

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 organisations is set up to cater to 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 organisations, 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 organisations (member of the BPSG QA) 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/organisation abroad. Every staff mobility will focus on the specific needs of its home country.

The travel and accommodation costs will be covered (a subsistence allowance is not included), 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, including travel days).

Mobile staff members will write an observation report according to a fixed format detailing their experiences at another QA agency, ministry or stakeholder organisation 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 organisations 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 if necessary 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 organisations ENQA and EQAR.

In January 2020 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. Applicants are strongly encouraged to establish connections with their chosen host institutions and already identify possible dates for the mobility before submitting their application, as there will be limited time after the mobilities are awarded to make these arrangements.

Priority will be given to applications where the needs and offers for peer support are attuned and agreed upon with a host institution beforehand, because this will enhance the chances of a customized and therefore successful learning experience. The second call is open for all members of the BPSG on QA. Countries who have only recently established QA agencies are especially encouraged to apply. Applicants who did not apply during the first call of the project, or applicants who only applied for one mobility will also receive priority during the evaluation process. One-sided applications are admissible. If your organisation 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 organisations 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 organisations 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 organisation can send out two staff members on staff mobility. There is one application per country, in which two staff members can travel.

As a *maximum of 2 staff members per BPSG QA member (country or organisation)* can apply for staff mobility, it is necessary for organisations within the same country, such as ministries and QA agencies, to agree before submitting their applications on who applies for a staff mobility and who will be sent out to travel.

Evaluation of applications

Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Quality of the demonstration of needs.
- Quality of the link with action plan.
- Quality of the choice of host country/organisations.
- Dissemination of knowledge.

Eligibility criteria & modalities

- Every country/organisation taking part in the BPSG QA can send 2 members for a mobility period. Use document 'Application Form Need for support 2020'.
- Receiving organisations need to demonstrate experience in a specific thematic field in QA, related to the topics of the BPSG QA. Use document 'Application Form Offer of peer support 2020'.
- Organisations 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 organisation working on quality assurance in Higher Education can be mobile.
- The mobility has to take place between the 1st of February 2020 and May 31st, 2020.
- The duration of the mobility is minimum 3 days (not including travel). The financing of the mobility is limited to maximum two weeks (14 days, including travel 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: October 2019.
- Applications and offers of support are to be sent to: staffmobilityQA@gmail.com. Please title the document 'Staff Mobility Need (country name)' if you applying for a mobility, or 'Staff Mobility Offer (country name)' if you are offering to host a mobile peer.
- Deadline for applications: 29th of November 2019.
- Matchmaking committee meeting to match the applications: 15 January 2020 (Ghent, Belgium).
- Announcement of selection results: End January, 2020.
- Staff mobility: February 1st, 2020 – 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).