

# ESG 2027 DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

**BFUG COPENHAGEN**

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# PUBLIC CONSULTATION



17 November 2025 until 9 January 2026



Full draft text of the ESG (introduction and 3 parts) and explanatory note



Online survey



Open to all interested parties (individual and organisational)



# BFUG CONSULTATIONS



# OUTCOMES FROM PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS

- Current structure is appropriate (introductory section, 3 parts)
- Caution against overloading the ESG with too many topics, as it risks diminishing its strength
- Focus on learning, teaching (and assessment), but with much stronger reference to links with research and the societal mission
- Maintain applicability to all types of higher education provision (including “other/alternative providers” and smaller units of learning e.g. micro-credentials)
- The ESG are standards for quality assurance and not for quality itself and should support different concepts of quality
- The standards should be self-explanatory, while the guidelines support implementation in different contexts instead of explaining concepts mentioned in the standards

# CONTEXT, SCOPE, PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES

- Restructured and updated for current context
- Scope and applicability of ESG remain the same
- Reference to QA as part of the context that creates the conditions for fostering social dimensions and fundamental values for higher education
- Additional purpose: The ESG support diverse groups of stakeholders in higher education systems in continuously monitoring and enhancing the education provided
- Additional principle: Quality assurance supports and enables international cooperation based on trust
- Definitions included in a glossary

# PART I MAIN CHANGES

## I.1 Policy for quality assurance

- Requirement for the internal quality assurance policy to reflect links between learning and teaching and other institutional missions and activities.
- Explicit reference to the involvement of students and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of the policy.
- Reference to the societal mission, social dimension and fundamental values of higher education in the guidelines.

## PART I MAIN CHANGES

### 1.2 Design, approval, ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

- Merger of ESG 2015 standards 1.2 and 1.9.
- Societal relevance and employability are added to the standard
- Emphasis on involvement of stakeholders, including students, in programme design/monitoring.
- Emphasis on importance of learning outcomes approach.

## **PART I MAIN CHANGES**

### **I.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment**

- Updated understanding of student-centred learning and focus on the role of QA in supporting this.
- Strengthening the reference, primarily in the guidelines, to students' active role, quality assurance perspective and inclusivity.
- Use of digital tools added to guidelines as good practice

### **I.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification**

- Guidelines now include specific reference to the diploma supplement.

# PART I MAIN CHANGES

## I.5 Teaching staff

- Updated understanding of the role of the teacher.
- Expansion of the standard to cover all staff involved in education delivery
- Societal mission added to guidelines as element for scholarly activity

## I.6 Learning environment

- Expanded to cover the whole learning environment – learning resources, infrastructure and student support.
- Includes digital tools among learning resources and infrastructure.
- Added reference to accessibility and inclusiveness.

# PART I MAIN CHANGES

## I.7 Information management

- Guidelines include reference to collecting data on student satisfaction.

## I.8 Public information

- Inclusion of the need to publish outcomes of quality assurance processes.

## I.9 Cyclical external quality assurance

- No significant change

## PART 2 MAIN CHANGES

### 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

- Specifies the need to address internal QA in general and all Part I standards specifically.
- Includes the need to verify that education provision is higher education and developed in line with requirements specific to the declared level of qualification offered.

### 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

- Underline the need to consider both accountability and enhancement, as well as relevant applicable regulations; and that the involvement of stakeholders is needed at all stages.

## PART 2 MAIN CHANGES

### 2.3 Implementing processes

- Underlines the need to have consistency and alignment between the aims, processes and methodologies.
- Clarification that a site visit normally takes place in person (unless otherwise justified), it is realised by the peer-review experts and includes interviews with different types of stakeholders (moved from guidelines).
- Clarification that the report is developed by the experts (moved from the guidelines).

## PART 2 MAIN CHANGES

### 2.4 Peer-review experts

- The requirement for the experts to be competent and independent and that their selection should be adapted to the specific quality assurance process was moved from the guidelines to the standard.

## PART 2 MAIN CHANGES

### 2.5 Processes and criteria for outcomes

- Changed name of the standard to cover also the processes to reach the outcomes.
- Reference to the evidence base for decision-making is strengthened (link between criteria, evidence in reports, outcomes of the procedure, and decision-making processes to reach the outcomes).
- The need to transparently communicate if and how the outcomes of the process are formally recognised was added to this standard (following deletion of standard of official status)

## PART 2 MAIN CHANGES

### 2.6 Reporting

- Expanded with the need to publish all documents used to reach the outcome of the review, in addition to the reports by the experts, if applicable.
- Reinforce the usability of the reports by the institutions, including recommendations, as well as the need to provide the opportunity to institutions to fact-check the reports (moved from guidelines).
- The need for digital accessibility and usability of reports was included in the guidelines.

## PART 2 MAIN CHANGES

### 2.6 Complaints and appeals

- The need for appeals to be considered by a different entity than the one that took the decision was added to the standard.
- Further clarify in the guidelines the difference between complaints (related to process) and appeals (related to outcomes).

## PART 3 MAIN CHANGES

### 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

- It is emphasised that involvement of stakeholders in the work and governance should be meaningful, while the students are now explicitly mentioned as one of the stakeholders to be involved.

### (ESG 3.2 Official Status – deleted)

- The need for transparent information on how the outcomes of the reviews can be used and by whom they are recognised was included in ESG Part II (2.5).

## PART 3 MAIN CHANGES

### 3.2 Independence

- Clarification that agencies have to act without undue influence from any single internal or external party, and that safeguards should be in place to prevent this.
- The three dimensions of independence - organisational, operational, and formal outcomes – are moved from the guidelines to the standard.

### 3.3 Activities for enhancement

- Standard is renamed and broadened to cover enhancement activities more generally.

## PART 3 MAIN CHANGES

### 3.4 Resources

- Stronger emphasis on human resources, including the added requirement to ensure continuous professional development of the staff.

### 3.5 Professional conduct and integrity

- ESG 2015 standard 3.6 split into two standards
- Reference to the need for having and maintaining high professional standards and tools for ensuring integrity in order to facilitate trust (including when working across borders)

## PART 3 MAIN CHANGES

### 3.6 Internal quality assurance

- Requirement for the existence and application of an internal QA policy is added to the standard.
- Professional conduct moved into a separate standard.

### 3.7 Review of agencies

- Requirement to address development since the previous review was added.

## BFUG DISCUSSION

The BFUG is invited to reflect on the main proposed changes to the ESG.

The outcomes of the discussion will be taken into consideration together with the outcomes of the public consultation.

All consultation documents:

<https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/#revision>





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