

Approval of the Application by the Andalusian Agency of Knowledge – Direction of Evaluation and Accreditation (AAC-DEVA) for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

Register Committee

Ref. RC13/2014/06

Ver. 1.0

Date 2014-11-29

Page 1 / 4

Application of:	05/06/2014
Previous registration:	07/10/2009 – 31/01/2014 (on 1/1/2012 AAC-DEVA inherited the registration from its predecessor, the <i>Agencia Andaluza de Evaluación, AGAE</i>)
External review report of:	June 2014
Review coordinated by:	ENQA
Review panel members:	Jon Haakstad (Chair), Teresa Sanchez (Secretary), Ivan Milentijevic, Marcel Crochet, Alina Gavra
Decision of:	29 November 2014
Registration until:	30 June 2019
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Luis Delgado (Spain, observer)

1. The application adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee considered the external review report of June 2014 on the compliance of AAC-DEVA with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).
3. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from AAC-DEVA as well as the chair of the review panel.

Analysis:

4. The Register Committee found that the report provides clear evidence and analysis of how AAC-DEVA complies with ESG.
5. In considering AAC-DEVA's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee only took into account external quality assurance of study programmes (ex-ante verification, follow-up/monitoring and ex-post re-accreditation), reviews of private universities for recognition, evaluation of innovative teaching projects and accreditation of foreign language domains, since these activities are considered to be within the scope of the ESG.

Activities related to individual teaching staff, studies on the entrance of students to the labour market, and evaluations of research projects,

groups and institutes are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to AAC-DEVA's registration.

6. The Register Committee noted that the review panel restricted its analysis to the processes for external quality assurance activities of study programmes. The Committee sought clarification from the chair of the review panel whether the panel analysed AAC-DEVA's compliance with ESG 2.1 – 2.7 & 3.7 with regard to reviews of private universities, the evaluation of innovative teaching projects and the accreditation of foreign language domains.

The Register Committee took note of the panel's clarification that the procedure for recognition of a new private university was a one-time licensing procedure that was based on the existence of accredited programmes but did not include a site visit. The Committee further noted that the panel considered the evaluation of innovative teaching projects and the accreditation of foreign language domains as specific enhancement or stimulation tools that were not concerned with quality assurance and that would "not address the ESG in any systematic way".

The Register Committee found the panel's interpretation is in contradiction to the Practices and Interpretations (par. 15, 16, 17). The Register Committee underlined that all activities that are in principle an ESG-type activity (i.e. they involve an external review of a higher education institution, a part thereof or a study programme) have to be carried out in substantial compliance with the ESG and have to be reviewed in the external review of the agency. This explicitly includes voluntary and enhancement-oriented or developmental activities.

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

ESG 2.5: The publication of reports was flagged when AAC-DEVA was admitted to the Register in 2009 (as AGAE).

The review report found that AAC-DEVA publishes all programme accreditation reports on the Agency website.

The Register Committee therefore considers that the flag has been addressed.

ESG 2.6: The review report concluded that AAC-DEVA has clear follow-up procedures in its programme accreditation and other procedures, but noted that it was not yet clear whether the same or other follow-up procedures would be applied after the first re-accreditation cycle.

Register Committee

Ref. RC13/2014/06

Ver. 1.0

Date 2014-11-29

Page 2 / 4

The Register Committee noted that the question of follow-up procedures after re-accreditation will need to be addressed in future reviews of AAC-DEVA.

ESG 2.7: The clarity of the cycle for re-accreditation was flagged when AAC-DEVA was admitted to the Register (as AGAE) in 2009.

The review report noted that the cycles of re-accreditation were clearly defined, with a 6-year cycle for Bachelor and a 4-year cycle for Master programmes.

While the re-accreditation is yet to commence the Register Committee concluded that the cycle of re-accreditation is now clearly defined.

ESG 3.4: The review report concluded that AAC-DEVA has adequate resources to fulfil its current functions.

The Register Committee, however, noted that the panel was concerned about the adequacy of resources with regard to the phase of re-accreditation of programmes, which will include site visits with experts and thus incur significant additional expenses.

The Register Committee sought and received clarification from AAC-DEVA on how it plans to secure adequate resources. The Committee was not convinced that the possible income sources mentioned in the response were concrete enough. It thus remained unclear whether AAC-DEVA has a fully developed resourcing strategy. This issue has therefore been flagged.

ESG 3.6: With a view to its independence, AAC-DEVA's governing structure and the role of the regional government were flagged when AAC-DEVA was admitted to the Register in 2009.

The Register Committee noted the panel's finding that DEVA is an independent part of AAC. The Committee further noted that while the ministry is involved in the AAC governing body, this body's responsibility is restricted to rather formal issues. The Committee found that the entrusting of all decisions about procedures, methods and protocols to an independent technical committee is useful to ensure independence.

The Register Committee was therefore able to concur with the panel's conclusion that AAC-DEVA's "limited structural independence does not hinder [its] effective operational independence" (page 30).

Conclusion:

8. **Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that AAC-DEVA continues to comply**

Register Committee

Ref. RC13/2014/06

Ver. 1.0

Date 2014-11-29

Page 3 / 4

substantially with the ESG and, therefore, renewed its inclusion on the Register.

AAC-DEVA's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 30/06/2019¹.

9. The Register Committee underlined that AAC-DEVA only carried out activities in Andalusia at the time of the review. Consequently, only these activities were reviewed by the external panel.

The Register Committee underlined that AAC-DEVA is required to make a Substantive Change Report once it starts to conduct reviews outside Andalusia, which it currently plans according to the agency's clarification. In doing so, AAC-DEVA needs to ensure that these activities will be fully and thoroughly based on the ESG.

10. The following issues have been flagged for particular attention when considering a potential application for renewal of inclusion. AAC-DEVA is expected to address these issue(s) specifically in its next self-evaluation report, setting out whether the issue has been resolved or indicating what progress has been made. AAC-DEVA is further responsible for informing the coordinator of the next external review and the review panel of the need to address this issues in the external review report.

Coverage of the external review

AAC-DEVA should make sure that its next self-evaluation report and the corresponding external review report analyse compliance with ESG part 2 in all its activities that involve reviews of higher education institutions or programmes. This should include all activities, no matter whether they are voluntary or obligatory, whether they are developmental or accountability-oriented, and whether they take place in Andalusia or elsewhere within or outside the EHEA.

ESG 3.4: Resources

It should be addressed whether AAC-DEVA was able to acquire and consolidate the resources required by the site-visits that it carries out as part of its periodic re-accreditation procedures.

ESG 3.8: Internal quality assurance

It should receive attention to what extent AAC-DEVA has demonstrated the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance arrangements by introducing a sufficient level of formality.

Register Committee

Ref. RC13/2014/06

Ver. 1.0

Date 2014-11-29

Page 4 / 4

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