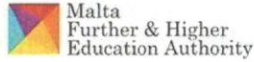
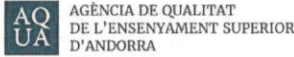


AGENCIJA ZA KONTROLU I OSIGURAVANJE
KVALITETA VISOKOG OBRAZOVANJA - PODGORICA

Priljena: 29.10.2024

Org. jed.	Klas. znak	Redn. br.	Folio	Srjednja
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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Andorra, Andorra

the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, Cyprus

the Icelandic Agency for Quality Assurance, Iceland

the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority, Malta

and

the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education, Montenegro

This Memorandum of Understanding is made between the **Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Andorra**, C/ Dr. Vilanova, 15-17, planta, AD500 Andorra la Vella (Andorra), hereafter referred to as **AQUA**.

The **Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education**, Lemesou Avenue, 5, 2112 Nicosia, (Cyprus), hereafter referred to as **CYQAA**.

The **Icelandic Agency for Quality Assurance**, Borgartún 30, 105 Reykjavík (Iceland), hereafter referred to as **IAQA**.

The **Malta Further and Higher Education Authority**, Triq J Abela Scolaro, HMR1304 Hamrun (Malta), hereafter referred to as **MFHEA**.

And

The **Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education**, Mihaila Lalica n.1, 81000 Podgorica (Montenegro), hereafter referred to as **ACQAHE**.

AQUA, CYQAA, IAQA, MFHEA and ACQAHE are referred to collectively as 'all Parties'.

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 1. A signature starting with 'd.'
 2. A signature starting with 'G' and 'S' (likely G. S. ...)
 3. A signature starting with 'J' and 'S' (likely J. S. ...)

Handwritten signature in blue ink:
 4. A signature starting with 'J' and 'S' (likely J. S. ...)

Whereas

AQUA was established in 2006 and operates as a public law institution with the objective of enduring the quality of higher education in Andorra. As an autonomous and independent entity, **AQUA** holds its own legal identity, assets, and the authority to act in pursuit of its objectives. The central mission of **AQUA** is to uphold the quality of higher education in Andorra by consistently adhering to the standards set by the EHEA. This mission is driven by a commitment to quality and rigour, aligned with societal and labour demands. **AQUA** accomplishes its mission through the evaluation, accreditation, and certification of teaching and research, promoting continuous improvement and adhering to the principles established in the EHEA.

CYQAA, established in 2015, is the competent independent authority responsible to safeguard standards and to support, through the procedures provided by the relevant legislation and the principles underlying the establishment of the European Higher Education Area, the continuous improvement and upgrading of higher education institutions and their programs of study, in order to comply with the ESG and the European policy for mobility and mutual qualification recognition. It also aims at promoting quality culture within the higher education institutions in Cyprus.

IAQA is an independent quality assurance agency, recognised by the Icelandic government. Since its establishment in 2011, its mission has been to safeguard the quality of higher education in Iceland by carrying out institution-wide reviews through an enhancement-led approach. **IAQA** benchmarks its work against the most up-to-date standards and approaches to quality assurance across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) while also fulfilling national legal requirements for quality assurance in higher education.

MFHEA was setup as an independent Authority in 2021 and was previously known as the National Commission for Further and Higher Education Authority (NCHFE). It is responsible for the regulation and quality assurance of Further and Higher Education Institutions. It was established to enhance the education system, and its key functions include quality assurance, accreditation and policy development of the Further and Higher Education sector.

ACQAHE was established in 2017 by the Law on Higher Education, as a national body responsible for overseeing and enhancing the quality of higher education in Montenegro. By applying European Standards and Guidelines, **ACQAHE** evaluates higher education institutions, study programs, and lifelong learning initiatives to ensure they meet high standards and align with European quality assurance systems. **ACQAHE**'s efforts are aimed at fostering continuous improvement and ensuring the international recognition of Montenegrin higher education.

AQUA, CYQAA, IAQA, MFHEA and ACQAHE

Having comparable missions and institutional objectives in the assurance of quality in higher education, all parties wish to continue and deepen further their cooperation upon the terms contained herein.

Shared Key principles

All Parties understand and mutually acknowledge their respective independent regulatory responsibilities as authorised by the separate national governments and/or as membership organisations recognised by national governments.



All Parties are members or affiliates of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), with comparable missions and organisational objectives in the assurance of quality in higher education, and now wish to establish a closer professional relationship as equal partners within a collaborative framework.

All Parties envision benefits to be achieved through dialogue and cooperation, with benefits accruing to all agencies and to the institutions under their purview.

All Parties understand the critical necessity of maintaining the confidentiality of information related to institutions, as well as to the agencies themselves as developed through accreditation activities.

Therefore, all Parties agree to the following framework for mutually supportive and collaborative engagement.

This Memorandum of Understanding is not exhaustive and is not intended to be legally binding between all Parties, except where specifically stated.

Areas of cooperation and collaboration

All Parties, in accordance with the legal and regulation framework of their respective countries, will pursue the following objectives for their mutual benefit:

1. Mutual understanding

Work to enhance their understanding of each other's approach to assuring quality in higher education, the respective systems in place for quality assurance and enhancement in higher education, and the critical matters relating to quality and standards in higher education.

2. Information exchange

Exchange information, news, updates, policies, good practices and offer professional advice about their activities and processes, about developments in their respective country's higher education systems, and about cross-border providers operating in their jurisdictions with named contacts at each organisation, having regard for the confidentiality of the information and relevant Data Protection legal framework respectively applicable to each Party.

3. Staff development

Where appropriate and possible, support the development of staff through activities such as staff exchange, observing each other's review processes, and provision of training.

4. Use of each other's reviewers

Where appropriate and possible, draw on reviewers or other specialists from each other's system to strengthen the international dimension of each other's review processes.

5. Collaboration

Where appropriate and possible, collaborate in relation to mutually agreed projects and activities for the benefit of both parties, including the quality enhancement of transnational education, the identification of fraudulent institutions, supporting student mobility and undertaking research on quality assurance related issues.

More specifically, at the end of term of validity of this Memorandum, all Parties aim to have achieved concrete collaboration in the following activities:

- Sharing information and resources related to the latest developments, challenges, approaches, and best practice in quality assurance of higher education.



- Sharing experience and knowledge in the field of mutual interests, e.g. academic integrity, transnational education, institutional and programme accreditation, microcredentials...
- Consulting on the improvement of standards and criteria of institutional and programme accreditations.
- Supporting agencies in developing future ENQA and EQAR evaluations/applications.
- Exchanging and training of quality experts.
- Collaborating on research projects that address common issues in quality assurance of higher education and contributing to each other's publications.
- Sharing insights and collaborating on the integration of new technologies in quality assurance processes to improve the accuracy of our processes and evaluations.
- Facilitate the mobility of employees in agencies.
- Co-organising events on specific issues related to quality assurance in higher education. All Parties offer slots in each other's events, on the basis of reciprocity. The number of spaces and mode of participation will be agreed annually.

If any additional costs will be incurred as a result of the collaboration, agreement to progress any allocation/reimbursement of costs should be agreed in writing between the Parties before any work is undertaken.

Confidentiality

All Parties agree to ensure that any information of a confidential nature ('confidential information') that is shared between Parties is safeguarded and remains confidential. All Parties agree not to disclose confidential information received from the other without the written consent of the disclosing Party. All Parties acknowledge that, in appropriate cases, they may reach a separate written agreement about the handling of particular confidential information or classes of confidential information. All Parties agree that this paragraph is legally binding.

Retention of information

Information exchanged under this Memorandum of Understanding will be held and disposed of in accordance with all Parties' retention schedules. For all parties, this will be up to five years.

Intellectual property rights

Any reports, notes, records, correspondence, documents, computer, and other storage, such as disks or other documents and materials used in this Memorandum of Understanding, which has been generated or is already owned by any organisation, shall be, and shall remain, the property of that organisation.

The settlement

In the event of a dispute between all Parties, it shall be resolved by friendly consultations.

Duration of Memorandum

The Memorandum of Understanding will take effect from the date of its signature and shall continue for 3 years unless it is terminated by the giving of three months' notice by any Party. It may be extended on mutual agreement of all parties.

Alteration of Memorandum

This Memorandum is signed by all Parties in a spirit of amicable cooperation. The terms of the Memorandum may be altered with the written approval of all Parties.

Management and liaison arrangements for the Memorandum

The Director of AQUA (at the time of signing, Dr Isaac Galobardes), on behalf of the President of CYQAA (at the time of signing, Erato Ioannou), the Executive Director of IAQA (at the time of signing, Dr Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir), the Chief Executive Officer of MFHEA (at the time of signing, Dr Rose Anne Cuschieri), and the Director of ACQAHE (at the time of signing, Goran Danilović) will have shared responsibility for managing the implementation of the terms of the Memorandum and taking stock of the terms of the Memorandum on an annual basis. This responsibility may be delegated to relevant members of the agencies' staff in relation to particular areas of cooperation.

Resources

Unless alternative arrangements are specifically agreed to meet particular project requirements, each Party will normally cover their own costs of implementing the terms of the Memorandum. For particular areas of cooperation, donor funding may be sought from other sources.

Signed in Malta on the 24th of October 2024.



Isaac Galobardes
Director

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Andorra (AQUA)

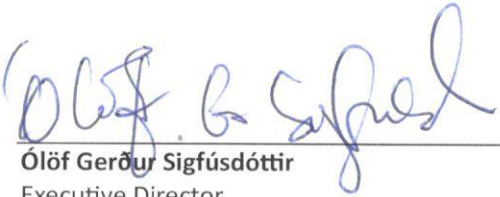
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Erato Ioannou
Higher Administrative Office

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Goran Danilović
Director

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Goran Danilović

Director

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