

Call for applications – Peer Support on Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Staff Mobility

Context

Within the Bologna Peer Support Group on Quality Assurance (BPSG QA), funding is available for staff mobilities to facilitate peer support among the partner countries of the group. The Bologna Peer Support Group on Quality Assurance was established with the aim of fostering peer support among countries. With the Paris Communiqué, a structured peer support approach based on solidarity, cooperation and mutual learning was adopted. In the work programme of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) for 2018-2020, peer support will focus on completing the implementation of three key commitments. One key commitment is quality assurance to be in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). A system of mobility of staff members involved in QA within national authorities and/or quality assurance agencies and/or relevant stakeholder organizations is set up to cater the needs of the Bologna Peer Support Group QA.

Staff mobility

Through a system of mobility of staff members working in the field of quality assurance within national authorities (ministries), quality assurance agencies and/or stakeholder organizations, peer support can be facilitated in the Bologna Peer Support Group on Quality Assurance. All flows and directions of staff mobility between ministries, QA-agencies and stakeholder organizations are possible. As such, the system supports the professional development of staff by offering a work placement in another country. Each mobile peer will further develop its QA competencies through job shadowing, observation periods and/or training at a partner QA agency/ministry/organization abroad. Every staff mobility will focus on specific needs of its home country.

The travel and accommodation costs will be covered, but the mobile peer's salary will continue to be paid as if the person is working at the sending partner. The duration of exchange can be from only a few days (3 days as a minimum) to a longer period of time, decided by the two partners involved. The financing for the staff mobilities will however be limited to a maximum of 2 weeks (14 days).

Mobile staff members will write an observation report according to a fixed format detailing their experiences at another QA agency, ministry or stakeholder organization and report back to the entire peer group.

All members of the BPSG on QA can send and receive staff for a limited period of time. A receiving partner needs to demonstrate experience in a specific field in QA and offers a mobile peer a Professional Development Programme in this field. This programme includes the planned professional activities and the related learning outcomes for the work period abroad. A sending partner needs to demonstrate a need for peer support concerning a specific topic in QA and the willingness to learn in this thematic field. Furthermore, the need for peer support should be related to the countries' action plan that was developed in the context of the BPSG QA.

In order to be able to match as many applications as possible, we invite countries and organizations to not only review their needs for peer support, but to also think about the strengths of their QA system and propose topics in which they can offer peer support.

Possible topics on which to focus during staff mobilities are:

- Legal framework & ESG
- External QA: institutional & programme accreditation
- Internal QA
- Stakeholders engagement
- Cross-border QA
- European Approach for the QA of joint programmes.

These are the same topics that are covered within the Bologna Peer Support Group on QA. In the application form up to three topics can be selected within the proposed staff mobility(ies). The applicant should elaborate intensively on each (of the) topic(s) in the next steps of the application form.

Selection procedure

A matchmaking committee will review the applications and match the staff members based on thematic interest and geographical spread. The matchmaking committee is composed of the co-chairs of the Bologna peer group on QA and two external experts of related stakeholder organizations ENQA and EQAR.

In September 2019 the matchmaking committee will hold a physical meeting to match the requests and offers for peer support. There is no guarantee on funding, the selection will be made based on the quality of the proposed staff mobility. Therefore it is in your best interest to be as specific as possible concerning your need and/or offer of peer support and the possible learning outcomes related to the proposed topic.

Priority will be given to applications, where the needs and offers for peer support are attuned and agreed upon beforehand, because this will enhance the chances of a customized and therefore successful learning experience. Although, one-sided applications are admissible as well. If your organization is applying for peer support and/or is prepared to offer peer support related to a certain topic, fill in the corresponding section of the application.

The funding for staff mobility is directly related to the work of the BPSG QA , hence this call is only open to countries or organizations taking part in the BPSG QA. The applications need to be tuned to the work of the BPSG QA. Therefore the link with the topics of the peer group needs to be clear in the application. Countries or organizations applying for peer support need to relate the proposed staff mobility project to the countries' action plan for the BPSG QA. It is the aim that the staff mobility would contribute to the progress to be made in the field of QA by June 2020.

Each country or stakeholder organization can send out two staff members on staff mobility. The proposed staff mobilities are aimed at a learning experience into a specific QA topic(s). There is one application per country, in which two staff members can travel.

Since a *maximum of 2 staff members per country* can apply for a staff mobility. Therefore, it is necessary for organizations within the same country, such as ministries and QA agencies, to agree on who applies for a staff mobility and who will be sent out to travel.

Eligibility criteria & modalities

- Every country/organization taking part in the BPSG QA can send 2 members for a mobility period.
- Receiving organizations need to demonstrate experience in a specific thematic field in QA, related to the topics of the BPSG QA.
- Organizations in need of peer support are able to demonstrate the need for peer support in a specific thematic field in QA, related to the topics of the BPSG QA.
- All staff members from a ministry, a quality assurance agency or a stakeholder organization working on quality assurance in Higher Education can be mobile.
- The mobility has to take place between the 1st of October 2019 and May 31st, 2020
- The duration of the mobility is minimum 3 days. The financing of the mobility is limited to maximum two weeks (14 days). The travel costs will be limited to 360 euro per mobility and accommodation costs to 120 euro/night, both based on actual costs.
- Upon completion of the mobility all staff members are expected to submit an observation report, to be sent in one month after the end of the mobility at the latest.

Timing

- Launch of the call for applications: May 2019
- Applications to be sent to: staffmobilityQA@gmail.com
- Deadline for applications: August 31st 2019
- Matchmaking committee meeting to match the applications: 9-11 September 2019 (Tbilisi, Georgia)
- Announcement of selection results: September 15th, 2019
- Staff mobility: October 1st, 2019 – May 31st, 2020
- Deadline observation report: 1 month after the end of the mobility at the latest
- Matchmaking committee meeting to review the observation reports: September 2020 (Limassol, Cyprus).