Reporting Substantive Changes

– Information for Registered Agencies –

Introduction

This document, together with the attached Report Template, aims to assist registered agencies in reporting substantive changes according to Art. 12 §1 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications:

“A listed agency shall notify EQAR of its own accord about changes to its legal form and status, amendments to its statutes and substantial changes in its process or methodology.”

It is the registered agency’s responsibility to inform EQAR of substantive changes that have occurred or are going to occur. Changes should be reported as soon as the changes are sufficiently clearly defined to allow providing comprehensive information on their nature and impact. This maybe before or after the changes actually take effect.

EQAR may also become aware of substantive changes in other ways. This may be either by third-party information received under the Complaints Policy, or on the basis of any information that is in the public domain.

Objective of Substantive Change Reports

Registered agencies are requested to inform EQAR of substantive changes so that EQAR will become aware of situations were an agency’s current practice differs substantially from the situation when it was reviewed against the ESG and admitted to the Register.

The requirement to report substantive changes is not intended to discourage change and innovation among registered agencies, and EQAR aims to minimise the burden on registered agencies.

EQAR therefore suggests that registered agencies keep their information on substantive changes as brief as possible, while giving a comprehensive picture of the nature and impact of the changes.

EQAR will normally merely take note of substantive change reports and update information on the Register, if necessary.

Only in cases of serious concerns whether a registered agency continues to comply substantially with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) will the Register Committee consider further action. Such action might be to require a re-review of the registered agency against the ESG before the
usual 5-year period has elapsed or, only in case of obvious and grave non-compliance with the ESG, removal from the Register.

Procedure

Registered agencies are requested to submit substantive change reports (including possible appendices) only by email to application@eqar.eu. All documents should be in PDF format, please avoid Word (.doc) documents or any other formats.

Agencies might include appendices related to the changes. These should be limited to what is absolutely necessary to provide comprehensive information. Appendices can be sent by email or provided as a hyperlink.

Please do not send any documents by regular mail, fax or otherwise.

Documents in any other language than English will not be reviewed.

The timeframe in which substantive change reports are acknowledged depends on the complexity of the substantive changes.

Should EQAR require clarification to fully understand the nature and impact of the substantive changes it may contact the registered agency.

There are no fees or other costs related to substantive change reports.

Type of Changes to be Reported

Substantive changes include any type of change that may impact on the registered agency’s ability to comply substantially with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG). Typically, changes might relate to the organisational identity, organisational structure and external quality assurance activities of the agency.

Registered agencies are recommended to use the following guiding questions in reporting substantive changes.

The main headings are formulated as yes/no questions. Under each main heading, there are examples of what type of changes might occur and what type of information is typically relevant for EQAR. These lists are, however, not exhaustive.

The nature of the changes should be described concisely under the corresponding sub-heading or separately, if they do not fall within these examples.

In all aspects the key question is how the current situation differs from the situation when the external review of the agency was carried out or when substantive changes were last reported regarding that aspect, respectively. The key consideration relates to the ways in which the substantial changes impact on the agency’s substantial compliance with the ESG.
Whether or Not to Report Changes

As a rule, if the answer is a clear “yes” to either of the main heading questions, a substantive change report should me made. If you are unsure whether the answer is “yes”, it should be “yes” if there is anything to report under one of the sub-headings or in an area of similar relevance.

If you are unsure whether a substantive change report is warranted or not, please seek advice from the EQAR Secretariat.

Guiding Questions

You may use the separate Report Template to create your report. Alternatively, please copy and paste these guiding questions into your own report. You may, of course, omit those questions that are not applicable.

Microsoft Word
OpenOffice

A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed?
   If yes, please specify the changes. These might include:
   i. changes to the legal form or status;
   ii. merger with/into another body/entity, another body/entity becoming part of the agency [please specify the legal successor in title of the registered agency, and which of the involved bodies/entities carried out external QA of HE programmes/HEIs before];
   iii. changes in parent entity, if applicable;
   iv. liquidation, bankruptcy or similar proceedings.

B. Has the organisational structure changed?
   If yes, please specify the changes. These might include:
   i. composition of governing or managing bodies;
   ii. establishment or discontinuing of governing or managing bodies;
   iii. major/drastic changes in the staffing or financial situation;
   iv. outsourcing of activities with significant relevance for the agency’s external quality assurance activities.
C. Have the external quality assurance activities implemented by your agency changed?

If yes, please specify the changes and address the following:

i. Are there new types of activities? If so, were they developed from scratch or on the basis of specific existing activities?

ii. Are there substantial changes in existing activities?

iii. Have some or all existing activities been discontinued?

If the answer to 1 or 2 is yes, please describe the following key aspects of their methodology, if possible in relation to existing activities that were subject to the last external review:

(a) purposes of the activity

(b) criteria used, how they were developed, what measures are implemented to ensure consistency?

(c) review teams composition, selection, appointment and training of reviewers

(d) site visits

(e) publication of reports

(f) follow-up

(g) periodicity

(h) embedding in system-wide analyses and accountability procedures of the agency

Version of this document: May 2012