



8th European Quality Assurance Forum

21 – 23 November 2013

Working together to take quality forward

Call for contributions

Deadline 2 August 2013

INTRODUCTION

Following the success of previous fora, we are pleased to announce that ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE will organise the 8th European Quality Assurance Forum, which will take place at the **University of Gothenburg, Sweden, on 21-23 November 2013**.

Through a mix of plenary and parallel sessions, the 2013 EQAF, entitled **“Working together to take quality forward”**, will combine practice-oriented or research-based discussions that will take place in the paper sessions and workshops with presentations of current developments in quality assurance.

Recent studies show that European quality assurance has taken huge steps forward in the past decade: both institutions and quality assurance agencies have developed sophisticated processes that aim to assure and enhance the quality of European higher education. However, it is also widely recognised that while processes are in place, there is still need for further work in developing the engagement of the whole academic community in quality, as well as communication and co-operation with other stakeholders. This year the Forum will therefore specifically explore how both individuals and organisations can better understand the role that quality assurance can play in their daily lives, get engaged and work together to take quality forward.

PARTICIPANTS

The European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) provides a platform for discussion, professional development and exchange of experiences among the main stakeholders in quality assurance (QA). Specifically, the Forum will be of interest to rectors and vice-rectors responsible for QA, QA officers in higher education institutions, students, QA agency staff and researchers working on higher education or the QA field.

CALL FOR PAPERS AND WORKSHOPS

We invite contributions from QA practitioners in higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies, students, institutional leaders and researchers in the field. EQAF is an excellent opportunity to present current practice or research and test new ideas, and to elicit feedback from colleagues and stakeholders. All contributions are expected to seek to stimulate a discussion with the participants, thus enhancing peer-learning.

The deadline to submit all contributions is **2 August 2013**. **Proposals received after this date will not be considered.**

Two types of contributions are being sought: paper and workshop proposals.

We will especially welcome paper and workshop proposals which present different perspectives (e.g. a case study developed jointly by a university and a QA agency).



The papers and workshops will be presented and discussed during parallel sessions, which, it is estimated, will be attended by 20 to 40 participants.

Please note that participants will be free to select which workshop or paper session to attend based on the **abstracts**, which will be included on the EQAF web-site and in the programme booklet. Thus, we encourage all contributors to pay special attention to their abstracts, which must be concise, correspond to the content of their papers and appeal to the participants. Giving **explicit titles of a reasonable length** to papers and workshops may also contribute to capturing the attention of a wider audience.

1. Paper sessions

This type of contribution will present either

- a) an analysis of quality assurance concepts or empirical research data related to internal or external quality assurance; or
- b) a specific institutional, national, or European quality assurance approach. The main objective of this type of paper is to share and discuss, in a self-reflective and critical way, experiences of QA practice or test ideas for new quality assurance initiatives and receive feedback from the participants. Authors should aim to discuss lessons that participants can draw from the case presented and to analyse success factors, challenges encountered and potential failures.

Guidelines related to this type of contribution can be found as annex 1 to this call (see below).

The papers will be presented during **45-minute-long parallel sessions**. Two cognate papers may follow each other. The presentation of the paper, which should last no more than 20 minutes, will be followed by a discussion. The author(s) should provide questions for discussion with the audience at the conclusion of the paper.

Formal requirements

A paper proposal should:

- Identify the author(s), and, in the case of co-authored papers, indicate who will be responsible for presenting the paper at the Forum
- Identify the organisation of the author(s)
- Be a fully written paper of no more than 3000 words (excluding references)
- Be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 150 words
- Conclude with two or three questions that will lead the discussion following the presentation

Evaluation criteria

The papers will be assessed by members of the EQAF Steering Committee on the basis of the following criteria:

- The paper has a clear focus that will be of interest to the participants.
- The argument, development, and structure are logical, coherent and understandable
- The paper provides a substantial basis for discussion and has the potential to sustain a lively discussion.
- Papers presenting case examples are critical and self-reflective and identify clearly the success and obstacles in implementation.



- No proposal for commercial purposes will be accepted.

2. Workshops

Workshops will focus on providing participants with a structured background on a specific topic or provide hands-on practical advice on how to implement or use a specific QA tool. The workshop will be led by the facilitator(s) in a **90-minute parallel session**. Workshops should not be dedicated to one or several paper-like presentations: the focus should be on **participant activity** rather than presentation from the workshop facilitator(s).

Formal requirements

A workshop proposal should:

- Identify the facilitator(s)
- Identify the organisation of the facilitator(s)
- Identify the target audience for the workshop
- Explain the main objectives
- Explain the activity to be carried out during the workshop
- Specify any audio-visual requirements
- Be no more than two A4 pages
- Be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 150 words

Evaluation criteria

The workshop proposals will be assessed by members of the EQAF Steering Committee on the basis of the following criteria:

- The level and type of participant activity: workshops should aim to sustain a lively debate with and the engagement of the audience in a hands-on activity.
- The topic and objectives of the workshop and their relevance to QA.
- Description of how the workshop will be run (activities proposed, how realistic it is to carry them out in the given timeframe, methodology to ensure participation from the audience...).
- No proposal for commercial purposes will be accepted.

Any supplementary documentation may be annexed. For instance, a workshop proposal on comparing different kinds of teaching evaluation questionnaires could include the questionnaires that will be discussed during the workshop.

We strongly encourage the workshop facilitators to prepare and handle the timing of their activities carefully. They should also be prepared to adapt to the number of participants in the audience (e.g. adapt the number of sub-groups in case attendance is below or beyond expectations).



PROCEDURE

All proposals should be submitted using the forms attached to this call, in Word format, by **2 August 2013** to Ivana Juraga (Ivana.Juraga@eua.be). Please do *not* send a hard copy or a PDF file.

All contributions will be reviewed by the EQAF Steering Committee. The authors will be informed in September if their contribution has been selected for presentation at EQAF. Selected proposals may receive comments on how the proposal should be amended before presentation at EQAF 2013. Please note that due to limited resources no comments can be provided to unsuccessful proposals. Unless the author indicates otherwise, all selected papers will be posted on the EQAF website after the event.

IMPORTANT: If you have submitted a paper or workshop proposal, please do not register for the event online until the results of the selection process have been announced. Each selected paper and workshop at EQAF 2013 will benefit from one reduced fee, which will be applied through a special registration process.

All correspondence with authors will be by email.

In order to assist contributors, a FAQ sheet (frequently asked questions) is included as annex 2 to this call for contributions.

Publication

In addition, following the Forum and after a further review, an on-line post-Forum publication will be produced, based on a small selection of the papers presented at the event. This publication is intended to contribute to the sustainability of the event outcomes by providing a wider audience with up-to-date information on current trends in internal and external quality processes in Europe.

Published papers should not exceed 3 000 words.

Calendar

2 August 2013: All elements of the proposal must be submitted in Word format using the forms attached to this call to Ivana.Juraga@eua.be. Proposals received after this date will not be considered. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.

September 2013: Notification of acceptance or rejection will be sent by email to all authors. Accepted proposals will be accompanied by comments. Abstracts of accepted proposals will be published on the Forum website. Information regarding the day and time of sessions at the Forum will be provided closer to the event.

21-23 November 2013: the 8th European Quality Assurance Forum takes place in Gothenburg, Sweden, hosted by the University of Gothenburg.

December 2013: (for papers selected for publication only) Notification if the paper will be included in the publication. Authors may receive comments on how to adapt the paper before it is finally accepted for publication.

End January 2014: (for papers selected for publication only) Deadline to submit the final paper for publication.



EQAF STEERING COMMITTEE

- ENQA: Helka Kekäläinen and Maria Kelo
- ESU: Fernando Galán Palomares and Dan Derricott
- EUA: Tia Loukkola and Norma Ryan (chair of the Steering Committee)
- EURASHE: Regitze Sparre Kristensen and Barbara Michalk
- Academic adviser: Bjørn Stensaker, Professor, University of Oslo, Norway



Annex 1: GUIDELINES FOR PAPERS¹

Content

Papers should be original. If there is an overlap with material published elsewhere, details should be given.

EQAF is an international event aimed at those interested in the theory, practice and policies relating to the management, improvement and evaluation of quality in higher education. This has two implications for authors.

First, the paper has to be of interest to a broad spectrum of participants, which means that:

- (a) the paper draws on institutional examples, or
- (b) it reports some international comparative research, or
- (c) if country specific, it explains how developments in one country have been informed by international developments, or
- (d) it explains how developments or research in one country have implications beyond its borders.

The aim is to provide the audience with information about, and lessons from, ideas and practice that are transferable to other contexts.

Second, the paper should avoid local references or assume that the audience will understand the processes used in a specific institution or agency or be familiar with the higher education system in a given country. Localised abbreviations or taken-for-granted notions should not be cited without explanation. Therefore, it is incumbent on authors to be clear about terminology.

Third, the paper should provide a substantial basis for discussion in the sessions.

A clear line of argument (or story) should flow through the paper. The paper needs to keep EQAF participants interested.

Abstract

All papers should include an abstract of up to 150 words maximum. The first sentence or two of the abstract should sum up the core idea, argument or thesis of the paper. This should be followed by concise details of the evidence used to support the argument. The implications of the paper (for different stakeholders) should normally follow. Special attention should be paid to writing an informative and appealing abstract because participants will base their choice of parallel sessions on this.

Institutional Case Studies

The case can be developed from the perspective of a QA agency or a higher education institution as well as from the perspective of a faculty or a department, demonstrating the various tensions and challenges. We will especially welcome paper and workshop proposals which present different perspectives (e.g. a case study developed jointly by a university and a QA agency).

Suggested headings:

¹ These guidelines have been adapted from the guidelines of the journal *Quality in Higher Education*.



- The quality assurance approach and/or strategy of the institution
- Legal/national/cultural context and/or constraints
- Stating the specific case and core issues
- Barriers and problems encountered when implementing new practice
- Policies and tools applied to overcome them
- Successes achieved/status to date
- Lessons learned (what would you do differently in retrospect?)
- Key issues still to be mastered (this would be particularly helpful in generating discussion during the session)

Length

Contributions to EQAF should be a maximum of 3 000 words (excluding references) and should include an abstract of up to 150 words.



Annex 2: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

This informal annex aims at providing indicative answers to frequently asked questions related to the EQAF call for contributions.

1. Are abstracts enough in themselves for a paper to be taken into account in the selection procedure?

Answer: Abstracts alone are not enough. The formal requirements for either a paper or a workshop proposal are listed under the sections “Paper sessions” and “Workshops” of the call for contributions. If you wish to submit a paper proposal, it must be a fully written paper of no more than 3 000 words (references excluded), accompanied by an abstract of up to 150 words.

2. I would like to present the QA system in place in my institution. Should I choose to submit a paper or a workshop?

Answer: Workshops are based on interactivity with the audience (e.g. on the use of specific QA tools in different national and institutional contexts...), and should not consist of one or a series of paper-like presentations. If you wish to collect feedback from other institutional contexts on, for example, one tool that you would like to implement within your institution, a workshop might be a good solution. Please be aware that a workshop lasts twice as long as a paper session and you will have to propose activities and sustain a lively discussion with your audience for 90 minutes.

If you wish to present a paper, please bear in mind that, if selected, your paper presentation should provide a substantial basis for sustaining a lively discussion among the audience. The paper should therefore be self-reflective and provide a basis for broadening perspectives beyond your own institutional approach (see also annex 1 above).

3. May I co-author a paper with someone from outside my institution?

Answer: Proposals submitted jointly by two or several authors are most welcome. You are free to co-author it either with someone from your institution or someone from another institution/organisation. As an example, a joint paper presenting a reform from both points of view of a QA agency and of an institution, or on a QA procedure from the perspective of an institution and its students, would be highly welcome and of interest to the audience of the Forum.

4. Can authors selected under the call for contributions be funded to participate in EQAF?

Answer: The EQAF organisers do not fund participation. Should a proposal of contribution be accepted, the presenter’s institution often covers the Forum fee as well as travel to the event. However, one reduced fee will be granted to each selected paper and workshop at EQAF 2013. This will be applied through a special registration process after the selection of papers and workshops is finalised.

5. I am based in an institution that is located outside Europe. May I still submit a proposal under the call for contributions?

Answer: Yes. Your proposal will be reviewed on the same basis and following the same criteria as other proposals (see call for contributions for the list of evaluation criteria for



each category of proposal). Please also consider the answer to question 4 related to funding for attending EQAF.

6. I am a student. May I also participate in this call for contributions?

Answer: You are most welcome to submit a proposal. We strongly encourage student participation in EQAF.

7. I do not work in the higher education area but would like to submit a contribution on quality assurance as a transversal topic. Would that be possible?

Answer: It all depends on how your proposal will address quality assurance. EQAF specifically focuses on quality assurance in higher education and all proposals selected under the call for contributions should be related, in one way or another, to this specific field. It might therefore not be the right platform if you intend to discuss a generic quality assurance management tool.

8. Will all proposals selected under this call for contributions be published automatically?

Answer: After the Forum, a publication gathering only a selection of papers presented during the event will be issued (see here: <http://www.eua.be/Publications.aspx> for examples from previous years). The selection of papers to be published is decided by the EQAF Steering Committee after the event. Authors of selected papers will be notified by email and will have the opportunity to edit and revise their contribution. All papers presented at the Forum will be available through the Forum website, unless the authors indicate otherwise.

9. What must I do after my proposal is selected?

Answer: In September, you will be notified by email about whether your proposal has been accepted. This email will indicate how you should then proceed.

10. Are papers that have been already published elsewhere eligible under this call for contributions?

Answer: The fact that your paper was already published under other circumstances does not constitute *per se* an excluding criteria. Your proposal should still fulfil the evaluation criteria as stated in the call for contributions, and be of relevance for the EQAF participants. However, the post-Forum publication tends to privilege papers that have not been published elsewhere.

11. What is the evaluation procedure?

Answer: The evaluation procedure works as follows: each proposal is reviewed by two different reviewers from different backgrounds, taking into account potential conflicts of interest and imperatives of impartiality. Each reviewer will give a score according to a standard scale for grading, and provide comments if he/she so wishes. The EQAF Steering Committee decides on the final selection based on scores given to contributions and the maximum number of proposals to be selected for each type of contribution.

12. Besides the evaluation criteria as announced in the call for contributions, are there other criteria that I should be aware of?



Answer: All proposals that fulfil the formal requirements as stated in the call for contributions will be reviewed according to the evaluation criteria. In addition, as is usual practice in academia, the reviewers will not evaluate any proposal that presents serious distortions to the basic principles for original contributions, i.e. papers with examples of plagiarism or copyright issues.

13. Will the organisers collect feedback from participants about my session?

Answer: The organisers do not collect feedback from participants about individual paper/workshop sessions. However, the presenters/facilitators are free to collect feedback from the participants of their session themselves.

* * *

This document tries to offer general answers to most frequently asked questions in order to clarify generic requests.

Should you have any further questions related to the call for contributions, please contact Ivana Juraga (Ivana.Juraga@eua.be).