

A photograph of an elderly man with a white beard and hair, wearing a dark jacket, sitting at a table. On the table are three plastic water bottles. In the background, a grand piano is visible. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm light source from the left. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# EQ-Arts Governance Framework

Published July 2020

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## Glossary

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# 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 This Framework sets out the governing principles that guide and regulate all activities undertaken by EQ-Arts. For agencies or institutions wishing to work with EQ-Arts this Framework sets out what they can expect from us and what is expected of them.
- 1.2 EQ-Arts is a sector-specific, not-for-profit, Foundation that represents a wide range of disciplines within the broad remit of the creative and performing arts and design (CPAD). Its focus is on enhancement-led quality assurance for higher arts education across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and beyond. Within the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) 2015.
- 1.3 Building on the experience gained from 25 years of quality assurance and enhancement<sup>1</sup> (originally founded within the administration of the European League of the Institutes of Arts [ELIA] in 1996) EQ-Arts was subsequently established as an independent Foundation under Dutch law on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015. It is registered at the Chamber of Commerce in Amsterdam (reg. no. 63775751) where its offices are based.
- 1.4. This framework will be revisited and developed annually to ensure relevance, that it is responsive to the changing demands of the CPAD higher education sector, the world of work and the impact of international/global changes.
- 1.5. All of the work undertaken by EQ-Arts (along with its associated correspondence and documentation) will be conducted in the English language.

*EQ-Arts  
preparations for  
EQAR Review, 2018*



## 2. Authority

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- 2.1** Accredited academic awards have standing in law—they are normally licensed by a national education agency or by a self-accrediting higher education institution. At present EQ-Arts is not an accreditation agency but a provider of high-level accreditation and review services on behalf of, or in partnerships with, such agencies, national ministries and/or institutions.
- 2.2** Quality assurance services provided by EQ-Arts will be subject to the national legislative framework of the country in which the institution is located or to the governance framework of a self-accrediting higher education institution. Such work will normally be commissioned by, and undertaken in partnership with, a ministry, National Quality Agency, a self-accrediting Higher Education Institution, or, an EQAR registered subject specific Quality Agency.
- 2.3** Quality enhancement exercises are normally a matter of institutional choice rather than of legislative requirement. They may be a precursor to accreditation/validation; the enhancement of academic programmes or systems that already are in validation or; form part of an institution's continuous process of self-learning and development. Where no formal accreditation or validation outcomes are part of such work then EQ-Arts will normally be commissioned directly by a higher education institution to undertake an independent, formal, review on its behalf.
- 2.4** The authority and effectiveness of all governance processes underpinning EQ-Arts activities are enhanced through the inclusion of representatives drawn from the following key stakeholder groups.
- National accreditation and assurance agencies;
  - Higher education institutions (both public sector and private);
  - Managers, staff, researchers and students in CPAD higher education;
  - Members of the world of work and professional practice in the CPAD sector;
  - Other HE disciplines aligned to CPAD.

# 3. Vision

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- 3.1** EQ-Arts aims to be the leading provider of quality assurance and enhancement services to higher education institutions in the CPAD sector in Europe.
- 3.2** While recognising academic and cultural diversity across the sector it will work to establish benchmark standards that help to assure and enhance the quality of academic provision, and the student learning experience, in an international context.
- 3.3** Through this work EQ-Arts will be known as an independent and trusted contributor to the CPAD sector, working constructively and efficiently with higher education institutions and national agencies. So, it will engender public confidence in the quality and value of higher education in the respective disciplines of the CPAD.
- 3.4** Alongside this EQ-Arts will also work to advance the sector's capacity for high quality third cycle provision and to stimulate CPAD research that drives the knowledge gained from research back into the teaching curriculum, to enhance the student experience and benefit communities outside the academy.

*EQ-Arts Workshop  
during ELIA Biennial  
Conference  
Rotterdam, 2018*



## 4. Mission

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- 4.1** EQ-Arts embraces the underpinning principles of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) 2015 and will work to fully embed the common framework for Quality Assurance. In particular, that Quality Assurance processes should:
- be the primary responsibility of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in assuring the quality of their own provision
  - be responsive to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students;
  - support the development of a quality culture;
  - take into account the needs and expectations of students, other stakeholders and society.

- 4.2** Within the fields of CPAD across the EHEA the specific mission of EQ-Arts is to:
- promote a strong quality culture for excellence and its continuous enhancement;
  - help guarantee the equivalence of minimum threshold standards for any academic qualification offered in the EHEA;
  - continually enhance the student learning experience to achieve the highest standards;
  - encourage the transfer of knowledge gained through staff research back into teaching;
  - instil trust and confidence in the processes of quality assurance and enhancement;
  - help to build institutional capacity for high quality internal review and enhancement.

## 5. Integrity

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- 5.1** The activities undertaken by EQ-Arts, as set out in this Framework, are based on the governing principle that all institutions will be treated fairly and equally in having open access to the professional knowledge and experience of EQ-Arts. Therefore, the mission of EQ-Arts is to assure and enhance quality across the CPAD sector as a whole in ways that are even-handed and impartial.
- 5.2** In this latter respect, EQ-Arts does not accept, or enter into, exclusive contracts with individual institutions for paid ‘consultancy’ where the purpose is to prepare for a forthcoming formal assessment to be carried out by EQ-Arts or to improve the academic provision to create a competitive advantage that would compromise the ability of EQ-Arts to form an independent judgment on the quality of that provision.
- 5.3** Members of EQ-Arts Governing Board, and its Register of Peer Reviewers, includes individuals who themselves are free from major conflicts of interest or the perception of such conflicts. Throughout their period of tenure on the Board or Register of Peer Reviewers no member shall undertake paid consultancy work with an institution commissioning the services of EQ-Arts and must declare any such consultancy arrangements prior to their membership of the organisation as a major conflict of interest that would preclude them from any engagement with the institutions concerned.
- 5.4** All of the quality assurance and enhancement activities undertaken by EQ-Arts will be operated on an independent and impartial basis that is free from conflicts of interest. The measures set out above are to ensure that the integrity of EQ-Arts, as an organisation, is never compromised and beyond reasonable doubt.



# 6. Ethics

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**6.1** EQ-Arts has regard to general ethical principles that it applies across all of its higher arts education activities. The EQ-Arts framework is based on the following Four Principles of ethical behaviour:

<i>Autonomy</i>	Respecting the decision-making capacities of autonomous persons.
<i>Beneficence</i>	Acting in ways that benefit participants.
<i>Non-maleficence</i>	Avoiding doing harm.
<i>Justice</i>	Distributing benefits and costs fairly, treating all participants equally.

**6.2** EQ-Arts applies these ethical principles in all the activities it participates in and how it engages with individuals and organisations. The Board is responsible to ensure that all people operating under the auspices of EQ-Arts comply with this framework along with the following working principles:

<i>Independence</i>	EQ-Arts is an independent organisation that, in turn, recognises the independence of institutions as self-governing entities having their own quality processes and policies.
<i>Excellence</i>	Quality assessments and reviews will be conducted against the highest professional standards. All programmes will be expected to have met a consistent minimum quality threshold while aiming for the highest standards of pedagogical excellence beyond this threshold.
<i>Impartiality</i>	Expert peer assessors will be selected against clear criteria and be required to undertake their work strictly without bias or conflict of interest.
<i>Equality</i>	All individuals, agencies, programmes and/or institutions will be treated with equal dignity and value.

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<i>Transparency</i>	All quality assessments and reviews will be conducted against clear criteria and requirements that are set out in advance and made publicly available on the EQ-Arts website. All stakeholders will receive concise feedback on their self-evaluations and other documentation to which they may respond. All reports produced by EQ-Arts will be made available in the public domain. All processes adopted by EQ-Arts will be open to external scrutiny.
<i>Objectivity</i>	All judgments made by peer assessors will be solely based on tangible evidence put before them to consider. Assessor's judgments will not be formed on the basis of opinion but on evidence — nor can self-evaluation documents substitute assertion for evidence.
<i>Consistency</i>	The quality criteria and quality standards set out by EQ-Arts will be applied consistently and fairly to all assessments and reviews that it undertakes.
<i>Diversity</i>	EQ-Arts will embrace the diversity of processes and frameworks employed by different agencies in their home nations and respect local legislative requirements and practices.
<i>Efficiency</i>	The assessment process of EQ-Arts is evolving (e.g. on-line) to continue to develop robust and rigorous assessments within the shortest practicable timescales in order to be efficient with material and human resources yet sustain rigorous review and assessment processes of the highest standard.
<i>Confidentiality</i>	Data and intellectual property will be treated confidentially by all persons or agencies involved in the processes of peer review undertaken on behalf of EQ-Arts.

# 7. Activities

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**7.1** The accreditation and review activities undertaken by EQ-Arts will cover the following levels:

## *Institution*

This will focus on the effectiveness of the institution's own quality assurance and enhancement systems to achieve the stated aims and objectives.

## *Unit*

This will focus on the degree to which an academic unit such as a Faculty, Department or School is delivering a range of academic provision that meets the academic objectives set out for it.

## *Programme*

This will focus on the degree to which the following programme levels have been able to sustain and enhance their academic provision:

- Pre-degree Certificate/Diploma;
- BA, MA;
- MPhil, M.Res, PhD.

## *Joint*

This may focus on a collaboration between two or more institutions seeking to offer, for example, a joint programme leading to a single academic award or, a compact arrangement between a pre-degree certificate/diploma and an undergraduate BA programme.

## *Research*

This will focus on an institution's research capacity as undertaken by its academic employees as well as the development of the institution's own research environment.



*Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Paradox*

# 8. Approach

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- 8.1** The approach adopted by EQ-Arts for its quality assurance and enhancement activities is rigorous and impartial. This is based on the following processes—both of which are essential precursors to the formation of robust and reliable quality judgments:

*Assessment* EQ-Arts will use a systematic and formal process of assessment to gather and analyse both quantitative and qualitative information about an institution, an individual programme, or, research activity. The aim is to understand the degree to which it has met its own objectives through the strategies it employs and the design of its academic provision. Assessment is an essential part of all accreditation and review processes.

*Evaluation* To properly evaluate the performance of an institution/programme, EQ-Arts will undertake a systematic, and objective, critical analysis that is based on the evidence resulting from assessment processes (both internal and external). The outcomes of an evaluation process will be quality judgments that underpin the recommendations made in all reports provided by EQ-Arts.

*Review for KazNUA  
in Astana,  
Kazakhstan, 2017*



## 9. Assurance

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- 9.1** Quality assurance processes will determine the formal and/or legal standing of an academic award or institutional provision. Normally these activities are commissioned by a national accreditation agency or by a self-accrediting higher education institution:

*Accreditation* Accreditation is the evaluation of an institution or a specific educational programme in order to determine the degree to which it will, if approved, meet the minimum threshold standards required to receive a licence to award academic qualifications. Accreditation is normally time-limited with periodic renewal.

*Revalidation* Revalidation is the process of periodic review through which an already accredited programme is judged to continue to be meeting, and to what degree, the threshold standards required for the accredited award. Revalidation, as a process of quality assurance, is also linked to evidence for the actions an institution has taken to deliver quality enhancement of the provision throughout the period since the previous validation, the degree to which this enhancement has been achieved and the strategies in place to further that enhancement.



# 10. Enhancement

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- 10.1** Quality enhancement activities are not usually a formal requirement but determined through institutional choice and so commissioned by the institution. EQ-Arts enhancement processes include:

## *Review*

Review processes are normally conducted on a periodic basis with their primary focus being on quality outcomes. The aim of review is to evaluate the degree to which an institution or programme has been able to quality enhance outcomes from the academic provision that is under review. Quality reviews can be undertaken either as an internal audit by the institution itself or as an external audit conducted by EQ-Arts.

## *Audit*

Audit processes are normally conducted on a periodic basis with their primary focus being on quality systems. Quality audits aim to determine the degree to which the overall system for quality assurance (not the quality of the outcomes from that system) are meeting, or could meet, stated aims and objectives. At programme level this can be undertaken either as an internal audit by the institution itself or as an external audit conducted by EQ-Arts. Institutional audits will determine the degree to which the Institution's own procedures and mechanisms ensure quality assurance and quality enhancement. Institutional audit is normally undertaken by an external agency.

## *Benchmarking*

Quality benchmarks are external reference points that help institutions to identify their own strengths, weaknesses and best practices. Benchmarks also help to establish meaningful comparisons between a range of institutional cultures and academic programmes so facilitating international co-operation between higher education institutions. Where an institution is subject to a national qualifications framework this will be the benchmark for comparison.

# 11. Workshops

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**11.1** To help build capacity in quality assurance and enhancement EQ-Arts will offer specialist workshops in support of the CPAD sector as a whole. These will be tailor-made for the specific circumstances of a country, region or group of institutions, often in collaboration with a Ministry or a National Agency. Workshops will provide clear step-by-step introductions to:

- European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG);
- How Quality Assurance Relates to Institutional Mission and Vision;
- Internal Quality Assurance Processes;
- External Quality Assurance Processes;
- Research Environments / Cultures and Research Assessment.

**11.2** Workshops will also provide guidance on the establishment of quality cultures within institutional contexts. In this instance topics will include:

- The Requirements of National Quality Assurance Agencies;
- How to ensure the quality of the students' learning experience;
- How to develop and embed Quality Assurance and Enhancement to meet European measures;
- Rapid and full engagement with the process supported by model guidelines developed by teaching peers;
- Staff with little experience of Quality Assurance and Enhancement processes will be provided with full support and a developmental process;
- A comprehensive model of how to write a Self-Evaluation Report (SER);
- Guidance on the development of staff research and the institution's research environment.



*EQ-Arts Workshop during Cumulus Conference Paris, 2018*

**11.3** Workshops will deal with the general principles of best practice in quality assurance and enhancement as applicable to a wide range of institutions. Registration for attendance at workshops will be publicly advertised and open to delegates from any institution to attend.

# 12. Training

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- 12.1** Assuring the quality and experience of peer reviewers commissioned by EQ-Arts is a major priority. Consequently, EQ-Arts offers training courses that are specifically designed to enable participants to adapt a range of skills to form a competence to work as an international peer-review expert in the field of external QA (in line with the ESG 2015 guidelines) and to be familiar with current policy developments in higher education quality assurance.
- 12.2** This training also aims to ensure an adequate level of consistent knowledge across the EQ-Arts community of peer reviewers in terms of EQ-Arts own processes and its standards for quality assurance and enhancement. The peer review training will also help to build the collective expertise and coherence of the CPAD international community of practice. Specifically, the training is designed to:
- familiarise participants with the ESG 2015 for Quality Assurance in the EHEA;
  - engage participants in processes of evidence analysis and in the development of strategic approaches to the evaluation of internal QA processes;
  - involve participants in a close simulation of an external international peer-review QA process;
  - adapt the communication and teamwork skills of participants to the specific context of international external QA review processes;
  - involve participants in simulated processes of the formulation and framing of recommendations and commendations;
  - familiarise participants with the procedures and processes adopted by EQ-Arts.
- 12.3** All peer reviewers who successfully complete an EQ-Arts training course will receive a certificate confirming their attainment of the standards set out. In exceptional cases where a potential reviewer's professional experience is deemed equivalent to the outcomes of such training then they may be given full or partial exemption from the training.

# 13. Reviewers

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- 13.1** Independent peer reviewers who underpin the work of EQ-Arts will be identified for their international experience and professional high standing. To support all of its activities EQ-Arts retains a Register of peer reviewers drawn from its range of stakeholders.
- 13.2** Inclusion in the EQ-Arts Register of reviewers will be made through a process of public advertisement and open application. The EQ-Arts website displays an open invitation for teachers, managers and professionals the higher arts education and professional sectors to participate in the annual External QA&E expert training programme. Their application is accompanied by a curriculum vitae (CV), demonstrating experience and engagement in QA practice. After the training programme, the Board considers recommendations from the trainers, set against the selection criteria below, and endorses the successful candidates to be added to the register. Students are also invited through open calls addressed to national and European Students Unions or associations and national QA agencies.

*Academics* To be included in the EQ-Arts Register applicants should demonstrate a mixture of the following attributes:

- must have gained an appropriate academic award in at least one of the disciplinary areas covered by the creative and performing arts and design (CPAD) and/or have gained equivalent professional experience before entering teaching;
- have an understanding of, and experience in, learning and teaching methodologies and curriculum design across CPAD;
- have experience in the internal evaluation of quality assurance and enhancement processes for disciplines within CPAD;
- have experience in the external evaluation of quality assurance and enhancement processes with some experience of benchmarking international standards;
- experienced in the consideration of qualitative evidence and quantitative data in order to form objective judgments;
- have proficiency in the use of academic English, spoken and written, that is sufficient for the purposes of QA&E;
- have successfully completed an EQ-Arts training programme or a briefing for peer reviewers who possess commensurate professional expertise and experience.

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*Managers* To be included in the EQ-Arts Register applicants should demonstrate a mixture of the following attributes:

- be currently, or recently, employed by an HE institution within the CPAD sector or a national accreditation agency;
- hold, or have held, specific senior responsibility for the management of quality assurance and enhancement processes;
- have experience in the external evaluation of quality assurance and enhancement processes with a strong knowledge of benchmarking international standards;
- have proficiency in the use of academic English, spoken and written, that is sufficient for the purposes of QA&E;
- have successfully completed an EQ-Arts training programme or a briefing for peer reviewers who possess commensurate professional expertise and experience.

*Students* To be included in the EQ-Arts Register applicants should demonstrate a mixture of the following attributes:

- be currently enrolled in a HE institution within the CPAD sector for either a BA/MA or MPhil/DPhil;
- have course experience sufficient to allow some degree of involvement in quality feedback processes through, for example, annual course monitoring or the representation of student views on course committees or student associations/unions;
- have been engaged in an international project, course or scheme (e.g. Erasmus) that provided comparative international experience of academic programmes;
- be able to take an objective and independent view of evidence provided for quality assurance and be sensitive and open-minded to different academic approaches;
- have a proficiency in English that is equivalent to level C1 in the Common European Framework of References for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment;
- have successfully completed an EQ-Arts training programme or a briefing for peer reviewers who possess commensurate professional expertise and experience.



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*Professionals/  
Practitioners*

To be included in the EQ-Arts Register applicants should demonstrate a mixture of the following attributes:

- be currently employed in a private sector organisation/agency that delivers services or products having some relationship to CPAD education;
- have either gained an appropriate academic award in at least one of the disciplinary areas covered by the CPAD and/or have developed student schemes in partnership with a CPAD higher education;
- have a familiarity with learning and teaching methodologies and curriculum design in the CPAD sector;
- have participated to some extent with an institution's internal quality assurance and enhancement processes;
- be experienced in the consideration of qualitative evidence and quantitative data in order to form objective, balanced, judgments;
- have proficiency in the use of academic English that is sufficient for the purposes of quality assurance and enhancement;
- have undertaken an EQ-Arts briefing session.

**13.3** If accepted onto the EQ-Arts Register of Peer Reviewers the individual registration period for academic teachers/managers/professionals will be four years, and, for students the registration will terminate two years after the point of graduation. All registrations will be open for renewal when a terms ends.

**13.4** The EQ-Arts Board will annually consider all of the nominations received and formally approve those nominations to be included in the Register of Peer Reviewers.

# 14. Impartiality

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- 14.1** All activities undertaken by EQ-Arts will be independent, impartial and free from potential conflicts of interest or perceptions of such a conflict.
- 14.2** All reviewers commissioned by EQ-Arts share the responsibility for guarding against the influence of their personal interests or potential biases, including conscious or unconscious biases based on protected characteristics.
- 14.3** All Board members, and those accepted onto the Register of Peer Reviewers, will be required to declare, and keep up to date, a list of instances where they may have major or minor conflicts of interest though completion of the EQ-Arts Conflict of Interest Form.
- 14.4** No person will be allowed to participate in a review approved by the EQ-Arts Board of Governance where they have a major conflict of interest with the institution concerned.
- 14.5** Examples of major conflicts of interest include the following:
- Having been a full time, part time or casual employee of the institution or been paid for professional services within five years preceding the review date;
  - Having a close personal relationship (e.g. partner, spouse, immediate family member) or enmity with staff in the institution;
  - Involved in, or having been involved, in the authorship or co-authorship of materials that will be presented by the institution/ agency for review;
  - Being supervised by any person who is employed by the institution;
  - Holding or having held unpaid honorary or visiting positions at the institution/agency;
  - Having been in dispute with the institution on any matter.
  - Any other interest(s) that the CEO of EQ-Arts may deem to be a major interest.
- 14.6** Any interest(s) other than those mentioned above, that could lead any reasonable observer to doubt a reviewer's impartiality, will be treated as a minor conflict of interest.

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- 14.7** Examples of minor conflicts of interest include:
- Having been involved in a research project with a member of staff at the institution;
  - Serving or having served on a working group of the institution/ agency;
  - Having presented at a conference hosted by the institution;
  - Have organised or organising academic events or programmes (e.g. summer courses, workshops, conferences) in collaboration with staff at the institution;
  - Serving, or have served, as an external assessor on staff appointment or promotions within the institution.
- 14.8** It shall be up to EQ-Arts CEO to decide what effect the existence of a minor interest may have on a potential reviewer's participation in a review exercise. Depending on the nature of a minor interest the CEO may decide that:
- The minor interest should be noted by the panel but should not affect the potential reviewer's participation in a review;
  - The minor interest, or group of minor interests, shall be treated as a major interest that precludes the potential reviewer from their participation in an exercise.
- 14.9** All review teams and their impartiality will be approved by the EQ-Arts Board.
- 14.10** The register of declared interests is maintained by the EQ-Arts Executive Office and can made available for public scrutiny on request by any person.
- 14.11** The instances described above, and the examples given, are not exhaustive as it is not possible to cover every instance where a conflict of interest may arise. In circumstances that are not covered by the above potential reviewers should seek advice from the CEO of EQ-Arts.
- 14.12** Prior to a quality assurance or enhancement exercise the commissioning institution will be provided with a list of panel members to confirm there are no conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of which EQ-Arts may not have been made aware when convening a panel.

# 15. Teams

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**15.1** Review Teams will be comprised of reviewers who invest the delivery of the EQ-Arts mission with authority and integrity, engendering confidence and trust in the processes of quality assurance and enhancement. The EQ-Arts Board is responsible for approving the appointment of Chairs and Team Members.

**15.2** The size of teams will vary depending on the type of the exercise being undertaken and its scale and/or complexity. Normally the composition and size of a review team will be discussed with an institution. The minimum number of members for any team will be three reviewers and one review secretary.

**15.3** Team membership will be comprised of individuals who represent stakeholder groups and are listed in the EQ-Arts Peer Review Register as follows:

Chair	x1
Reviewers	x1 or more
Student representative	x1
Secretary	x1

**15.4** In addition to fulfilling the criteria for inclusion in the EQ-Arts Register of Reviewers, review Chairs will meet the following additional criteria:

- Be free of any major conflicts of interest;
- Have previous experience of chairing quality exercises, or, have participated in sufficient EQ-Arts quality teams (either as a Deputy Chair or member);
- Be able to structure the workflow for a quality exercise and allocate tasks to team members;
- Be able to facilitate and stimulate the participation of all team members in a quality exercise;
- Have the capacity to communicate complex issues in a straightforward language;
- Be able to build trust and confidence between institutional representatives and EQ-Arts team members;
- Be a confident speaker in formal public settings;
- Experience in drafting quality outcomes and visit reports;
- Ensure that all team members abide by the principles and processes set out in this Governance Framework.

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- 15.5** Team members will be selected from individuals listed in the EQ-Arts Register of Peer Reviewers. The constitution of Teams will have a balanced mix of gender, geographic spread, arts discipline specific knowledge, general experience of QA&E, academic experience in Higher Arts Education and experience of the professional world. This spread of expertise will normally include institutional management and governance, artistic and academic management and artistic and professional experience. Knowledge of the country-specific system of higher arts education and of the legislation applicable will be addressed where possible and as appropriate.
- 15.6** In convening teams of experts EQ-Arts is also conscious of its responsibility to nourish and support the next generation of academics. In this respect care will be taken to include early career academics so they can learn from, and benefit through, the experience of high-quality peer review processes.

*Review for UfG Linz,  
Austria, 2017*





# 16. Outcomes

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- 16.1** The outcomes of all EQ-Arts quality assurance and quality enhancement reviews will be a report written by international subject specialists in the CPAD sector. All such reports will be permanently lodged in the public domain via the EQ-Arts website.
- 16.2** All reports will identify areas of good practice, potential areas for further development and perceived weaknesses. Accreditation and Validation reports will, additionally, include a formal recommendation on the accreditation/validation outcomes along with any conditions or requirements that may, or may not, be attached to these. Should there be any conditions these will be realistically achievable and expressed in such a way that makes clear the timescales for this and what is expected. The institution will have the prerogative to determine what may be the best means to achieve these conditions. If such conditions are not met within the timescales set out, then the recommendation may be not to recommend accreditation or continue validation.
- 16.3** Once a review has been concluded the commissioning Institution will have 10 days to register any Complaint concerning EQ-Arts service delivery. Irrespective of any Complaint being received, the preparation of the final report will continue to proceed through the following stages:
- The Review Team Chair will deliver a draft report, agreed with the Review Team, to EQ-Arts Board for comment;
  - The draft report will then be made available to the commissioning institution to identify any errors of fact;
  - The draft report, along with any responses from the commissioning Institution will go back to the Review Team for preparation of a final draft;
  - The final draft report will be endorsed by EQ-Arts Board for its approval to release the documentation before being published on the EQ-Arts website;
  - The commissioning institution will receive a final draft of the report. It is at this point, that the Institution may choose to invoke the EQ-Arts Appeals Procedure. If an appeal is received, then the process will be halted until the Appeal is resolved.

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**16.4** EQ-Arts will aggregate the data gathered through its Review exercises to identify issues of relevance across the CPAD sector and use this material to produce summative reports. These reports will take three forms as follows:

*Analysis* Trend analyses will aggregate data from EQ-Arts review exercises to produce Thematic Reports that identify areas for further attention;

*Survey* Survey reports will gather and present information on best practices and case studies in thematic areas that have been identified through the trend analyses;

*Policy* Policy reports will address existing and emerging strategic issues that are of relevance to the CPAD sector.

**16.5** At the conclusion of each exercise one further outcome is that the commissioning institution/agency will be invited to complete a Customer Feedback Survey Questionnaire. Through this they will be able to provide comments on their experience of the review and the quality of service provided by EQ-Arts. This will include areas of good practice, examples of processes that may benefit from further review or the conduct of the business by the EQ-Arts Team.

**16.6** This information will be used as part of the EQ-Arts annual self-monitoring in order to identify areas of good practice and others for further improvement.

**16.7** Issues arising from an Institution's feedback will not be communicated to the Review Team conducting the exercise in question but constitute an important part of EQ-Arts continuous self-enhancement of its own activities and services.

# 17. Complaints

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- 17.1 Purpose:** This complaints procedure will enable an institution to seek remedy for a deviation from, or a failure in, some element of EQ-Arts service delivery as it is set out in this Governance Framework.
- 17.2 Grounds:** These will be considered valid where an Institution considers that EQ-Arts has failed to implement, or deviated from, any of the processes or procedures set out in this Governance Framework for its service delivery. Complaints cannot be used to modify the judgments or outcomes of a quality assurance exercise, which would be a matter for Appeal (see next section).
- 17.3 Procedure:** An institution may lodge a complaint within 10 working days of the receipt of the draft evaluation report. Complaints must be in writing to the EQ-Arts Executive Office and include all of the following:
- Identification of the object of the complaint, pointing to the specific provision in this Governance Framework from which there has been some deviation or omission;
  - An explanation of the manner and extent of the deviation with supporting evidence;
  - An indication of any measure(s) that could help to remedy such a failing or deviation.
- 17.3.1** Receipt of a complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days by the Chair of the EQ-Arts Board who reserves the right to reject complaints that do not contain all of the information listed above. The only exception to this will be a complaint against the Board itself, or its members, in which case the Complaint will go to an independent Complaints Committee<sup>1</sup>. On accepting a Complaint, the Chair will then decide on one of the following courses of action:
- investigate the matter with the institution and the Chair of the Review Team and decide to either remedy or reject the complaint as a whole;
  - establish a Complaints Committee to investigate the matter further.

**17.4 Complaints Committee:** A Complaints Committee will be comprised of three members drawn from the EQ-Arts Register of Peer Reviewers and be chaired by the EQ-Arts CEO. In composing the Committee, geographical and disciplinary balance will be considered, as well as required expertise and background of the Committee members. All members will be free of major or minor conflicts of interest. The institution will be made aware of the membership of the Complaints Committee and given 5 working days to raise any concerns about conflicts of interest over which EQ-Arts may not have been made aware. On commencing its work, a Complaints Committee will: review the case for the complaint as set out in the institution's documentation;

- conclude whether the complainant's case should be upheld, partially upheld or rejected;
- offer any recommendations in support of the committee's conclusions;
- provide the Chair of EQ-Arts Executive Board with a report setting out a reasoned explanation for the committee's conclusions and recommendations.

**17.5** In all cases, the EQ-Arts CEO will make a decision on the Complaint and communicate the outcome of the process to the head of the institution, normally within 30 working days of receipt of the complaint. This decision will be final.

*EQ-Arts  
Board Meeting,  
Amsterdam, 2019*



# 18. Appeals

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- 18.1 Purpose:** The appeals procedure will enable an institution to seek reconsideration of a quality judgement(s) or outcome(s) before publication of the final report.
- 18.1.1** The various provisions for reviewing the preliminary judgements of Review Teams and correcting factual errors in draft reports should mean that an Appeal is an action of last resort — nevertheless, it is an important safeguard for institutions that there exists an independent channel through which they can have an appeal heard.
- 18.2 Scope for an Appeal:** The outcomes of quality assurance exercises (i.e. accreditation and validation) are potentially far-reaching for the institution. It is important, therefore, that the institution can have access to an appeals process where genuine concerns over the reliability and robustness of quality judgments and their outcomes can be independently tested.
- 18.2.1** Appeals will only relate to quality assurance exercises (i.e. accreditation and validation) where the judgments and their outcomes have a formal or legal standing that require the institution's compliance. There can be no appeal against recommendations included in a quality enhancement exercise (i.e. review, audit or benchmarking) where the take-up of good practice recommendations is a matter of institutional choice and discretion.
- 18.2.2** An institution should only resort to an appeal in cases where the quality assurance outcomes are either “Accredited with conditions” or “Not accredited”. In either case, the Review Team will have decided that a significant proportion of the EQ-Arts Standards constituting either of these outcomes have not been met and it is towards these individual judgements of Standards, that the appeal should be directed
- 18.3 Grounds for an Appeal:** Whereas there is provision in EQ-Arts procedures for institutions to correct factual errors in review reports<sup>1</sup>, prior to the reports being published, issues of factual accuracy will not constitute grounds for an appeal. Nor can there be any



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appeal against the academic judgments made by peer reviewers. If, however, there were thought to be flaws in the processes leading up to such judgments then these may constitute the grounds for an appeal. In this respect, the following instances alone are grounds for appeal:

- Evidence was supplied by the institution in documentation that was made available prior to a visit but was overlooked or ignored by reviewers when forming quality judgments about the academic provision;
- For reasons beyond an institution's control it was not possible at the time of a visit for the institution to make some important evidence available to the reviewers;
- There was some procedural irregularity in the conduct of the business during a visit that distorted the process of forming judgments.

**18.4 Appeals Process:** Institutions should, at the earliest opportunity, alert the EQ-Arts Executive Office of their intention to lodge an appeal and before a final report has been published. All appeals must be made in writing and received by the EQ-Arts Executive Office within 20 working days of the formal notification of a confirmed outcome being communicated by the EQ-Arts Board and before the final report is published.

**18.4.1** The appeals documentation should be delivered both electronically (as a single pdf file) and in hard copy form to the EQ-Arts Executive Office in Amsterdam. The date stamp on the electronic version of the appeal will be taken as the definitive date for it being within the 20-day cut-off point. Upon receipt of appeals in the EQ-Arts Executive Office they, and the date of their receipt, will be confirmed by email. Written appeals should include:

- A covering letter from the institutional Head, confirming the appeal and providing a summary of its key points;
- A document that:
  - Identifies the grounds upon which the appeal is to be considered (see above);

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- A reasoned argument that identifies the specific judgments, outcomes and/or conditions that should be reconsidered, the reasons for doing so, along with tangible evidence to support the appeal;
  - Any supporting documentation that may include evidence to support specific parts of the appeal (being clearly referenced to the points above) where this is too lengthy to be included in the above document.

**18.4.2** Once an Appeal has been formally received by EQ-Arts the Review process will be suspended until the Appeal has been fully resolved and closed.

**18.5 Appeals Committee:** All Appeals (including Complaints that are against the EQ-Arts Board or any of its members) will be heard by an Appeals Committee that is independent of the Board of Governance. This Committee will have a Chair, to be nominated for a period of three years by an independent Subject Association with whom EQ-Arts is formally associated. The Chair will be nominated for their considerable experience of quality assurance and appeals procedures, and, be free of any major conflicts concerning the appeals to be heard. During their period of tenure, the Chair will not participate in any of EQ-Arts quality assurance and enhancement activities. The Appeals Committee will be comprised of two or three people, including the Chair who will appoint a second or third person(s), meeting the criteria set out above and being selected from the EQ-Arts Register of Peer Reviewers.

**18.5.1** The Appeals Committee will consider documentation received from the appellant institution along with any direct responses to specific points in the appeal that EQ-Arts may choose to submit. The final judgement of the Appeals Committee will take one of the following forms:

- The appeal is rejected;
- The appeal is partly upheld (in which case it must be specified whether the case is sufficiently strong to cause the original judgement to be altered);

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- The appeal is fully upheld (based on the report and written submissions alone);
  - The appeal cannot be decided based upon a written submission alone and a further visit is required (in principle, this judgement will only be used as a last resort).

**18.5.2** In each case, the Chair of the Appeals Committee will prepare a reasoned explanation for the Committee's verdict. This takes the form of a report submitted to the EQ-Arts Board by the Appeals Committee. Except under the most exceptional circumstances, the EQ-Arts Board will accept the verdict and recommendations of the Appeals Committee. Similarly, if a further visit is called for, the Board will normally endorse this.

**18.6 Outcomes of an Appeal:** The result of the appeal will be communicated by the EQ-Arts Board to the institution. The result finally published on the EQ-Arts website will reflect the judgement after the appeal and will not record that this judgement was reached after an appeals process.

**18.6.1** Where an appeal is Rejected by the Board this decision will be final with no further recourse for a subsequent appeal.

**18.6.2** Where an appeal is partly upheld, the Appeals Committee may either decide that the strength of the institution's case is sufficient to alter the overall result or that, notwithstanding the valid points made, the overall verdict should stand. This decision will focus on two considerations:

- Does the partial upholding of an appeal mean that a Review Team's decision, that a particular standard has been 'partially fulfilled' or 'not fulfilled', should be revised?
- If so, should an overall condition arising from the original verdict be mitigated to a recommendation – or be removed?

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- 18.6.3** Where an appeal is fully upheld, this is likely to result in a change in both of the areas described above.
- 18.6.4** Because an Institution may appeal against a number of outcomes or conditions in a single report then this, likewise, may result in the Appeals Committee concluding that some elements of an appeal should be rejected, others partially upheld and some to be fully upheld. This, in turn, will determine any changes to the overall profile of conditions (for example, in the exceptional case of an original decision not to grant accreditation, an appeals decision that reduced the overall number, or the severity, of the conditions applied would normally result in accreditation being approved subject to any remaining conditions).
- 18.6.5** Exceptionally, the Appeals Committee may decide that it is unable to reach a definitive verdict based on the submitted documentation alone. Should this occur, the Committee may recommend a fresh review visit to consider the contested elements of the Review Team's decision. In such instances only the substance of the appeal will be reviewed and matters previously dealt with cannot be re-opened. For an appeals visit, the Review Team will consist of three experts, none of whom was involved in the original visit and amongst whom there is an appropriate balance of expertise. The visit should normally take no longer than one day. The costs of the visit will be shared equally between the institution and EQ-Arts. In the light of this, the institution shall have the right to decline a visit, in which case the original decision of the Review Team will stand.

# 19. Constitution

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**19.1** The EQ-Arts Board is comprised of members who constitute the governing body of the Foundation. To discharge its responsibilities the Board acts independently of all external interests and/or influences, including governments (given its non-governmental status) and other stakeholders. Consequently, members of the Board are appointed in a personal capacity (no Board member represents the interests of an organisation, agency or institution).

**19.2** The EQ-Arts Board is responsible for the:

- effective implementation and continuous review of the Governance Framework set out here;
- planning of external, independent, periodic reviews of the Board's own performance;
- approval of annual reports/accounts and the appointment of annual auditors;
- preparation and monitoring of a five-year strategic plan;
- approval and monitoring of annual business and operational plans;
- final decision making in all the Board's formal assessment and accreditation processes;
- signing-off of final reports concerning all of the Board's quality assurance activities;
- researching and approving periodic trend analyses drawn from the Board's activities;
- scrutinising and approving applications to join the Board's Register of Peer Reviewers;
- approving the appointment of Review Team Chairs and Members;
- instigating independent reviews of complaints or appeals concerning the Board's activities;
- convening occasional or standing working groups to assist in the Board's work;
- identifying and selecting new Board members and electing a chair.

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**19.3** The constitution of the Board is as follows:

Chair (x1)	Elected from, and by, Board members
Ex-officio (x1)	EQ-Arts Chief Executive Officer <sup>1</sup>
Treasurer (x1)	Appointed by the Board from its members
Secretary (x1)	Appointed by the Board from its members
Members (min2)	Selected from the EQ-Arts Register of Peer Reviewers or by nomination <sup>2</sup> & invitation
Student(s) (min1)	Nominated by Higher Education Institutions, Student Union associations or Quality Assurance Agencies
Officer (x1)	EQ-Arts General Manager <sup>3</sup>
Observers (<5)	By invitation from other arts agencies or professional and subject associations aligned with the work of EQ-Arts.

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With the exception of the Executive Officer and General Manager all periods of office will be for a period of three years renewable for a maximum of three terms.

A skills audit of all current Board members will be maintained to ensure that the Board's collective responsibilities are fully discharged and that the range of stakeholder interests are properly represented.

<sup>1</sup> *Non-voting member*

<sup>2</sup> *Nominated by International Arts Discipline Networks (e.g. CUMULUS, CILECT, AEC etc.)*

<sup>3</sup> *Non-voting member*



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**19.4** Criteria for Board membership include:

- experience of the world of work and professional practice in the CPAD sector;
- a deep knowledge and experience of working (teaching, managing etc.) in the higher arts education sector;
- a deep knowledge of, and longstanding experience in, the field of international Quality Assurance and Enhancement in the Higher Arts Education sector;
- specific skills that contribute to the Board's wide-ranging activities;
- the ability to summarise and present complex arguments in public situations;
- a firm command of, and proficiency in, the use of Academic English both spoken and written.
- Throughout their period of tenure on the Board none of its members shall undertake paid work with an institution commissioning the services of EQ-Arts and must declare any such consultancy arrangements prior to their membership of the Board as a major conflict of interest.

**19.5** Board membership will include representatives of all the Stakeholder Groups identified by EQ-Arts. They will contribute a range of skills necessary for the organisation's good governance and represent a diversity of institutional types and regional interests.

**19.6** New Board members will be identified through an open process that is based on an:

- analysis of the current membership's diversity;
- audit of the skills needed to ensure the organisation's good governance;

**19.7** The process will be implemented through:

- invitation for nominations from arts subject associations that are aligned to the work of EQ-Arts.

# 20. Equality, diversity and inclusion

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**20.1** EQ-Arts approaches Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in two ways. Firstly, within EQ-Arts own organisational environment and, secondly, within the broader academic community that EQ-Arts engages with in terms of its quality assurance and enhancement activities. In both these respects EQ-Arts is committed to:

- making sure there is no unjustified, unconscious or unlawful discrimination in the organisation's recruitment, selection, management, promotion and quality assurance/enhancement processes;
- ensuring that all colleagues are treated equally, solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of sex, colour, ethnic or national origin, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, religion and belief (including lack of belief) or political beliefs, trade union membership or non- membership, marital and civil partnership status, family circumstances, pregnancy or maternity status, gender reassignment, or on the basis of being a part-time or fixed term worker;
- understanding, valuing and working constructively with diversity to enable fair and full participation in our work and activities so that all participants are able to express their views and beliefs without fear of penalty;
- treating individuals with whom we work with fairness, dignity and respect;
- being pro-active in the removal of barriers and the redressing of imbalances caused by inequality and unjustified discrimination.

# Glossary

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<b>AEC</b>	Association Européenne des Conservatoires The European Association of Conservatoires
<b>AQ Austria</b>	Die Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung, Austria The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation, Austria
<b>ARTESNET</b>	The Future of Higher Education in Europe
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CILECT</b>	Centre International de Liaison des Écoles de Cinéma et de Télévision
<b>CPAD</b>	Creative and Performing Arts and Design
<b>CUMULUS</b>	International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media
<b>ECA</b>	European Consortium for Accreditation
<b>EHEA</b>	European Higher Education Area
<b>ELIA</b>	European League of the Institutes of the Arts
<b>EQAR</b>	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
<b>ESG</b>	European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
<b>EUA</b>	European University Association
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>INTERARTES</b>	School of Music and Technology, Cascais
<b>KHiO</b>	Oslo National Academy of the Arts
<b>MusiQuE</b>	An external evaluation body dedicated to the continuous improvement of the quality of higher music education across Europe
<b>NVAO</b>	The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QAE</b>	Quality Assurance and Enhancement
<b>SER</b>	Self Evaluation Report
<b>SKVC</b>	Studijų Kokybės Vertinimo Centro Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, Lithuania