

Quality Policy Statement

The Agency A3ES formally assumes its permanent commitment to quality, considering that quality assurance in the performance of its activities is an essential value to ensure the credibility of its actions and the trust of its stakeholders, namely higher education institutions, students, political authorities and society at large.

The fundamental elements of A3ES's quality policy are:

- A clear definition of its mission and objectives;
- The strategic planning of its activities, duly expressed in a multiannual strategic plan and the annual activity plans;
- The compliance of its actions with the European standards and Guidelines and relevant national legislation;
- The permanent concern with the transparency of all its activities;
- The establishment of accountability mechanisms;
- The adoption of a Code of Ethics for every member of the Agency;
- The development of a quality culture among its (internal and external) members and collaborators;
- The establishment of monitoring and continuous improvement mechanisms of its activities;
- The systematic development of studies and research projects and the systematic critical analysis of themes and mechanisms related to quality assurance;
- The periodic external evaluation of the Agency, in compliance with European standards;
- The internationalisation policy of A3ES and its integration in ENQA and EQAR.

In the pursuit of its quality policy the Agency establishes, among others, the following internal quality assurance mechanisms:

- Elaboration and disclosure of formally approved documentation relative to norms, regulations, procedures and instruments relevant for the operation of the Agency's bodies and for developing assessment and accreditation processes;

- Regular revision of the norms regulating the Agency's assessment and accreditation procedures;
- Monitoring, revision and regular updating of the assessment and accreditation mechanisms and procedures;
- Regular meetings with the Agency's Advisory Council;
- Collection of feedback and improvement suggestions by means of enquiries addressed to higher education institutions, members of external assessment teams and Project Coordinators in the organisation, instruments, performance and results of the Agency's assessment and accreditation procedures;
- Informal hearings of higher education institutions and their representative bodies on the development of criteria, procedures and instruments related to assessment and accreditation processes;
- Formal external feedback from the Agency's Scientific Council, a body composed of six international experts in the area of quality assurance. They visit the Agency once a year and provide a report on the Agency's organisation and performance, as well as recommendations on aspects they consider relevant for the development and continuous improvement of all processes;
- Internal feedback provided by Project Coordinators who have frequent and regular contact with the executive members of the Management Board who closely follow the different phases of the assessment and accreditation processes;
- Analysis of collected information by the Agency's Office of Research and Analysis;
- The Management Board internal reflection and prospective analysis. The Council systematically examines received comments, analyses and suggestions and when appropriate integrates them in the decision-making process;
- Development of studies and research projects focused on quality assessment and accreditation processes; critical following of European trends and best practices in quality assurance and its possible integration in the Agency's own processes;
- Regular training of the members of external assessment teams and specialised training of the Agency's permanent staff;

- External international assessment of the Agency, every five years, complying with the European Standards and Guidelines, and the consequent integration in ENQA as a full member and in EQAR.

The Management Board pledges to ensure the fulfilment of this quality policy and its periodic updating taking into account the evolution of the Agency's needs and those of its environment.

The present quality policy is communicated to all internal and external members of the Agency and is available on the Agency Website.