The European Higher Education Area

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is the result of the political will of 48 countries which, step by step during the last eighteen years, built an area using common tools. These 49 countries implement reforms on higher education on the basis of common key values – such as freedom of expression, autonomy for institutions, independent students' unions, academic freedom, free movement of students and staff. Through this process, countries, institutions and stakeholders of the European area continuously adapt their higher education systems making them more compatible and strengthening their quality assurance mechanisms. For all these countries, the main goal is to increase staff and students' mobility and to facilitate employability.

The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of universities and national rectors' conferences in 48 European countries. EUA plays a crucial role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation. Thanks to its interaction with a range of other European and international organisations EUA ensures that the independent voice of European universities is heard, wherever decisions are being taken that will impact on their activities.

Since its establishment quality assurance has been one of EUA's key areas of activity. As the voice of Europe's universities, EUA supports and takes forward the interests of individual institutions and the higher education system as a whole. With respect to quality assurance, EUA seeks to ensure that the views of the university sector are taken into account in European and national-level policy discussions on internal and external quality assurance while it also supports its members in developing internal quality systems aiming to promote institutional quality cultures in accordance ESG 2015. With this aim EUA carries out a variety of activities that are underpinned by the belief that the main responsibility for quality assurance lies within higher education institutions.

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) is an umbrella organisation which represents quality assurance organisations from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) member states. ENQA promotes European co-operation in the field of quality assurance in higher education and disseminates information and expertise among its members and towards stakeholders in order to develop and share good practice and to foster the European dimension of quality assurance.

ENQA worked with the other "E4" agencies, the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European Students Union (ESU), to establish the [European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education](#) (EQAR), which makes available a validated list of higher education quality assurance agencies which adhere to the ESG, and reduces the risk of bodies which purport to grant accreditation without rigorous review. EQAR is composed of the founding E4 bodies, government members (any state which is part of the Bologna Process may join) and social partners, and governed by an elected Executive Board. It has a small secretariat and is based in Brussels.