

Mapping the implementation and application of the ESG (The MAP-ESG project)

Fiona Crozier

Chair of the MAP-ESG Steering

Vice-President ENQA

Assistant Director, QAA UK

Introduction

- Background
- Why the MAP-ESG project and why now?
- MAP-ESG – what's it about?
- Analysis of consultation results and next steps

A few quotations from the original document

- "...the report is no more than a first step in...a long and arduous route to the establishment of a widely shared set of underpinning values, expectations and good practice in relation to quality and its assurance..."
- "What has been set in motion by the Berlin mandate will need to be developed further if it is to provide the fully functioning European dimension of QA for the EHEA."

Contd.

- "...the report sets its face against a narrow, prescriptive and highly formulated approach to standards."
- "...the report prefers the generic principle to the specific requirement."
- "The purpose of these S&G is to provide a source of assistance and guidance to both HEIs...and agencies as well as to contribute to a common frame of reference."
- "It is not the intention that these S&G should dictate practice or be interpreted as prescriptive or unchangeable."

The MAP-ESG project

- The project is a mapping exercise, supported by EC funding, to review the extent of the application and implementation of the ESG since their adoption
- It will report to the ministerial meeting in Bucharest in April 2012. Ministers will be invited to decide whether, and if so to what extent, the ESG should be revised
- Chaired by ENQA and steered by the E4 (ENQA, ESU, EUA & EURASHE) group, assisted by an Advisory Group.
- Each of the Es consulted its stakeholders to gather their views on the utility and applicability of the ESG and produced an interim report
- A final report is has been drafted, incorporating the main headlines from all 4 interim reports – this report will be launched on 17/1/12 at an event in Copenhagen

Structure of the final report

- 5 sections: Introduction to the ESG, their background and history
Introduction to the MAP-ESG project, its objective and methodology
Major findings of the project (under 3 headings)
Conclusions
Recommendation
- There will be an Executive Summary and the 4 interim reports will be appendices
- Agreement that the report would set out clearly those areas where there was agreement amongst the E4 and would leave room for different opinions and conclusions
- The report is about to be posted on the ENQA website for public comment

Why is the project being carried out now?

- HE is changing rapidly – are the ESG still as appropriate to the world of 2011/2012 as they were in 2005?
- The Bologna stocktaking exercise appears to suggest that the ESG are less than fully implemented in the EHEA
- Isn't it always good to have a periodic look at things? The current ESG were always a "first step."

Headlines from the 4 consultations

- The majority of respondents viewed the ESG as having had a positive impact on the development of QA across the EHEA and as contributing to the European dimension to QA
- Little desire to revise the actual content; improvement and clarification
- Clarification of terminology or a glossary would be useful, as would a clearer demarcation of the status of and difference between a standard and a guideline(e.g. 1.2 & 1.3, 2.3 and 3.2 & 3.4)
- Scope felt to be appropriate by the majority (although there was encouragement by ESU respondents to consider whether or not a revised document should reflect overarching principles agreed by Bologna signatories)

Headlines contd...

- Tension around the purpose of the ESG: reference point v. checklist/compliance tool; raised by ENQA and EQAR and recognised by other respondents
- Preference for a principle-based approach, capable of being applied across a diversity of national contexts (all respondents) and of ensuring that primary responsibility for QA lies with institutions (EUA/EURASHE)
- More could be done to achieve consistency of application and mutual understanding of the ESG amongst all stakeholders

Agreed conclusions in the final report

- Clear evidence of the positive impact of the ESG on QA in the EHEA
- Essential to maintain the generic principle and to ensure that the ESG as widely applicable as possible
- Scope is generally appropriate but some encouragement to consider to what extent a revised ESG should reflect more overarching Bologna principles
- Take account of the impact of revisions on those stakeholders who may only recently have begun to implement the ESG

The recommendation to ministers

ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE recommend that the ministers of the EHEA countries mandate the E4 organisations to carry out, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, notably Education International, the Bologna Follow-Up Group and EQAR, a thorough revision of the ESG in order to improve their clarity, applicability and usefulness. This work would be carried out in the understanding that the current principles would be maintained. The report, with the revised document, will be presented to the BFUG prior to the ministerial meeting in 2015 in time for the BFUG's and, ultimately, the ministers' discussion and decision.

The recommendation...

...is intended to highlight the following:

- The awareness of the impact of any change to the ESG on stakeholders who use the ESG on a regular basis and on those countries, HEIs and agencies who have only recently begun their implementation
- The need for a revision of the ESG to improve their clarity, applicability and usefulness (but NOT to change the content)
- That the project has brought into focus the differing perspectives, contexts and expectations of the different stakeholders and the need to continue to work with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible in order to ensure consensus

Recent events...

- BFUG meeting, Krakow (October 2011)

Some discussion around length of time needed for proposed revision

- Comments on the final draft report received (November 2011)

Final remarks

- The outcomes of the consultations confirm that, given that this was a first attempt to agree on principles for QA across the EHEA, the ESG has stood the test of time remarkably well
- However, there is always room for improvement; in this case not of the content of the principles enshrined in the ESG but in terms of the clarity of their presentation

Thank you for your attention

Fiona Crozier

f.crozier@qaa.ac.uk