Framework model for External Quality Assurance (F-EQA-M)

Description

WP2 – Partner Country Framework for the EQA system (C3QA Project)
THIS IS A TEMPLATE FOR EACH PARTNER COUNTRY
MODIFY IT ACCORDING TO YOUR OWN PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

C3QA

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1 NATIONAL REGULATIONS ON CYCLE 3 STUDIES

Please include here current National Regulations (it could be extracted from the country reports already done).

2 PROPOSAL OF THE GENERIC STRUCTURE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGEMENT OF 3RD CYCLE STUDIES

Please include here current Relationship and Governance of Procedures

Please write down what is available, or will be available, in the country's management structure, or how this structure could be adapted to your current system. Note that the Quality Assessment/Assurance Agency might be a section inside the Ministry.
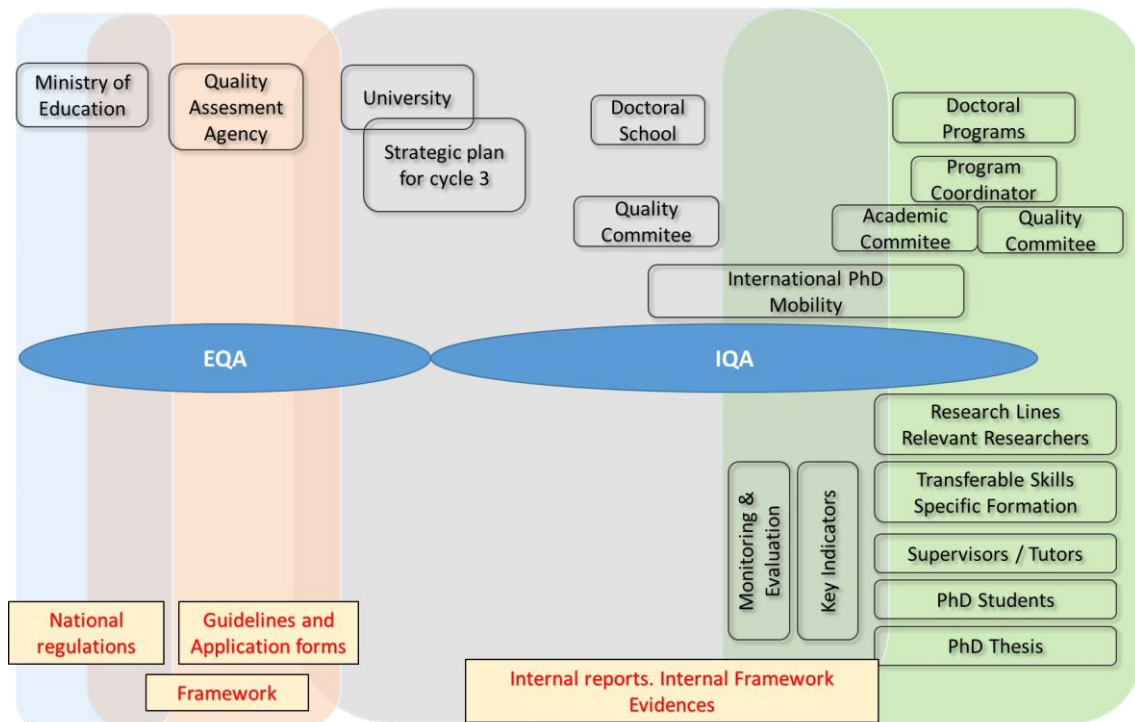
Change the figure above accordingly to the proposal for your country (it is included in the attached powerpoint file)

Next, the framework describes the External Quality Assessment Agency, The Doctoral School governing the 3rd cycle studies inside each University, Doctoral Programs (proposal according to the strategic plan of the university, ex-ante accreditation, ex-post-accreditation). Finally, a Roadmap for the framework adaptation concerning the particularities of each partner country should be described. The European Standard Guidelines are included as annexes.

3   EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (ExQAA)

It is recommended to have an External Quality Assurance Agency. Also it seems acceptable to have it inside a Ministry section. Does your country plan to have one external quality agency?

3.1 Policies about the ExQAA

The ExQAA itself must pass some quality criteria. For example, planning to be a member of ENQA[1] should guarantee the quality of the ExQAA and the system as a whole.

It is advisable to be member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EQAR[2]) or other associations such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE[3]). What is the country planning about that?

According to the external evaluation coordinated by ENQA, the ExQAA would meet the Quality Assurance Criteria in the European Higher Education Area.

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA[4] that quality assurance agencies should be externally assessed every 5 years. In addition, the European Register of Quality Agencies (EQAR) requires a positive external evaluation in order to be a member of the register.

The **European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)** is an umbrella organisation which represents quality assurance organisations from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) member states. ENQA promotes European co-operation in the field of quality assurance in higher education and disseminates information and expertise among its members and towards stakeholders in order to develop and share good practice and to foster the European dimension of quality assurance.

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[1] European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) www.enqa.eu

[2] European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) www.eqar.eu

[3] International Network Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) www.inqaahe.org .

[4] European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process (EHEA) www.ehea.info

3.2 General characteristics to be met by an ExQAA.

The mission of the ExQAA is to coordinate the quality management policies of the country's higher education institutions in order to provide an improvement, both nationally and internationally. Policies for improvement are always aimed at adapting the University to the labor market.:

- modernisation of the university structure
- search for new learning frameworks,
- measures to be implemented in order to make university education excellent and adapt it to the needs of business.

Examples of activities to carry out by an ExQAA.

1. the evaluation and accreditation of the studies leading to formal qualifications
2. the evaluation and certification of the studies leading to the obtaining of diplomas and degrees to Universities and centres of higher education;
3. evaluation of teaching, research and management activities of university teaching staff;
4. evaluation of educational institutions in the country teaching according to foreign educational systems; evaluation of the activities, programmes, services and management of higher education institutions and institutions Public administration

ExQAA should have the following goals:

- To ensure the quality in the design of the proposals of official doctoral programs through an improvement-oriented process.
- To ensure the linkage of the verification process (EX-ANTE / EX-POST) in accordance with the framework for the verification, monitoring, modification and accreditation of the official studies.
- To promote the elaboration of proposals for new programs that are appropriate in content and form, both for the evaluation and for the generation of public information that is associated with the official qualifications.
- Identify proposals with *ex-ante* evaluation, in order to assess more strongly the bases that justify their formulation and the academic and research resources that will make them viable and sustainable over time.
- To ensure that both the people who prepare the proposals for official doctoral programs and the people who evaluate them share exactly the same benchmarks.
- Establish equivalent and linked evaluation procedures for the undergraduate, master and doctoral studies.

3.2.1 The evaluation committees of the ExQAA

One of the elements that contributes to guaranteeing the validity, reliability and usefulness of the external evaluation processes is the performance of the external experts (peer review). The quality and independency of the evaluation process lay down on the experts, which are constituted in commissions in which they provide the scientific-technical and disciplinary orientation, professional and as users

3.2.2 Field Specific Evaluation Commissions (SEC)

The quality agency (national or regional agencies) usually set up different Specific Evaluation Commissions (SEC) for the different fields of knowledge and one specifically. They have a permanent character. The SECs are responsible for the evaluation of the programs and institutions, and therefore, the process of verification, monitoring, modification and accreditation. The SECs main function is to evaluate the sustainability and adequacy of the proposals for new studies.

The SEC have a variable number of members (Avoiding conflict of interest), which depends on the number of official degrees and university centers they evaluate. SEC can create subcommittees by scope. In particular, the SEC of official doctoral degrees has the following composition:

- the president, usually a Professor with recognized academic merits.
- at least two academic people for each of the knowledge fields.
- a PhD student.
- a secretary, usually a personal from the technical staff of the quality agency.

- Including international relevant experts

The SEC can be assisted by other experts of recognized prestige what advise them on specific aspects of the evaluation of the qualifications that are under their responsibility. The experts send independent technical reports that will be taken in consideration by the corresponding SEC.

4   DOCTORAL SCHOOL (DS)

<mark>To include in the 3rd cycle regulations a Doctoral School is not mandatory but it has multiple advantages. The use and management of a DS inside each university is highly recommended to guarantee and manage the Internal Quality Assesment (IQA). **It might be possible to name a section from the "Study sections" which will have those similar functions. Please adapt to your proposed country structure for 3rd cycle studies**</mark>

<mark>Please adapt the following objectives of the DS and their functions. Indicate which of them you'll maintain and which new you'll introduce</mark>

Advantages and responsibilities of a DS:

- Common rules and guidelines for different doctoral programs.
- Quality management, monitoring, etc.
- Strategic planning for 3rd cycle studies from one university.
- Provide transferable skills training.
- Help to overcome the isolation of researchers (research lines).

The Doctoral School (DS) is understood to be the Unit/Section created by one or more Universities and in possible collaboration with other bodies whether national or foreign, whose main objective **is to organize the teaching and activities of the doctorate within the scope of its doctoral management.**

DS possible functions, among others:

1. Organize the doctorate at the University and ensure proper and efficient management.
2. Propose approval of the creation, modification and abolition of doctoral programs.
3. Ensuring the quality of doctoral programs.
4. Ensure that doctoral programs are in line with the University's research strategy.
5. Elaborate proposals for regulations, guidelines and procedures for doctoral studies.
6. Carry out the academic management of doctoral studies, which includes, among others, that related to the following points: the enrolment of students; assessment reports; custody of records; validation, recognitions, adaptation and equivalence of studies; scholarships; administrative control

of doctoral theses, diplomas and certificates; and establishment of the calendar for the management of doctoral studies.

7. Establish an internal regulation that regulates the rights and duties of doctoral students, tutors and thesis directors.
8. To provide the necessary information to members of the university community on the regulations and procedures affecting doctoral studies.
9. Regulate the academic commissions of doctoral programs, taking into account their specific characteristics.
10. Establish procedures for resolving conflicts and complaints in the field of doctoral studies
11. Plan the offer of transversal or specific activities for an adequate training of doctoral students.
12. Ensure a critical mass of sufficient and suitable teaching and research staff and doctoral students in doctoral programs to guarantee their quality.
13. To promote national and international inter-university cooperation.
14. Encourage the incorporation of doctors in the business sector and the internationalization of doctoral studies.
15. Provide technical support and policy advice about the doctoral management
16. Guarantee the electronic archiving of doctoral theses in the institutional repositories of the University's thesis.

5 DOCTORAL PROGRAMS (DPS)

Next sections are focused on the quality assesment about the 3rd cycle studies.

- Proposal: ex-ante accreditation
- Follow-up: ex-post accreditation

6 DOCTORAL PROGRAM EX-ANTE ACCREDITATION

<mark>Next you have an example to be adapted for each country about the procedure and issues related with the proposal of a doctoral program (DP). The accreditation of the proposed DP is named as "ex-ante", giving the idea that multiple items should be stated and confirmed before the implementation of a particular DP.</mark>

First section describes a possible procedure (documentation, times) which confers quality about the proposal process.

Next the standards and critereia that are used in the evaluation of the DP proposal is shown and described. Every actor, university, DP coordinators and evaluators should be on the same page, having a similar idea about what are the contents that the DP proposal should have and what will be the indexes/factors used in the evaluation.

6.1 The evaluation procedure

The main stages of the accreditation process are the following:

1) **Strategic planning of doctoral programs at the university.**
   Which is the University's strategic plannnig of doctoral studies?
   Which doctoral programs will be implemented in the next academic year if the evaluation process of the studies is passed.

2) **Research and doctoral training strategy.** The university must present its doctoral research and training strategy to the quality assessment agency before submitting any of their study programs for the verification process. This document will be valued by the SEC to know the justification of the implementation of such programs, which will be completed later with the information that each doctoral program includes in the verification report. The Research and Doctoral Training report must contain at least the following aspects:
   - The mission of the university with regard to the research and the objectives to achieve.
   - Consolidated research areas and priority lines.
   - The relationship with the R&D environment (institutions involved in R&D and their funding programs).
   - The instruments in the university to monitoring the activities of the research groups involved in the doctoral programs.
   - The areas in which the different doctoral programs are structured and, for each area, the programs that form part of it (map of studies). Also is convenient to include the university master's degrees directly related.
   - The management methodology and systems for doctoral training (schools of doctorate, other units involved).
   - The human resources and materials currently available or previewed in

the future.

- The rules of intellectual property and how to carry out doctorates in collaboration with companies.

It is recommended that the strategy in doctoral research and training be valid for at least 6 years, which is the period in which the doctoral programs must be re-accredited. Then it will be a good time to review the research strategy based on the results obtained and the situation of the R&D context.

Once the strategy has been exposed, the university will be able to present its proposals for new doctoral programs. These proposals will be grouped into the different areas specified in the strategy. That is to say, all the programs that are part of a specific field will be presented for verification at the same time (for example, all the programs of that university in the field of biomedicine, humanities, anthropology, economy, engineering, chemistry, etc.). Thus, the CEA will be able to assess in a more appropriate way the context and the justification of the programs, their synergies, the human resources and their alignment with the research strategy and of doctoral training of the university.

3) **Request for verification.** The universities must present their proposals by means of online application that the Ministry of Education provides to them for this purpose.

4) **Review and acceptance of the application.** The university will review the documentation provided and accept the request if it meets the requirements established. Otherwise, it will be required to be corrected, for which the universities will have a period of XX days. If the request data is accepted, the request is transferred to the relevant QAA, that will resolve it within a maximum of XX months.

5) **Evaluation of the proposal.** The proposal shall be allocated to the SEC of doctoral programs, which will evaluate it in accordance with the standards and criteria set out before.

6) **Preliminary verification report.** The SEC will provide a preliminary verification report, which will forward to the universities through the online application to submit allegations, if appropriate.

7) **Interaction SEC-Program.** The responsible of program/university may interact with the SEC commission through its secretary, who will have to enable the relevant mechanisms to solve the questions or require some clarification from other members. If necessary, a meeting will be held between the program managers and the members of the SEC.

8) **Allegations.** Within approximately XX days, the institution may submit the allegations it deems appropriate to the previous report for the SEC to take into consideration. The allegations must resolve those aspects that SEC has indicated in the preliminary report.

9) **Review of Allegations.** SEC will evaluate the new proposal made by the institution and analyze whether the possible deficiencies detected have been corrected.

10) **Final report.** After evaluating the allegations presented, the SEC will provide, through the online application, the final verification report for the university take it into consideration. The outcome of the report shall be expressed in terms of favourable or unfavourable.

11) **Verification resolution.** Once received the QAA report, the university will resolve the verification or not of the proposal of new program that carries out the university institution.

12) **Appeals**. The university may appeal against this decision within a maximum period of one month from its notification. If the resource is admitted to process, the university must send it to QAA within a maximum of XX months.

13) **Appeal resolution**. The complaint will be assessed by the Appeals Commission, which shall request at least two academics from the doctorate program, external to the SEC and without regard to the preliminary evaluation of the proposal. The review of the appeal shall be based solely on the report proposed by the University and on all the documentation contained in the dossier. The additional information provided during the evaluation process will not be considered unless there is any clarification of the information presented initially.

14) **Appeal report.** Within one month, the appeals committee must issue the corresponding report, which shall be transferred to university.

15) **Resolution on the appeal.** Once the appeal report has been received, the university will issue a definitive resolution within XX months, which must be exhausted by the administrative route. The decision will be communicated to the university and other involved institutions. The lack of resolution expressed in this period will allow to consider the appeal as dismissed.

6.2 <u>Ex-Ante Evaluation: Standards and Criteria</u>

6.2.1 What points are important to reflect on when proposing a doctoral program?

<mark>Please reflect on what are the more important points/issues when proposing a doctoral program</mark>

What relevant is the University strategic plan for cycle 3?

Each university should have a clear idea of the strategic plan about research and related doctoral programs.

What is the aim of the program and why is it proposed?

First of all, it is required to set the definition of the study with respect to the aspects that administratively identify the proposal and those that justify its interest and need, besides to the training profile intended.

How will it be achieved?

The program's training objectives must be achieved through the quality assurance of the following processes:

- The access and admission of students, who set up the starting point of the formative process, and the supervision and monitoring actions of the PhD student, together with the formative actions of the proposal, to ensure that students reach the training profile intended.
- The planning of training activities, which designs, organizes and implements the training, monitoring and evaluation activities aimed at achieving the profile of formation that is intended.
- The human resources and material resources and support needed to reach the training profile.

What results are expected and how will their achievement be guaranteed?

The expected results expressed in quantitative values of the indicators and the quality assurance mechanisms will allow the monitoring, review and improvement of the official doctorate programs and the procedures, in order to ensure the achievement of the profile established according to the results obtained or their modification if necessary.

6.2.2 Aspects to be evaluated and evaluation criteria

<mark>Please reflect on the different aspects to be evaluated and evaluation criteria.</mark>

The following aspects should be assessed to verify a new doctoral program proposal:

0. University strategic plan for cycle 3.
1. Description of the doctoral program.
2. Competences.
3. Access and admission of students.
4. Training activities.
5. Organization of the program.
6. Human resources.
7. Material resources and support services available to doctoral students.
8. Review, improvement and results of the program.

[1] *Description of the doctoral program, which will contain the data*:

Contents to be included

Name of the program, participating institutions (coordinator and collaborators), whether or not the program is integrated into a doctoral school, the existence of international networks or agreements, etc.

Collaborating institutions with agreements

Procedures for the design, approval and continuous enhancement are implemented in line with institutional guidelines

Introduction

Content of program

Teaching & learning methodology

Information dissemination

How this criteria will be evaluated:

The designation of the doctoral program should be consistent with the lines of research proposed in the program.

Participation in the program by other institutions.

The coherence of the program with the university's R+D+i strategy or, where appropriate, with other institutions (Program enrolled in a Doctoral School, whether it is part of the university that proposes the doctoral program, inter-

university or in collaboration with other organizations and institutions).

The existence of international networks or conventions.

[2] *Competencies.*

Contents to be included

Description of the competences to be acquired by students at the end of the doctoral program.

Basic and general competencies

Personal skills and abilities

How this criteria will be evaluated:

If the competences to be acquired by the doctoral candidate are evaluable and guarantee, as a minimum, the basic competences detailed in National Regulations or are consistent with those corresponding to the doctoral level.

[3] *Access and admission of students.*

Contents to be included

Pathways and requirements for student access and admission, as well as the systems for making

Access requirements

Eligibility criteria

Training supplements

Information available to students prior to enrollment.

Recommended admission profile

Reception and orientation procedures for new students

Support and guidance mechanisms

Admission systems and procedures adapted to students with special educational needs arising from disability.

Description of the specific training supplements adapted to the different profiles of income, if any.

In case the doctoral program comes from an existing program, number of students admitted in the last 5 years identifying those coming from other

countries. In the case of new programs, it must provide to estimate the enrolment and forecasts of foreign students.

How this criteria will be evaluated:

The clarity and appropriateness of admission and selection procedures for students.

Adaptation of specific training supplements to the different income profiles, if any.

The number of students (national and foreign) enrolled in the doctoral program in the last 5 years or estimate of the expected enrollment.

[4] *Training activities:*

Contents to be included

Detail of the transversal and specific training activities in the program area.

Seminars webinars

Conferences for young researchers

Internship in companies

Mobility

institutions with agreements

Planning of these training activities.

Control procedures.

Actions and mobility criteria.

How this criteria will be evaluated:

The organisation of training for doctoral students, in particular on subjects of the research area and methodological knowledge (seminars, courses, workshops, etc.), transversal skills, training experiences (doctoral conferences, national or international congresses, etc.) and their planning throughout the development of the program

[5] *Program organisation*.

Contents to be included

Supervision of thesis.

List of activities planned to promote the management of doctoral theses and the existence of a good practice guide for their management.

List of planned activities that encourage multiple supervision, in academically justified cases (co-direction of theses by an experienced supervisor and a novel supervisor, co-tutelle of interdisciplinary, collaborative, international, etc.), and presence of international experts in the monitoring commissions, previous reports and in the thesis committees.

Doctoral student monitoring.

Description of the procedure used by the corresponding academic committee to assign the tutor and supervisor of the doctoral thesis.

Description of the procedure for the control of each doctoral student's activity document and the certification of their data.

Description of the procedure for the annual evaluation of the research plan and the document of doctoral activities.

Anticipation of doctoral students' stays in other national and international training centres, co-tutelle and International mentions.

Regulations for the presentation and defence of doctoral theses.

Regulation of elaboration, authorization and defense of the thesis

Research planning

Individual activity reports

Annual evaluation of requirements

Defence authorization

Evaluation Committee

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How this criteria will be evaluated:

The adequacy/suitability to de doctoral program of the activities planned to promote the management of doctoral theses .

The adequacy of the procedures described above to the objectives of the program.

The presence of international experts in the monitoring commissions, previous reports and in thesis tribunals.

During the renewal of accreditation phase, the estimates provided in this

criterion will be reviewed, taking into account the justifications provided and the actions derived from their monitoring.

[6] *__Human resources.__*

Contents to be included

Description of the research teams and faculty, detailing the internationalization of the program. Foreign researchers' participation.

Description of the mechanisms for external collaboration.

Program research areas; research teams associated with them.

Scientific production of research staff in the last 5 years and joint contributions with foreign researchers.

Experience of research staff in the management of doctoral theses.

Mechanisms for calculating tutoring and thesis direction as part of the teaching and research dedication of the teaching staff.

Suitability of teaching staff

How this criteria will be evaluated:

A minimum of XXXX% of researchers participating in the program have accredited experience.

Number of foreign professors participating in the program.

The research groups incorporated into the doctoral program have at least one competitive project in the subjects of the program's lines of research.

The quality of the scientific contributions of the research staff participating in the program over the last 5 years

Researchers participating have to had reached any national research recognition, joint contributions with foreign researchers, etc.

The research staff participating in the program have proven experience in the management of doctoral theses in the last 5 years.

The existence in the university of clear mechanisms to recognize the work of tutoring and thesis direction.

[7] *__Material resources and support available for doctoral students__*.

Contents to be included

Description of the material means and services available (laboratories and

workshops, library, access to databases, connectivity, etc.).

Provision for obtaining external resources to support doctoral students in their training.

How this criteria will be evaluated:

Whether the material resources and other available means are adequate to guarantee the development of the research to be carried out by the student.

External resources and travel grants dedicated for congress attendance and stays abroad.

The budget for seminars, conferences and other national and international training actions.

The percentage of doctoral students who obtain post-doctorate grants or contracts.

[8] *Program review, improvement and results.*

Contents to be included

Unit or person responsible for the quality assurance system.

Description of the monitoring mechanisms and procedures that allow the development and results of the doctoral program to be analysed for improvement.

Description of procedures to ensure the correct development of mobility programs and mechanisms for publishing information on the program, its development and results.

In the case of programs involving more than one university, mechanisms and procedures should be described to ensure coordination between the participating universities.

Description of the procedure for tracking graduate doctors. Data relating to the last 5 years or forecast estimate for the next 6 years (in the case of newly created programs) on: theses produced, success rate in the completion of doctoral theses, quality of theses and resulting contributions. Justification of the data provided

How this criteria will be evaluated:

The doctoral program should have a responsible unit and articulate procedures and mechanisms to supervise its development, analyze the results and determine the appropriate actions for its improvement. The opinions of the students and the graduated will be particularly important when defining and implementing improvement actions.

The existence of a procedure analysing the results of the mobility program, mechanisms for publishing information on the program, its development and outcome will be assessed.

In case of programs involving more than one university, the existence of mechanisms and procedures to ensure coordination between the participating universities will be valued.

The data for the last 5 years or the estimation according to its justification and context. During the renewal of accreditation, these estimations will be reviewed, taking into account the justifications provided and the actions derived from their follow-up.

The employability of doctoral students during the three years following the reading of their thesis or forecast thereof, in the case of new programs

7 DOCTORAL PROGRAM EX-POST ACCREDITATION

7.1 The processes of Monitoring and Accreditation of doctoral programs

The monitoring of doctoral programs has two fundamental objectives. On the one hand, it must be a useful tool for the management of the university enabling the internal evaluation of its development using the analysis of the values of certain indicators (thesis defended, insertion of the doctoral students, satisfaction of the doctoral students and professors, etc.), in order to be able to diagnose the reality and develop proposals for improvement. On the other hand, the monitoring, along with the visit that will be made to the centres of study, **will be the main evidence for the accreditation of doctoral programs.**

The objective is to make the process of consideration about the development of doctoral programs the basis for earning the accreditation. In other words, the accreditation is set as the culmination of the monitoring process. The idea is to understand both processes as a single one: a process of continuous improvement culminating with the external validation of the obtained results.

To achieve this objective, it is essential that the evidences consulted during the monitoring process coincide with those necessary to accredit the programs and, among them, the key is the self-report.

The Monitoring Reports of Doctoral Programs (MRDP) should reflect on the six same dimensions that are taken into account in the accreditation process: training program, public information, the adequacy of professors to the program, the effectiveness of learning support systems, the internal quality assurance system, and the review, improvement and quality of the program results. This reflection in the form of a monitoring report should be produced *at least every three years*. However, programs and institutions should tend to implement mechanisms to obtain the main development and academic results indicators from each course.

This structure of the monitoring report must be identical to the self-report for accreditation in order to make the integration of both processes effective. In this way, the latest monitoring report will become the self-report and should provide a reflection of the synthesis of the doctoral program's development since the verification or last accreditation.

Universities should submit to the *ExQAA* the monitoring reports prepared until the first accreditation of the programs. Periodically, the Agency will select some of the received MRDP's to be evaluated, prioritizing the reports of the doctoral programs that the universities themselves identify that require special attention, those that contain proposals of significant modifications and those that are considered appropriate according to the analysis of their development indicators.

Each university shall, preferably each year, prepare a University Monitoring Report (UMR) to be used to assess the monitoring process in the institution, the detected

problems in the development of the programs and their academic results, the actions of improvement proposed or implemented and the detection of good practices that can be disseminated in the whole of the institution. This report has no style requisites and covers programs that have made a monitoring report in that academic year. It is compulsory to send them to the Quality Agency until all of the institution's doctoral programs have been accredited for the first time. In universities where doctoral programs are under the responsibility of a doctoral school, the UMR becomes the DS report.

The university, and DS, should develop an Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) which involves the mechanisms, procedures and rules that are the main framework for all the processes involved in the 3rd cycle studies.

According to this framework, the modifications of the doctoral programs are linked to the previous analysis carried out in the monitoring process, so that significant changes may be requested only if an MRDP has been prepared and is therefore linked to the reflection stemmed from said report.

7.2 Evaluation of the Monitoring Proccess

The phases of the monitoring process are:

- **Elaboration of the MRDP.** The program ponders on the development of the study and elaborates the corresponding report according to what establishes its IQAS and the standards and criteria of this guide. This report must follow a fixed structure done supplied by the Agencies.
- **Selection of the MRDP.** The Quality Agency will inform the universities about the ISC to be selected for evaluation annually. It will be possible to prioritize the reports of those doctoral programs that the universities identify as requiring special attention, those that contain proposals of significative modification and those considered appropriate according to the analysis their development indicators.
- **Evaluation of the MRDP.** One of the fundamental aspects of this evaluation will be to assess, on the one hand, the development of the doctorate program and, on the other, the adequacy and relevance of the monitoring process and its report.
- **Evaluation report.** Quality Assessment Agency will send the MRDP evaluation reports approved by the CEA to the universities.
- **Allegations.** Within a period of approximately one month, the institution may submit any allegations it deems appropriate to the prior reports for the Appeals Committee to take into consideration and resolve the appeal.

7.2.1 Elaboration of Monitoring Report - MRDP

The processes associated with the teaching quality assurance are described in the Systems of Internal Quality Assurance (IQAS) of the institutions, which must have as main objective the continuous improvement of the doctoral programs and the scope of the objective of accreditation. Therefore, the IQAS is the main source of information necessary for the doctoral programs monitoring and as the key instrument for its accreditation.

To guarantee the quality of the process, the MRDP must be, among other things:

- Complete, rigorous and concrete. It must analyze and ponder the elements considered key to the situation to be analyzed and improved.
- Based on evidence generated throughout the development of the program.
- Systematic and detailed regarding the analysis of the causes and, therefore, of what is necessary to undertake the improvements.
- Balanced, both in positive aspects and in aspects that need to be improved.
- Shared and validated by the university community, to ensure its representativeness in the analysis, in accordance with the procedures established in the IQAS.

MRDP elaboration stages

MRDP elaboration responsibility

The responsibility for the elaboration and approval of the monitoring report shall be established by the IQAS. The established body should take into account the opinion of the different interest groups of the doctoral program, such as academics, teaching and administrative staff, doctoral students and other collectives deemed appropriate.

The last MRDP prior to the accreditation process will correspond to the self-report for the accreditation visit and, therefore, must also undergo a public presentation open to the entire educational community linked to the program.

Information collection systematics

The elaboration of the MRDP will take into account all those evidences and all those indicators that derive from the procedures contemplated in the IQAS. Data and analyses from both the doctoral program and the pertinent centre must be kept in mind. The information may be of a quantitative or qualitative nature, and include from management data and indicators on the *inputs* or entries to processes and results of the center or doctoral school activity.

Once all the information is available, the responsible entity will have to analyze and reflect on the total volume of data, in order to meet the established standards and define an improvement plan.

The last MRDP of the accreditation process must cover the period between verification and the time of the external visit for accreditation.

Contents of the MRDP

The institution should reflect on whether the quality standards of accreditation are being achieved or, on the contrary, it is necessary to implement actions in order to succeed. It is displayed as a document articulated in the same six sections that should be used in the accreditation process.

1. Presentation of the program. In this section the institution must provide an overview of the program to set the background for the reader of the report. Thus, data can be provided on the most significant achievements of the program's trajectory (number of doctoral students and doctorates, teaching staff and its typology, etc.).

2. MRDP elaboration process. The institution should briefly describe the process followed in the elaboration of the MRDP, stressing whether there have been problems in the process (data collection, etc.) or discrepancies with respect to what was expected in the IQAS. It must clearly state the responsible body, the elaboration period, the body and the date of its approval.

It is essential that the MRDP becomes the main tool for the modification or accreditation of doctoral programs, as such the period in which it is produced is very relevant, and must be always previous and linked to the launching of these processes. Any deviation from the expected timing must be clearly indicated.

3. Assessment of the scope of the standards In this section, the institution must develop an evidence-based argument about the extent of the standards.

Depending on the standard in question, the doctoral program and/or the institution must carry out an assessment by referring directly to the most significant data that show the standards observance. In each case the degree of fulfillment of the intended objectives and the scope of the established specifications (for example, has the intended number of defended thesis been reached, or is the number of lines of research reasonable, etc.). The standards to be considered are as follows:

1. Formative program quality.
2. Public information relevance.
3. Suitable teaching staff.
4. Learning support systems effectiveness.
5. Internal quality guarantee system efficiency.
6. Quality of results.

It is advised to include an evaluation of the scope of each these standards in the MRDP. In this sense, the institution can use the following scale values:

- ***In progress towards excellence.*** The standard is fully achieved and there are also examples of good practices that exceed the minimum

required.

- *Has been reached*. The standard is fully achieved in the doctoral program.
- *Has been reached with exceptions*. A minimum level of the standard has been reached, but there are aspects that must be improved. These aspects can be improved in a reasonable period of time.
- *It's not enough*. The doctoral program does not get the minimum required level to reach the corresponding standard. The improvements that must be introduced are of such magnitude that it is not possible to reach the standard in a reasonable time span.

4. Evaluation and proposal of the improvement plan

The doctoral program should analyze and reflect on its functioning and development. This reflection should be based on both public information and data, the indicators and qualitative information derived from its IQAS. If the institution considers it opportune, a global assessment can be made to summarize the development of the program.

Taking into account the evaluative analysis, improvement actions must be planned (detailing and defining a time schedule and responsibilities). The effectiveness of these actions may be greater if linked to the objectives and results of the program indicators.

It must also give specific answers to the actions that had been proposed and planned in the MRDP of the previous period, confirming those that have been implemented and explaining the failure of those that were not carried out and set to the following period.

5. Evidence

Evidences must be taken into account during the elaboration of the MRDP and only the most relevant should be enclosed in the elaboration of the self-report for the accreditation.

University monitoring reports (UMR)

Taking into account the MRDP, the university will evaluate the development of all its DPs. The incidents that may have occurred during the elaboration and approval of the MRDP should be specified. The UMR will focus on those DPs that require special attention and on those that stand out for their excellent implementation and excellent development. The report will also collect, where appropriate, interdisciplinary improvement actions to promote the improved development and monitoring of all programs. The university will decide the most appropriate model and structure for that report. In the event that the university has a doctorate school, the preparation of the UMR will be the responsibility of this center.

7.3 Ex-Post Evaluation: standards and criteria

7.3.1 Quality of the training program

The institutions must have processes within their IQAS that allow the design and approval of doctoral programs, in a manner consistent with European standards and guidelines for the internal quality assurance in HEI, especially the ESG 1.2 (approval, control and periodic review of programs and studies), which recommends that "academic institutions should have formal mechanisms for approving, evaluating and periodically monitoring their programs and qualifications» (ENQA, 2005).

Those responsible for the doctoral program should analyze whether the design of the program (lines of research, competencies and formative activities profile) is updated according to the requirements of the discipline and responds to the formative level required in the MECES:

The program has mechanisms to ensure that the doctoral candidates' enrollment profile is adequate and their number is consistent with the characteristics and distribution of the research lines of the program and the number of vacancies offered.

The program has adequate supervisory mechanisms for doctoral students and, where appropriate, training activities.

Indicators that need to be considered to evaluate this standard are as follows:

- Offer and demand.
- Students enrolled (each new income).
- Total number of students enrolled.
- Percentage of foreign students enrolled.
- Percentage of students from other universities.
- Percentage of students enrolled part-time.
- Percentage of students with scholarship.
- Percentage of students according to access requirements.
- Percentage of students according to research line.

7.3.2 Relevance of public information

According to ESG 1.7 (public information), "Institutions must regularly publish updated, impartial and objective information, both quantitatively and qualitatively, about programs and qualifications they offer."

This information should be public and easily accessible to the whole society and should include information about operational development of the doctoral program and the results derived therefrom.

On the other hand, the ESG 1.1 (policy and procedures for quality assurance) states that "The strategy, policy and procedures must have a formal status and be publicly available." Therefore, the institution should also report on the IQAS and, especially,

on the monitoring and accreditation processes of the doctoral program.

The publication of the information guarantees transparency and facilitates accountability, in line with European benchmarks on quality in higher education. Specifically, regarding to ESG 1.6 (information systems), "institutions must ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their curricula and other activities".

To ensure the quality of public information, institutions should periodically reflect about the validity, relevance and updating of public information, accessibility, and continuous improvement of quality guarantee processes.

The institution is therefore expected to analyze whether it adequately informs all stakeholders on the characteristics of the doctoral program and on the management processes that guarantee its quality.

The institution publishes truthful, complete and updated information of the doctoral program characteristics, its operational development and the results obtained.

The institution guarantees an easy access to the relevant information of the doctoral program to all stakeholders. This information includes the monitoring results and, if applicable, its accreditation.

The institution publishes the IQAS in which the doctoral program is framed.

Evidences that need to be considered to evaluate this standard is as follows:

- Institution web or Study web (University).
- Documentation of Processes of the IQAS about public information, collection of information and accountability (University).

7.3.3 Efficiency of the internal quality assurance system (IQA)

This section must respond to ESG Point 1.1, which states that ' institutions must have a policy of procedures associated with guaranteeing the quality and criteria of their programs and qualifications.

They must also explicitly engage in the development of a policy that recognizes the importance of quality and quality assurance in their work. To achieve this goal, a strategy for continuous quality improvement must be developed and implemented. The strategy, policy and procedures must have a formal status and be publicly available. The role of students and other stakeholders should also be taken into account. This section also replies to the ESG 1.2, which recommends that "academic institutions should have formal mechanisms to approve, evaluate and periodically monitor their programs and studies."

Those responsible for the doctoral program should analyse on whether it has an IQA system formally established and implemented that ensures, in an efficient way, the quality and the continuous improvement of the doctorate program

The implemented IQAS facilitates the design and approval processes of the doctoral program, its monitoring and its accreditation.

The implemented IQAS guarantees the collection of information and relevant results for the efficient management of doctoral programs.

The implemented IQAS is periodically reviewed to analyze its suitability and propose improvement plans to optimize it.

Evidences that need to be considered to evaluate this standard is as follows:

- Documentation of the IQAS (University):
    - Process of design and approval of doctoral programs.
    - Process of monitoring of doctoral programs.
    - Accreditation process for doctoral programs.
    - IQAS review process.
- Plans and monitoring of the improvement actions of the doctoral program (University).
- Tools that allow to know the degree of satisfaction of the interest groups (University).

7.3.4 Teaching staff quality and suitability

Teaching staff must have the experience and training appropriate to the objectives of the doctoral program, and be sufficient in number and dedication to assume their main functions: tutoring and Thesis management, the teaching and evaluation of the training activities, and if applicable the management of the program, etc.

Ensuring the quality and suitability of teaching staff responds directly to European standards for internal quality assurance in HEI. Specifically, the ESG 1.4 (Teaching staff quality assurance) recommends that "Institutions should find the adequate system to ensure professors are trained and competent". This system should be made available to persons conducting the external assessment and must be detailed in the relevant reports ' (ENQA, 2005).

Those responsible for the doctoral program should analyze on whether number of teachers is sufficient and appropriate, according to the characteristics of the doctoral program, the scientific field and the number of students.

Teaching staff have an accredited research activity.

Teaching staff are sufficient and have the proper dedication to develop their functions.

The doctoral program has the appropriate framework to promote the thesis management.

Participation of foreign professors and international doctors in monitoring commissions and thesis committees is adequate in the scientific field of the program.

Those responsible for the doctoral program should analyze on the maintenance of the initial conditions (in verification process), specially on the following aspects:

- The accredited experience of the teaching and research staff.
- The quality of scientific contributions.
- The number of ongoing competitive research projects.
- The international activity of professors.

Evidences that needs to be considered to evaluate this standard is as follows:

- Competitive research projects ongoing in which the IP is a professor in the doctoral program (University).
- Professors who participate in ongoing competitive research projects (University).
- Relevant scientific contributions of the professors in the field of the program (University).
- Foreign professors supervising doctoral theses and which teach training activities (University).
- Results of the promotion actions for advising doctoral theses (university).
- If applicable, a training plan or IQAS documents related to the teaching staff quality assurance, human resources policies, etc. may be considered.

Indicators that need to be considered to evaluate this standard are as follows:

- Number of supervisors of the defended thesis (University).
- Recognized research periods (six-years period) of the thesis supervisors (university).

7.3.5 Effectiveness of learning support systems

In addition to the teaching and research staff, the institutions make available to doctoral students different services and resources to motivate, facilitate and enrich their learning. In this context, the ESG 1.5 (learning resources and student support) recommends: "Institutions must ensure that the available resources to support student learning are adequate and appropriate for each program " (ENQA, 2005).

The institution is therefore expected to analyze on whether material resources and services needed for developing the envisaged activities in the doctorate program and for training the doctoral student are sufficient and appropriate to the number of doctoral students and to the characteristics of the program.

This section refers to all the services and resources that contribute to the support of learning.

The available material resources are suitable for the number of doctoral students and the characteristics of the doctoral program.

The services available to doctoral students adequately support the learning process and facilitate the insertion into the labor market.

The scope of this section includes:

- Material resources, such as facilities (workspaces for doctoral students, laboratories, computer rooms, libraries, etc.), technological infrastructures, equipment and scientific-technical material, etc.
- Services, mainly those of reception and other logistical benefits (housing, advice on legal matters regarding the residence, etc.), academic orientation (scholarships, mobility, projects, etc.) and professional orientation and labour insertion.

The evidence to be considered to evaluate this standard is as follows:

- Documentation of the IQAS on the process of quality assurance of material resources (University).
- Institutional plans to facilitate Labour insertion (university).
- Documentation of the IQAS on the process of support and orientation to doctoral students (university).

The indicators that need to be considered to evaluate this standard are as follows:

- Doctoral students' satisfaction with the studies (University).
- Satisfaction of the thesis supervisors with the studies (University).

7.3.6 Quality of results

Evaluation of learning in the elaboration of the doctoral thesis is the process that allows to determine the degree of results achievement, as the ESG 1.3 (student evaluation) includes, which recommends: «The students must be evaluated using criteria, standards and procedures that are published, and applied in a coherent manner' (ENQA, 2005). Both the doctoral theses and the formative activities and the evaluation system must be pertinent, public and appropriate to certify the learning reflected in the training profile. The adequacy of the evaluation system implies a judgement on their relevance (validity) and an assessment of the extent to which these activities discriminate and ensure their quality (reliability).

The results of the labour insertion of the doctors also have to be valued in this section, since they are one of the key results of the university formation. This section should take advantage of the wealth of the information system of universities about this aspect, which allows a contextualized analysis of its main indicators.

Those responsible of doctoral program is expected to analyze on whether doctoral theses, formative activities and evaluation are consistent with the training profile. And whether the quantitative results of the academic and labour insertion indicators are adequate.

- Doctoral theses, training activities and their evaluation are consistent with the pretended formative profile.
- Values of the academic indicators are suitable for the characteristics of the

doctoral program.

- Values of the labour insertion indicators are suitable for the characteristics of the doctoral program.

Evidences that need to be considered to evaluate this standard is as follows:

- Documentation of the IQAS on the processes associated with the development of the doctorate program and the collection and analysis of the results for the improvement (University).
- Doctoral theses generated within the framework of the doctorate program (University).
- Information about training activities and evaluation systems (University).

Indicators that need to be considered to evaluate this standard are as follows:

- Number of full-time defended theses.
- Number of part-time defended theses.
- Average length of the full-time doctoral program.
- Average length of part-time doctoral program.
- Percentage of students that do not complete the program.
- Percentage of theses with the Laude qualification.
- Percentage of doctors with international mention.
- Number of scientific contributions of doctoral theses.
- Percentage of students that complete research stays.
- Employment rate.
- Rate of suitable employments regarding doctoral studies.

8 ROADMAP FOR THE FRAMEWORK ADAPTATION

Please add a Roadmap for the framework adaptation concerning the particularities of each partner country should be described

ANNEXES - EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES[5]

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[5] http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

9 EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

9.1 Standards and guidelines for quality assurance agencies

9.1.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

9.1.2 Official status

Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognized as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.

9.1.3 Independence

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

9.1.4 Thematic analysis

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyses the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

9.1.5 Resources

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

9.1.6 Internal quality assurance and professional Conduct

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

9.1.7 Cyclical external review of agencies

Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

9.2 Standards and guidelines for external quality assurance (ExQAA)

9.2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance.

9.2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

9.2.3 Implementing processes

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include

- a self-assessment or equivalent;

- an external assessment normally including a site visit;

- a report resulting from the external assessment;

- a consistent follow-up.

9.2.4 Peer-review experts

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

9.2.5 Criteria for outcomes

Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

9.2.6 Reporting

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

9.2.7 Complaints and appeals

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

9.3 Standards and guidelines for quality assurance agencies

9.3.1 Policy for quality assurance

Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

9.3.2 Design and approval of programmes

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

9.3.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

9.3.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

9.3.5 Teaching staff

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

9.3.6 Learning resources and student support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

9.3.7 Information management

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

9.3.8 Public information

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

9.3.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

9.3.10   Cyclical external quality assurance

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.