



The European Consortium for
Accreditation in Higher Education

**ASSOCIATION EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM FOR
ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
(ECA)**

Annual Report 2020



Content

1. Balance sheet at 31 December 20220	3
2. Statement of income and expenditure 2020	4
3. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies	6
a. About ECA.....	6
b. Summary of Significant Accounting Principles	9
4. Notes to the balance sheet at 31 December 2020	10
a. Current Assets.....	10
b. Equity (reserves).....	10
c. Current Liabilities.....	10
5. Notes to the statement of income and expenditure 2020.....	11
a. Income	11
b. Expenses	13
6. Report of the Financial Committee.....	16



1. Balance sheet at 31 December 2020

	<u>31 December 2019</u>	<u>31 December 2020</u>
<i>Current assets</i>		
Accounts receivable	2.000 €	12.000 €
Other current assets	-	-
Cash at bank	157.347 €	215.421,89 €
	159.347 €	227.421,89 €
Total assets	<u>159.347 €</u>	<u>227.421,89 €</u>
<i>Equity</i>	168.080 €	242.567,50 €
 <i>Current liabilities</i>		
Accounts Payable		
Current accounts	18.500 €	60,50€
Prepaid income	8.000 €	7.000 €
	<u>26.500 €</u>	<u>7.060,50€</u>
Total liabilities	<u>159.347 €</u>	<u>227.421,89 €</u>



2. Statement of income and expenditure 2020

	Actual 2020	Revised budget 2020	Actual 2019
	€	€	€
Fixed Income			
Contribution members	68.000 €	68.000 €	68.000 €
Contribution observers	4.000 €	4.000 €	4.000 €
Total income	72.000 €	72.000 €	72.000 €
Services & Project Income			
CeQuInt fees	10.000 €	4.400 €	4.400 €
Training fees	-	4.500 €	5.600 €
QA Students	-	14.206 €	-
SUCTIA	14.709 €	15.909 €	-
ImpEA project income	-	57.425 €	-
eQuatic project income	16.658 €	16.658 €	-
AR-NET project income	366 €	366 €	1.112 €
e-VALUATE project income	-	1.000 €	-
EQ-Arts project income	8.000 €	10.000 €	-
Total Services and Projects Income	48.133 €	124.464 €	11.112 €
Total Revenues	121.733 €	196.464 €	83.112 €



	Actual	Revised budget	Actual
	2020	2020	2019
	€	€	€
Fixed Expenses			
Coordination costs	37.000 €	37.000 €	37.000 €
Information and communication	7.056 €	8.000 €	3.369 €
Contributions to ECAEvents	-	5.500 €	12.751 €
Travel expenses	-	3.000 €	6.626 €
Other expenses	3.129 €	3.000 €	10.618 €
Total Fixed Expenses	47.185 €	56.500 €	70.364 €

	Actual	Revised budget	Actual
	2020	2020	2019
	€	€	€
Services & Project Expenses			
CeQuint costs	-	4.000 €	5.571 €
Training costs	-	4.500 €	4.831 €
AQ Students	-	14.206 €	-
SUCTIA	-	15.909 €	-
CALOHEE project costs	-	-	-
ImpEA project costs	60,50 €	57.425 €	-
eQuatic project costs	-	16.658 €	2.577 €
AR-NET project costs	-	-	-
e-VALUATE project costs	-	1.000 €	-
EQ-Arts project costs	-	10.000 €	-
Internal strategic projects costs	-	7.000 €	-
Total Services and Projects Expenses	60,50 €	130.698 €	13.130 €
Total expenses	47.245,50 €	187.198 €	83.494 €
Net result	74.487,50 €	9.266 €	-382 €



3. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

a. About ECA

The Annual Report 2020 is the seventh one of the association ECA. The European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) was incorporated as an association in The Hague, The Netherlands on 15 April 2014. The Annual Report 2020 covers the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020. Prior to the incorporation ECA was not a legal entity but a project consortium set up by accreditation agencies in 2003 in Córdoba. The existence of this project consortium ended with the incorporation of ECA as an association.

The membership of the association ECA consists of accreditation and QA agencies.

Eligible for Membership shall be an organisation:

- a. which has its registered office in a country which participates in the Bologna Process ("Bologna Countries");
- b. which has been established as a corporate body or is based on national and/or regional regulations and/or agreements;
- c. which has accreditation or accreditation-like practices as one of its principal functions;
- d. which contributes actively to the objectives of the Association; and
- e. which fulfils the ECA Code of Good Practice and/or the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

The member organisations participating in ECA meet at least once a year in a plenary General Meeting. The General Meeting will decide on the admission of a new Member. The Annual Meeting will take place virtually on 30th June 2021. Due to the COVID-19 the meeting will be held by virtual means.

The association has a Board appointed by the General Meeting and consisting of three to seven members, including a Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer. The members who are not Chair or Vice-Chair need to represent five different Bologna member countries. The Board had the following composition in 2020:

- Maciej Markowski (PKA, Poland), Chair, from 28 June 2018 and renewed on the 16th June 2020.
- Solange Pizarz (Hcerés), France), Board member from 28 June 2018; Interim Vice-Chair since 19 February; Vice-Chair since 6 June 2019, and renewed on 16th June 2020.



The European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education

- Loulou Von Ravensberg (UKÄ, Sweden), Board member from 28 June 2018 and Treasurer from 24 September 2018 until 16th June 2020.
- Eva Fernandez de Labastida (Unibasq, Spain), Board member from 28 June 2018 and renewed on the 16th June 2020.
- Ronny Heintze (AQAS, Germany), Board member from 28 June 2018, and renewed on the 16th June 2020.
- Klemen Subic (SQAA, Slovenia), Board member from 28 June 2018, and renewed on the 16th June 2020.
- Luut Kroes (NVAO, The Netherlands), Board Member from 16th June and Treasurer from 8 July.

The Board met nine times in 2020 by virtual means: 19 February, 24 April, 11 May, 18 May, 05 June, 08 July, 16 September, 09 October, 03 December.

The Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Association, under the supervision of the Board.

The Secretariat is led by the Coordinator who is appointed by the General Meeting and operates under the responsibility of the Board. In the General Meeting held in Cologne Sandra Marcos was appointed as Coordinator until 30 June 2021.

The objectives of the association ECA are:

- to achieve mutual recognition of accreditation and quality assurance decisions, to enhance the conditions for such mutual recognition, especially for joint programmes;
- to provide a platform for mutual learning and disseminating experiences with accreditation and accreditation-like practises;
- to provide transparent information on quality;
- to facilitate the internationalisation of institutions and students;
- and, furthermore, to perform any and all acts relating to the foregoing in the broadest sense.

The Association does not have the objective to make a profit. The Association cooperates with other relevant networks.

To achieve the objectives of ECA the Members agree to undertake activities in Working Groups. The following Groups were in place in 2020:

1. Mutual recognition and joint programmes
2. Innovation in QA and accreditation

In addition, the members have appointed two standing committees of ECA:



The European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education

- The Certification Group is responsible for the methodology and due process to award ECA's Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation.
- The Appeals Committee has the task of handling appeals regarding the ECA Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation, as specified in the Appeals Procedure CeQuInt.

On the other hand, the Board has installed the Communication Committee (CC) as an ad-hoc committee.

All working groups (WG) and the Certification Group (CG) met in the reporting period:

- 20 January in Israel. CG and CC.
- 24 September WG1 by virtual means
- 1 December WG2 by virtual means

The strategy of the association is defined in the [ECA strategic management plan](#). On 28 June 2018 the members adopted the "ECA Strategic Update 2018-2023".

The strategic vision of ECA is to act as an internationally recognised driver of innovation in quality assurance. With its expertise, networking and services ECA contributes to the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), promotes internationalisation of higher education and assures "state of the art" activities of its members.

ECA contributes to the EHEA implementation and to international QA developments through innovative project work. Projects in which ECA participates are discussed in the working groups and/or the Board. In 2020 ECA was involved as project partner or expert in:

- Facilitating implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (ImpEA; October 2017-August 2020)
- Automatic Recognition in the Networks in 2020 (AR-Net; 2018-2020)
- Evaluating e-learning for academic recognition (E-Valuate; March 2018-February 2020).
- Quality Assurance Student Experts (September 2019- 31 August 2021)
- Measuring and Comparing Achievements of Learning Outcomes in Higher Education in Europe - Extension. Phase 2 (CALOHEEx) (2019-2022)
- Systemic University Change Towards Internationalisation for Academia (SUCTIA). (2019-2022)
- 'Implementation of automatic recognition in the networks' (I-AR). (2020-2022)
- Stacking credits and the future of the qualification (STACQ). (2020-2022)
- Fostering Student Engagement through AI-driven Qualitative Quality Assurance Practices (2020-2022)



b. Summary of Significant Accounting Principles

Basis of Preparation

These financial statements, express the information for the year 2020.

These financial statements, which are expressed in Euros, are prepared in accordance with accounting principles mentioned below.

The net result is added to the reserves.

Assets

Assets are stated at nominal value net of a provision for doubtful debts.

Cash at bank

Cash at bank are at the disposal of the consortium and are interest bearing at prevailing market rates.

Current liabilities

Current liabilities are stated at nominal value.

Income and expenses recognition

Income and expenses are accounted for in the period to which they relate.



4. Notes to the balance sheet at 31 December 2020

a. Current Assets

The current assets comprise other current assets and cash at bank. These items are amounts still to be received.

b. Equity (reserves)

Statement of movements

	<u>31 December 2020</u>	<u>31 December 2019</u>
	€	€
As at January 1	168.080€	168.462 €
Net result reporting year	74.487,50€	-382 €
	-	
As at December 31	<u>242.567,50 €</u>	<u>168.080 €</u>

The net result was much higher than in 2019. Most of the variation has been due to the global pandemic. The net amount that has been increased in 2020 will be used in 2021 mostly to pay for work carried out about EU projects in which ECA is partner between 2020 and 2021.

c. Current Liabilities

There is an invoice for the hosting of the Impea project which was paid in January 2021 and two invoices of memberships for the period 2021.



5. Notes to the statement of income and expenditure 2020

a. Income

	Actual 2020	Revised budget 2020	Actual 2019
	€	€	€
Fixed Income			
Contribution members	68.000 €	68.000 €	68.000 €
Contribution observers	4.000 €	4.000 €	4.000 €
Total income	72.000 €	72.000 €	72.000 €
Services & Project Income			
CeQuInt fees	10.000 €	4.400 €	4.400 €
Training fees	-	4.500 €	5.600 €
QA Students	-	14.206 €	-
SUCTIA	14.709 €	15.909 €	-
CALOHEE project income	-	-	-
ImpEA project income	-	57.425 €	-
eQuatic project income	16.658 €	16.658 €	-
AR-NET project income	366 €	366 €	1.112 €
e-VALUATE project income	-	1.000 €	-
EQ-Arts project income	8.000 €	10.000 €	-
Total services and projects Income	48.133 €	124.464 €	11.112 €
Total Revenues	121.733 €	196.464 €	83.112 €

In 2020 a membership contribution of 4.000 € was invoiced to:

1. Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), Croatia
2. Commission des Titres d'Ingénieurs (CTI), France
3. Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge im Bereich Gesundheit und Soziales (AHPGS), Germany
4. Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen (AQAS), Germany
5. Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur (ZEvA), Germany
6. Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), the Netherlands and Flanders



7. Bureau of the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA), Poland
8. Agenda Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (ANECA), Spain
9. Aragon Agency for Quality Assurance and Strategic Foresight in Higher Education (ACPUA), Spain
10. Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency (SQAA), Slovenia
11. The Danish Accreditation Institution (AI), Denmark
12. Agency for Quality Assurance in the Galician University (ACSUG), Spain
13. Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKA), Sweden
14. Higher Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcerés), France
15. Agency for the Quality of the Basque University System (Unibasq), Spain
16. Agencia para la Calidad del Systema Universitario de Castilla y León (ACSUCYL), Spain
17. Academie Information Centre / Latvian Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA), Latvia.

An observer fee of 2.000 € was invoiced to:

1. Council for Higher Education (CHE), Israel
2. International Centre of Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality Education (THE-ICE), Australia.

In December 2020 ECA has 17 members and 2 observers. Until 31 December 2020, 15 members paid the fee and 2 observers. There is still one agency that have not yet paid the fee and that have already been claimed three times. On the other hand, there is one Agency that was admitted as member in the General Meeting but no answer from their side.

Services and projects income

- One application for a CeQuInt institutional assessment (2.000 euro) and ten applications for CeQuInt programme assessment (800 euro each).
- Fees of 4.500 euro in total were foreseen for organising one training (internationalisation certificate or assessing joint programmes). The Board agreed a trainings fee for participants of 450 euro with a reduced fee of 350 euro for ECA full members and observers. Finally, no trainings were carried out due to the pandemic but organized two webinars, the dissemination of the outcomes of the Impea project and participate in one online event about CeQuInt:
 - 26 May: Responses to Covid-19 pandemic situation from ECA agencies.
 - 9Nov: Internationalization and quality: a comprehensive approach through CeQuInt.
 - 30 nov: Impact on the move to the on-line mode of delivery on LO.
 - 17 December: Impea project final event.
- Regarding EU projects in which ECA is partner there were received as expected from SUCTIA (a regulation on the income was done as the calculation was wrong from the partner), Equatic and AR-Net. The other projects will pay in 2021 as it was informed to ECA.
- As regards EQ-Arts evaluation, the fee was reduced to 8.000 euro since the evaluation was carried out virtually. The evaluation took place virtually on the 27th November.



b. Expenses

	Actual 2020	Revised budget 2020	Actual 2019
	€	€	€
Cost of coordination	37.000 €	37.000€	37.000 €
			-
Total	37.000 €	37.000 €	37.000 €

The agreement between ECA and the member agency hosting the Secretariat stipulates that the agency and an external company will provide and coordinate the secretariat activities of ECA, including the financial administration. The tasks of the Coordinator and Secretariat are listed in the Statutes (articles 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17). The contribution of ECA for meeting the costs of hosting the Secretariat amounts to 37,000 €.

	Actual 2020	Revised budget 2020	Actual 2019
	€	€	€
Services & Project Expenses			
CeQuint costs	-	4.000 €	5.571 €
Training costs	-	4.500 €	4.831 €
QA Students	-	14.206 €	
SUCTIA	-	15.909 €	
CALOHEE project costs	-	-	-
ImpEA project costs	60,50 €	57.425 €	-
eQuatic project costs	-	16.658 €	2.577 €
AR-NET project costs	-	-	-
e-VALUATE project costs	-	1.000 €	-
EQ-Arts project costs	-	10.000 €	-
Internal strategic projects costs	-	7.000 €	-
Total Services Expenses	60,50 €	130.698 €	13.130 €

Services and Projects expenses

The assumption is that overall the costs for participating in projects will be matched by the received income from projects in 2021.



The aim of the budget item Internal strategic projects costs is to facilitate internal projects that enable members to work on a project that is in line with the strategic priorities of ECA. Each working group can make a proposal to the Board for funding of an internal project that is aligned to the strategic priorities. In 2020, this amount was reduced to 7.000 € but the initiative was not in place yet.

Regarding EQ-arts a total amount of 6.000 € will be paid in 2021 to experts involved in the evaluation.

	Actual 2020	Revised budget 2020	Actual 2019
	€	€	€
Information and communication	7.056 €	8.000 €	3.369 €
Total	<u>7.056 €</u>	<u>8.000 €</u>	<u>3.369 €</u>

The information and communication costs until 31 December 2020 relate for the most part to the hosting, maintenance, registration of the website domains, the first payment for the new design of ECA website. It is also included the promotional material of ECA and the fee for Zoom (virtual meeting platform)

	Actual 2020	Revised budget 2020	Actual 2019
	€	€	€
Contributions to ECA events			
ECA Events	0 €	5.500 €	12.721 €
Total	<u>0 €</u>	<u>5.500 €</u>	<u>12.721 €</u>

Due to the pandemic no ECA physical events were organized.

	Actual 2020	Revised budget 2020	Actual 2019
	€	€	€
Travel expenses			
Travel Expenses	0 €	3.000 €	6.626 €
Total	<u>0 €</u>	<u>3.000 €</u>	<u>6.626 €</u>

Due to the pandemic no travel expenses were incurred.



	Actual 2020	Revised budget 2020	Actual 2019
	€	€	€
Other expenses			
Affiliated memberships	2.317 €	2.317 €	2.317 €
Bank Charges	448,99 €	500 €	142 €
Consultancy	-	-	8.060 €
Other general expenses	363,10 €	983 €	100 €
Total	3.129 €	3.800 €	10.618 €

Other expenses until 31 December 2020 include ENQA affiliate membership fee, Board insurance, and bank charges.



6. Report of the Financial Committee.

Each year, the General Meeting will appoint a Financial Committee consisting of at least two members, who may not be Members of the Board. The Financial Committee will audit the Annual Report and will report to the General Meeting on its findings.

We have audited the financial statements 2020 of the association European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA), which comprise the balance sheet as at 31 December 2020, the statement of income and expenditure 2020, and the notes, comprising a summary of the accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Responsibility of the Board

The Board is required to provide the Financial Committee with all the information requested by it for the benefit of its audit, to show it the cash and assets if it so wishes, and to make the books, records and other data carriers of the Association available to it for its inspection.

Responsibility of the Financial Committee

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. This requires that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement. Our audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. Our audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the accounting policies selected and disclosed by the entity, as set out in the notes to the financial statements.

To begin the FC wishes to make some general observations regarding the financial performance of ECA in 2020:

- Total assets increased by nearly 43% (31 December 2019 to 31 December 2020)
- Whilst fixed revenues were unchanged, total revenues rose by 46.5% (31 December 2019 to 31 December 2020)
- Fixed expenses decreased by nearly 33% (31 December 2019 to 31 December 2020)



- Equity (reserves) increased by 74 487,5 Euro (44%) (31 December 2019 to 31 December 2020)
- Moreover, notwithstanding the ECAs status as a not for profit organisation, the FC wishes to note that the ECA made a net profit of €74 487,50 in 2020, compared with a loss of €382 in 2019, which was the first year in its history that the organisation had made a financial loss.

The FC recognises that as a result of the global pandemic, the ECA, in common with the majority of IQAs worldwide, faced an unprecedented and highly volatile operating environment in 2020. Furthermore, we appreciate that this environment had different but equally dramatic impacts on income and expenditure.

Whilst fixed income (comprised entirely of membership subscriptions) remained constant, variable income was 46% above 2019, yet was 38% below the revised budget. Conversely, the combined expenses were 43% below 2019, and nearly 75% below the revised budget. As a consequence, equity of the ECA increased dramatically to nearly 0.25 million euro. Nevertheless, the FC appreciates that the majority of this surplus will be utilised in 2021 to pay for work carried out about EU projects in which ECA is partner between 2020 and 2021.

Despite this, the FC wishes to re-emphasise the concern raised in the 2018 report regarding the continuous surpluses: *“the FC is worried about the persistence of high financial surpluses in the subsequent years, as well as its significant increase in 2018”*. Given this we consider it is important to emphasise our opinion that the ECA should focus more on development of projects, and other events (training seminars, webinars and other dissemination activities, etc), in order to add value to its agency members.

Given the above, the FC recommends the following actions to the ECA Board;

1. Insist on the development of projects and other events (training seminars, dissemination activities, webinars etc), in order to add value to the ECA members.
2. As the world emerges from the global pandemic, we recommend the ECA continues to explore and instigate measures to control travel expenses, not only for the association itself, but also for its agency members, for example by reducing face to face meetings and making use of the virtual and on-line activities and the experience gained in this area.
3. Instigate measures to ensure budget for projects and other events. The Board and the Secretariat should have updated information of these activities and inform all the ECA members of the benefits and usefulness of the activities.
4. Endeavour, despite and indeed because of the unpredictable environment, to set more accurate budgets and revised budgets in 2021.



The European Consortium for
Accreditation in Higher Education

Approved in the ECA GA virtual meeting on the 16 June.

Signatures of the Board members.

Solange Pisarz

Chair

Eva Fernández de Labastida

Vice-chair

Luit Kroes

Treasurer

Ronny Heintze

Board member

Klemen Subic

Board member

Signatures of the Financial Committee

Craig Thompson

Luis Velón