

Approval of the Application
by Quality Assurance Unit of the Flemish Council of Universities
and University Colleges (VLUHR QA)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

Register Committee

Ref. RC14/2015/01

Ver. 1.0

Date 24.01.2015

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Application of:	17/11/2014
Agency registered since:	7/5/2013 – predecessors: VLHORA since 10/4/2009, VLIR since 7/10/2009
External review report of:	9 September 2014
Review coordinated by:	ENQA
Review panel members:	Christian Thune (Chair), Paul Mitchell, (Secretary), Pedro Teixeira (academic), Andrée Sursock, Anouk Platteel (student)
Decision of:	24 January 2015
Registration until:	30 September 2019
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Lucien Bollaert (Vice-Chair, Register Committee) Noël Vercruysse (Observer, Register Committee)
Attachments:	1.

1. The application of 17/11/2014 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee considered the external review report of 9 September 2014 on the compliance of VLUHR QA with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).
3. The Register Committee concluded that the external review was independent of VLUHR QA and found that the report provides clear evidence and analysis of how VLUHR QA complies with ESG.
4. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from VLUHR QA on the currently planned changes of the Flemish system for external quality assurance (letter of 07/01/2015).
5. The Register Committee found that the report provides clear evidence and analysis of how VLUHR QA complies with ESG.

Analysis:

6. With regard to the specific European Standards and Guidelines, the Register Committee considered the following:

ESG 2.6 & 3.7: When provisional registration was granted to VLUHR QA in 2012, the development of its own follow-up procedures, in addition to

follow-up by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) or the government, was flagged.

While the review panel report refers to follow-up implemented by higher education institutions internally as well as annual reports to the Flemish Government, it remains the case that VLUHR QA does not itself undertake follow-up between the periodical programme assessments.

The review panel noted that “monitoring overall is effectively carried out” (p. 28) despite the lack of own follow-up by VLUHR QA. The Register Committee therefore concluded that VLUHR QA only partially complies with the standard and the issue remained flagged.

ESG 3.4: The Register Committee noted the panel’s comment that the level of resources available to VLUHR QA “begins to challenge” (p. 35) the high quality work of the agency and that the agency has “just sufficient resources to support its current operations in their current (already reduced) format”.

In the light of these comments the Register Committee was not persuaded by the panel’s judgement and considered that VLUHR QA only partially complies with the standard; the issue has therefore been flagged.

ESG 3.6: When VLUHR QA was provisionally registered it was flagged for attention whether the organisational structure of the VLUHR QA underlines and safeguards its independence.

The Register Committee noted that the review panel analysed in detail the organisational structure of VLUHR QA, especially with regard to the division of responsibilities between the VLUHR Board and the separate VLUHR QA Board. It noted that the latter is responsible for actual evaluation activities of the agency.

The Register Committee concurred with the panel’s conclusion that the organisational structures of VLUHR and VLUHR QA are effective in ensuring independence. Progress has been made in comparison to the structures of VLIR and VLHORA.

While the Register Committee considers that the flag was addressed, it noted that there remains a need to strengthen involvement of stakeholders in VLUHR QA’s work.

Conclusion:

7. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that VLUHR QA continues to comply substantially with the ESG and, therefore renewed its inclusion on the Register.

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VLUHR's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 30/09/2019¹.

8. The Register Committee underlined that VLUHR QA is expected to make a Substantive Change Report once the planned changes to the Flemish system for external quality assurance have been finalised and the impact on VLUHR QA's work has become clear.
9. The following issues have been flagged for particular attention when considering a potential application for renewal of inclusion. VLUHR QA is expected to address these issues specifically in its next self-evaluation report, setting out whether the issue has been resolved or indicating what progress has been made. VLUHR QA is further responsible for informing the coordinator of the next external review and the review panel of the need to address these issues in the external review report.

ESG 2.6 & 3.7: It should receive attention whether VLUHR QA has introduced its own procedures for follow-up between periodical assessments.

ESG 3.4: It should be addressed whether VLUHR QA has sufficient and sustainable resources to implement its activities.

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¹ Inclusion is valid for five years from the date of the external review report, see §4.1 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.