

MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION

between



the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)

and



the European Consortium for Accreditation in
higher education (ECA)

10 June 2013

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Introduction to the Memorandum of Cooperation

APQN is a non-profit organization established in 2003 by the quality assurance agencies, as well as other bodies with an interest in quality assurance, with the mission to enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them.

Its purpose is (among others):

- to promote good practice in the maintenance and improvement of quality in higher education in the Asia-Pacific region
- to facilitate links between quality assurance agencies and acceptance of each other's decisions and judgments
- to permit better-informed international recognition of qualifications throughout the region
- to enhance the mobility of students between institutions both within and across national borders
- to assist members of APQN to determine standards of institutions operating across national borders

ECA is a non-profit consortium of nationally recognised European accreditation/QA agencies established in 2003 that strives for continuous progress in external quality assurance, promoting mutual recognition, internationalisation, mobility and transparency to the benefit of students, HE institutions and society.

Its purpose is (among others):

- to promote mutual recognition initiatives in QA with the goal to facilitate cross-border recognition of qualifications
- to support internationalisation of HE institutions and students
- to provide transparent information on quality
- to promote an intensive mutual learning experience among its members in order to support them in the establishment and maintenance of modern external QA systems.

Recognising the similarity of the mission statements and the objectives of APQN and ECA and their mutual interest in the quality of higher education and higher education institutions, it is in the interests of both organisations to formalise a memorandum of co-operation between the two organisations to establish the objectives, parameters and resources of joint activities and mutual support.

The memorandum responds to the demands of increasing internationalisation in quality assurance and in higher education, and reflects international policy statements of educational leaders in both regions of the world.

The memorandum of cooperation between APQN and ECA covers the following areas:

1. The nature of the relationship between APQN and ECA

According to its stated purposes APQN promotes the interests of the region vis-à-vis other networks and international organizations.

According to its strategic plan, ECA wants to contribute to international QA developments through innovative project work.

By cooperating, APQN and ECA aim to enhance the understanding of each other's priorities, and to promote the strategic and content-related collaboration between both organisations.

2. Overall objectives of this Memorandum

This Memorandum is intended to reinforce and provide a platform for the desired cooperation between APQN and ECA. It aims at strengthening the work of APQN and its member agencies, and the work of ECA and its member agencies, as well as their interrelations, with the overall goal of enhanced global understanding and practice in the field of quality assurance in higher education. This MoC is intended to facilitate cooperation between APQN and ECA and to set the basis for common projects in areas of mutual interest and benefit. Such key areas are:

- Mutual learning from each other and regular sharing of ideas and experiences
- Mutual recognition of quality assurance decisions
- Facilitation of cross-border higher education and QA
- Promotion of internationalisation of HEIs and of mobility of students
- Establishing transparency tools in the area of HE and QA
- Striving towards excellence and professionalism in our own work
- Developing modern accreditation/EQA systems.
- Exchange of ideas, resources and experts in QA

3. Exchange of information

The two organisations will exchange non-confidential policy documents and relevant non-confidential operational information to enable the two organisations to support and learn from each other.

4. Targets

If possible, the following activities will be carried out during the next three years:

- Exchange of staff and the organisation of joint workshops and regular meetings; organisation of a joint conference if financial means can be generated for this purpose
- In depth comparisons of each other's accreditation procedures and decision making processes; similarity checks and mutual observations
- Establishment of commonly agreed tools and guidelines in the domain of accreditation and external QA
- The exploration of methodologies to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications between the two regions (especially in the area of joint programmes); pilot projects in this area
- Development of distinctive quality features and certificates handed out for good quality performances of HE in designated areas
- Development of website driven QA transparency tools in both regions. This may include collaboration of Qrossroads of ECA and proposed Quality Information Portal of APQN. Development of principles for cross border QA (for joint programs or branch campuses in Asia and Europe)
- Development of a joint database for international reviewers (share QA experts and hold a joint training program for international reviewers) and training of reviewers

5. Resources

MoC- APQN and ECA

The two organisations will cover their own costs for the cooperation, unless there is project funding available for some fields of collaboration. Active and coordinated fundraising efforts are foreseen in order to reach the above stated goals and carry out the intended activities (funding through e.g. EU, UNESCO/World Bank, INQAAHE, APEC, ASEAN, AMAP, etc.).

6. Timeline

The timing of the activities will be as agreed between the two organisations. This agreement comes into effect on the date of signing, is valid for a period of three years, and may be renewed by mutual agreement.

7. Agency Officers responsible for managing the Agreement

The President of APQN and the Chairman of ECA will have responsibility for managing the Memorandum of Cooperation. Either party may delegate the responsibility from time to time in relation to particular areas of cooperation. The President of APQN may appoint a member of the APQN Board to exercise the overall responsibility for this Memorandum on behalf of the network. The Chairman of ECA may appoint a member of the ECA Management Group to exercise the overall responsibility for this Memorandum on behalf of the consortium.

8. Signatures

There are two identical copies of this Memorandum, one for each signatory.

Dr Rolf Heusser
Chairman of ECA
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Signature:



Dr Jagannath Patil
President of APQN
jp.naacindia@gmail.com
Signature:

