

Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education: Changes and Challenges

NOQA Meeting
19.10.2021

QEF2

- Quality Board of international experts ($N = 7$ + an Icelandic student observer)
 - Andrée Sursock (Chair)
 - Barbara Brittingham/Crichton Lang
 - Ellen Hazelkorn
 - Oisín Hassan
 - Riitaa Pyykkö
 - Norman Sharp
 - Philip Winn
 - (appointed by LÍS, the National Union for Icelandic Students)
- Research Evaluation Advisory Committee (REAC)
- Quality Council of Icelandic stakeholders
- Secretariat (Manager of the QB)

Changes since NOQA 2019

- Summary of reviews in first cycle of QEF (report)
- Work on various manuals and handbooks
- Reviews in second cycle of QEF published
- Commissioned reviews
- Relocated secretariat office
- Online operations
- Joint projects
- Success stories

Summary of reviews in first cycle of QEF











- Commendations and recommendations from review reports mapped on to ESGs (2015)
- Commendations and recommendations that did not map on to ESGs (2015) were coded thematically:
 - Governance and role clarity
 - Strategy and action planning
 - Documentation and formalisation of policies, procedures, processes
 - Mission and vision
 - Commitment to enhancement and engagement with EQA
 - Ethos and resilience
 - Outreach
 - Management team
 - Research

Work on various manuals and handbooks

- Existing manuals updated, revised and published online
- New manuals developed for commissioned reviews

Quality Board Publications

Guidance material

-  [QEF2 Handbook »](#)
-  [Guidance note: Paragraph 25 \(Combining SLR with an alternative review\) »](#)
-  [Guidance note: Paragraph 26 \(Reviewing Central Support Services\) »](#)
-  [Guidance note: Paragraph 49 \(Research in SLR\) »](#)
-  [Guidance note: Paragraphs 73-74 \(Initial consideration of Reflective Analysis\) »](#)
-  [Guidance note: Paragraph 86-88 \(Producing the IWR review report\) »](#)
-  [Internal Quality Assurance Guidebook »](#)
-  [Guidelines for Teams and Chairs in IWR »](#)
-  [Guidelines for Chair and Team Members for doctoral accreditation reviews »](#)
-  [Informational Flyer on IWR Process »](#)

Governance

-  [Quality Board Constitution »](#)
-  [Quality Board Handbook »](#)
-  [Complaints and Appeals Policy »](#)
-  [Mission and strategy »](#)

Reviews in second cycle published

- Four institutional reviews (IWRs; Sep 2019 – Sep 2021)
- Two judgments
 - Standards of degrees and awards
 - Quality of student learning experience
- One review had a negative outcome
 - Action plan and Board follow-up
- Some challenges identified in first cycle appear to persist, e.g.,
 - Governance structures and processes
 - Formal and comprehensive programme review
 - Information/data management

Reviews in second cycle published

- Subject-Level Reviews (SLRs)
 - Institution-led reviews of individual units (departments)
 - Areas of coverage:
 - Standards of degrees
 - Student learning experience
 - Management of research
 - No judgment, but involvement of external experts
 - Full report sent to Quality Board (summary published)
 - Form part of evidence base for institutional reviews
 - Meant to capture seven years of ongoing programmatic and departmental reviews

Research management in second cycle

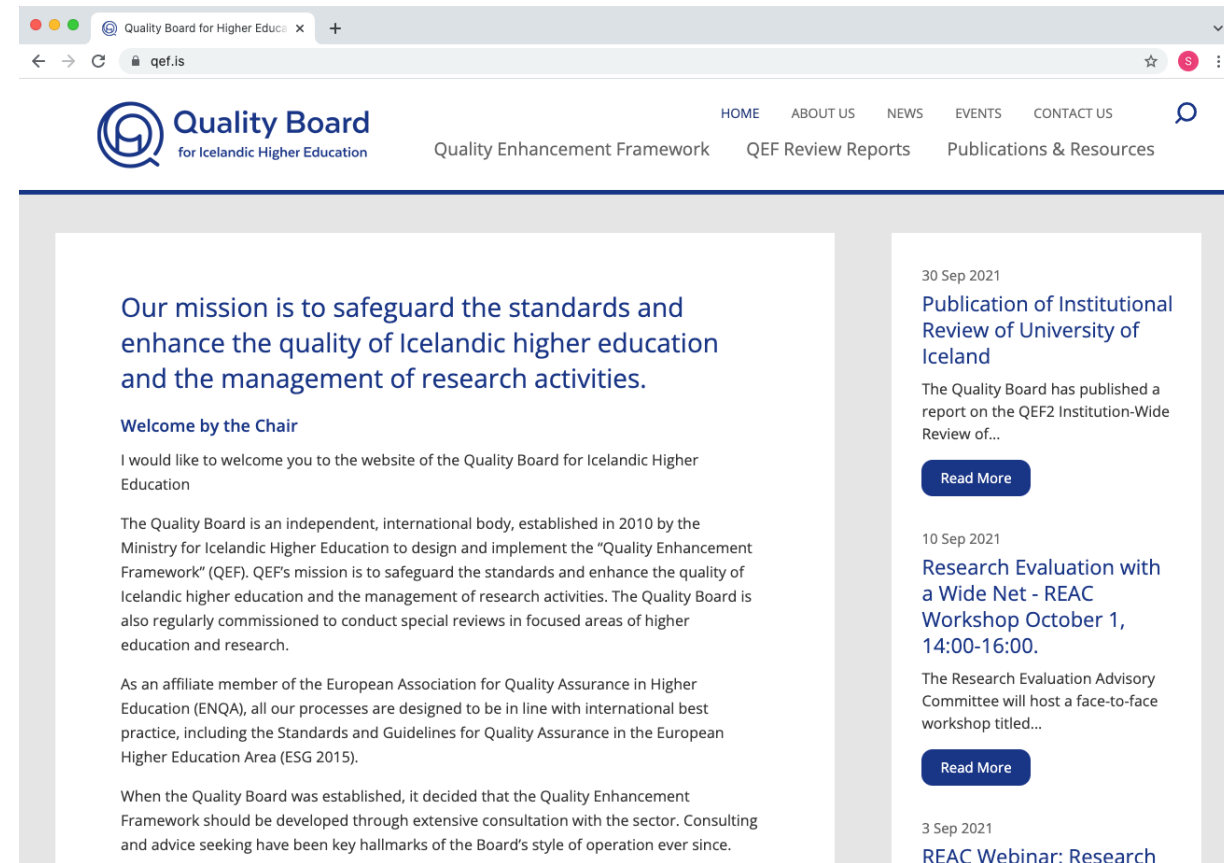
- Covered in both IWRs and SLRs
- Some universities have clear research strategies at institutional level
- Some departments have clear research strategies
- Historical boundaries and traditions may be hindering development of
 - Explicit research strategies
 - Interdisciplinary research agendas
- Is “strategy” and “evaluation” antithetical to academic freedom of individual staff members?

Commissioned reviews

- Programme-level review of Police Studies (completed)
- Accreditation of doctoral studies (completed)
- Impact assessment of *Icelandic Research Fund* (ongoing)
- Review of strategic management at a university-affiliated research institute (ongoing)

Relocated secretariat office

- Made possible by revised rules on QA in higher education (December 2018)
- New website
- More independence
- Less administrative support



Online operations (May 2020-Sep 2021)

- Online Board meetings
 - Four regularly scheduled main meetings
 - A number of occasional and “as needed” meetings
- Webinars and online workshops
 - Two webinars hosted by Board
 - Two webinars co-hosted by Board
- Online reviews
 - IWR (N = 2)
 - Commissioned reviews (N = 2)

Joint projects

- Webinar with FINEEC (November 2020)
 - Reviewing previous cycles
- Building capacity for internal QA in Greenland (ongoing)
 - Series of webinars
 - Virtual visits to Icelandic universities
 - Site-visit to Greenland
 - Faroe Islands invited to attend

FINNISH EDUCATION EVALUATION CENTRE **Quality Board**
for Icelandic Higher Education

WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM A CYCLE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS?

RESULTS AND SYNTHESIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ICELAND AND FINLAND

AIM OF THE WEBINAR

- To present and discuss results from meta-synthesis of institutional reviews conducted by Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education and FINEEC.
- To share experiences and good practices on analysis of external quality assurance activities.

TIME Friday 27 November 2020 11.00-12.30 CET (+1 Finland, -1 Iceland)
VENUE Teams-webinar

PROGRAM

11.00 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME
Professor Riitta Pyykkö, University of Turku, Member of the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education

11.10 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIRST CYCLE OF REVIEWS IN ICELAND
Sigurður Óli Sigurðsson, Manager of the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education

11.40 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SECOND CYCLE OF QUALITY AUDITS IN FINLAND
Mirella Nordblad, Counsellor of Evaluation and Mira Huusko, Senior Advisor, FINEEC

12.10 COMMENTARIES AND DISCUSSION
Andrée Sursock, Senior Advisor, European University Association, Chair of the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education
Dietlinde Kastelliz, Head of Department Audit and Consulting, AQ Austria

12.30 CLOSING OF THE WEBINAR
Professor Riitta Pyykkö, University of Turku

WELCOME!

Please register for the webinar no later than 20 November 2020 using [this link](#).

Screenshot

Success stories

- Two advisory bodies
 - Quality Council
 - Common definitions of key data for informal benchmarking
 - Webinar on internationalisation as a driver of quality
 - Ongoing sharing of resources
 - Research Evaluation Advisory Committee
 - Webinar and in-person workshop on research evaluation
 - Taking a leading national role for dialogue on research management and evaluation at a critical time
- Online meetings offer flexibility and quicker response times

Challenges

- COVID-19
 - Reviews postponed and then moved online
 - Backlog (five reviews in 10 months)
 - More use of contracted services
 - Board meetings online (no Board members in Iceland for 18 months)
 - Lack of local presence, resources and capacity felt more acutely
- Relocated secretariat office in 2020
 - Secretariat remains a “one person operation”
 - Less administrative support
- Legal framework in need of further revision

Thank you!

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