUTIVE UNIT

The first table indicates some examples of the various types of training the members of the Executive Unit could attend in the period from 2016 to now.
The type of competencies refers to the ENQA QA professional competencies framework[9] colour code.

year	activity	Type of competencies	Number of staff
2021	Project management introduction (EAP)	systemic/technical	2
	EUA webinar « Ensuring fair and transparent recognition procedures through Bologna tools »	knowledge	1
	ENQA webinar "Micro-credentials and the role of external quality assurance"	knowledge	1
	Evaluation of public policies (EAP)	systemic/technical	2
	GDPR training (EAP)	knowledge	1
	Excel, power point	systemic/technical	1
	ARES training on latest changes in the FWB legal framework	knowledge	12
	INQAAHE conference Glasgow (online)	knowledge	1
2020	Introduction to conflict management (EAP)	interpersonal	2
	IT – Moodle, Webex, JITSI, BIG BLUE BUTTON, ZOOM	systemic/technical	1
	Project management (EAP)	systemic/technical	1
	Process management (EAP)	systemic/technical	1
	Note-taking techniques (EAP)	systemic/technical	1
	Meeting conduct techniques (EAP)	interpersonal	1
	EUA webinar "2020 European Quality Assurance Forum"	knowledge	2
	QAN meeting 2020 online	knowledge	3
	32è Colloque ADMEE, Casablanca, Maroc	knowledge	1
	ENQA webinar on "trust-based e-assessment in higher education"	knowledge	1
	INQAAHE webinar « Online assessment : best practices et pratical solutions »	knowledge	1
	EQAF 2020	knowledge	1
2019	IT - Woodclap	systemic/technical	2
	ENQA Members'' Forum	knowledge	3
	Mindmapping (EAP)	systemic/technical	1
	Kanban (FWB)	systemic/technical	1
	ARES training on the Governance Decree (university colleges)	knowledge	12
	31e colloque de l'ADMEE – Europe, Lausanne, Suisse	knowledge	1
	Communication (keynote) conference « Culture qualité, posture orientée », HERS, Libramont	Communication/professional attitude/autonomy	2
	Seminar Adult education in FWB	knowledge	1
	EQAF 2019	knowledge	3
2018	ARES training on data skills (HOPS, FASE)	systemic/technical	10
	ARES/CoQER seminar on the key-role of quality officer in HEIs in FWB	knowledge	2
	Languages – Dutch	Communication	1
	Languages - English	Communication	1

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[9] https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/ENQA-Competencies-Framework.pdf

	EQAF 2018	knowledge	1
2017	Training on the features of Adult education in FWB	knowledge	6
	EQAF 2017	knowledge	3
	1st Forum « Learning & Teaching », EUA, Paris, France	knowledge	1
	ARES training on the Landscape Decree	knowledge	10
	Languages - English	Communication	2
2016	ENQA GA, Gloucester, UK	knowledge	2
	EQAF 2016	knowledge	1

The second table shows the various themes analysed by the whole Executive Unit during their annual residential seminar.

Year	Themes
2021	Take stock of the past year and prepare the coming year Methodological discussion on online – mixed – face to face modes of working Update on the pilot phase Preparation of the ENQA visit AEQES communication plan : identify needs and actions, setting priorities the continuous evaluation of programmes : feedback and developments
2020	Not organized because of the pandemic However the Executive Unit focused on developing tools to handle the online activities and teleworking and on updating the material (ex: guidelines for HEIs, training platform for the experts)
2019	Take stock of the past year and prepare the coming year Administrative simplification – impact on daily tasks Money matters – connecting the work of the accountant and the rest of the staff Update on the WG Discussions on the stakeholders partnerships and regular contacts Focus on joint programmes and the *ad hoc* QA practices
2018	Take stock of the past year and prepare the coming year Brainstorming : the ideal Agency (missions, values, strategy, governance) and the ideal organisation of the Executive Unit (including professional competencies to develop) Principles and objectives of the pilot phase Workshop on the quality of evaluation reports (focus on the reference framework) Experts annual training seminar (feedback from surveys and adjustments) AEQES Study day: information and call for speakers
2017	Take stock of the past year and prepare the coming year Professional attitude – roles and responsibilities during site-visits and follow-up (handling potential delicate situations) Focus on experts: update on jurisprudence and rules of procedure, pool, composition of panels, students in panels, etc. Update on WG – the methodological proposal and the future pilot phase Info: the Joint NOTE ARES-AEQES System-wide analyses : debriefing on kick-off meetings, roles and responsibilities in the writing and editing process, templates Checking of all the tools (review/updating/changes): accompanying guide to the reference framework, Quality Handbook, guidelines to HEIs, information form, surveys, website, material for quality officers meetings Experts annual training seminar (feedback from surveys and adjustments) Staff: professional competencies to develop – feedback and priorities setting

ANNEX 10   LINKS TO MAIN DOCUMENTS CITED IN THE REPORT

1   Standards and indicators, and methodological documents

Reference framework for initial programmatic evaluation
http://aeqes.be/documents/R%C3%89F%C3%89RENTIEL_200x280-Ao%C3%BBt-201-EN-V2[1].pdf

Reference framework for continuous programmatic evaluation
http://aeqes.be/documents/20210327referenceframeworkcontinuousprogrammaticeval.pdf

Accompanying guidelines (available in French)
http://aeqes.be/documents/R%C3%A9f%C3%A9rentiel%20AEQES%20et%20guide%20d'accompagnement-2.11.pdf

Planning of the evaluations
http://aeqes.be/calendrier_plan.cfm
http://aeqes.be/documents/20210318Plan%2020192023delaphasepilote.pdf
http://aeqes.be/documents/20210318AEQESplan2329.pdf
http://aeqes.be/documents/PlanEvaluationsinstitutionnelles2023-2029.pdf

Guidelines for HE institutions (available in French)
http://aeqes.be/documents/20200917Guide%2020192023adestinationdesetablissementsV2.pdf

Guidelines for experts (available in French)
http://www.aeqes.be/documents/20170616GuideExpertsV311.pdf

General information about institutional review pilot phase (available in French)
www.aeqes-coconstruction.be

Methodological proposal about institutional review pilot phase (available in French)
https://aeqes-coconstruction.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/20171030-Rapport-de-lAEQES-version-finale-sans-annexes.pdf

Methodological guidelines pilot phase about institutional review pilot phase (available in French)
https://aeqes-coconstruction.be/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/20190625-Phase-pilote-AEQES-balises-methodologiques-v4-valide-CoPIL.pdf

2   Studies and analyses

TRENDS (available in French)
http://www.aeqes.be/documents/AEQESTENDANCESNET.pdf

FOCUS (available in French)
http://aeqes.be/documents/AEQES-Focus-WEB.pdf

PATHWAYS available in French)
http://aeqes.be/documents/20160523Trajectoires.pdf

FROM PROGRAMMES TO GOVERNANCE (available in French)
http://www.aeqes.be/documents/AEQESGOUVERNANCE2019.pdf

3 Legal framework, position papers and *memorandum*

AEQES decree 2008
http://www.aeqes.be/documents/20171220%20D%C3%A9cret%20Agence.pdf

Internal regulations (ROI)
http://www.aeqes.be/agence_references_textes_detail.cfm?documents_id=32

AEQES' position paper on legal changes needed to improve the Agency's functioning
http://aeqes.be/documents/20121004%20AEQES%20position%20paper%20of%20June%2018.pdf

Memorandum addressed to policymakers
http://aeqes.be/documents/AEQES-Memorandum-web.pdf

4 Documents in support of the strategy and internal management of quality at the Agency

Strategic plan 2021 – 2025
http://aeqes.be/documents/StrategicPlan202125.pdf

Quality Handbook
http://aeqes.be/documents/20210305QualityHandbook.pdf

5 Jurisprudence for the selection of experts

Jurisprudence for the selection of experts and the composition of the experts' panels
http://www.aeqes.be/documents/20190618JurisprudenceCommissionExperts.pdf

6 Code of ethics

Code of ethics
http://aeqes.be/documents/Deontological%20code%20-%20AEQES.pdf