

2021 European Quality Assurance Forum

Building trust and enhancement: from information to evidence

Online event
18-19 November 2021

Call for contributions

Deadline: 26 July 2021

INTRODUCTION

EUA, ENQA, ESU, and EURASHE will organise the 2021 European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) on 18 and 19 November 2021. The 2021 EQAF, entitled “Building trust and enhancement: from information to evidence”, will take place online and will include sessions about European policies and trends, research, and practices on current developments in quality assurance.

FORUM OBJECTIVES

To promote trust and serve as a basis for informed decision-making and quality enhancement, quality assurance needs to be evidence-based. The amount of data on higher education and the performance of higher education institutions has increased in recent years and its nature is changing partly due to digitalisation. This makes it increasingly important to determine which information is meaningful and relevant for stakeholders in higher education, hence worth serving as evidence for robust quality assurance processes. The event will address questions such as how to ensure an appropriate balance between qualitative and quantitative data and diversity of sources of information. It will also focus on how to analyse and interpret the data, as well as how to ensure that it is used to enhance quality and promote trust. Notably, the 2021 EQAF will offer an occasion to analyse how to make the best out of the opportunities offered by digitalisation while avoiding pitfalls.

The Forum will explore the evidence used in external and internal quality assurance and how to improve its use and impact.

PARTICIPANTS

EQAF provides a platform for discussion, professional development and exchange of experiences among the main stakeholders in quality assurance. Specifically, the Forum is of interest to rectors and vice-rectors responsible for quality assurance, quality assurance officers in higher education institutions, students, quality assurance agency staff and researchers working on higher education or quality assurance.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

We invite contributions from quality assurance practitioners at higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies, students, and researchers in the field. EQAF is an excellent opportunity to present current practices or research, test new ideas and draw feedback from colleagues and stakeholders about topics that are of interest to you. All contributions are expected to stimulate a discussion among participants, thus enhancing peer learning. Contributors should also bear in mind the diversity of participants at EQAF and should therefore aim to focus on the transferability of results or practices to different contexts in order to increase the relevance for the audience.

The deadline to submit all contributions is **26 July 2021**. **Proposals received after this date will not be considered.**

Two types of contributions will be considered: paper and discussion starter proposals.

We will especially welcome proposals that reflect on the forum objectives. We also welcome proposals that present different perspectives (e.g. a case study developed jointly by a university and a quality assurance agency) and strongly encourage cooperation with students when preparing proposals.

Selected contributions will be presented and discussed during the online sessions.

EQAF participants will be free to select which session to attend based on the abstracts. Therefore, we encourage all contributors to pay special attention to their abstracts, which must be concise, correspond to the content of their contribution and appeal to the participants. The organisers reserve the right to amend abstracts in order to ensure that they accurately reflect the content of the session.

Giving **explicit titles of a reasonable length** to papers and discussion starters may also contribute to capturing the attention of a wider audience.

Considering the format of the event, a limited number of contributions will be accepted.

SESSION TYPES

1. Paper sessions

This type of contribution will focus on one of the following:

- a) Practice – a case study of quality assurance practices at institutional, national, or European level, analysing the success factors, challenges encountered, possible failures, and transferability to other contexts.
- b) Policy – a case study of a particular policy approach, taking into account the implications for practice or transferability to other contexts
- c) Research – an analysis of concepts or data related to quality assurance with a discussion of the implications for policy or practice

The paper is expected to share and discuss experiences in a self-reflective and critical way, or to test ideas for new quality assurance initiatives and receive feedback from participants.

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
- Include the authors' short biographies (up to 150 words)
- Be a fully written paper of maximum 3000 words (excluding references)
- Be accompanied by an abstract of maximum 150 words

Evaluation criteria

The papers will be assessed by members of the EQAF Programme Committee based on the following criteria:

- The paper is relevant both in terms of relating to the general objectives of the Forum and in reflecting the 2021 topic in the broader sense
- 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 successes and obstacles in implementation
- The paper considers transferability beyond the original context
- No proposal for commercial purposes will be accepted

2. Discussion starters

These short contributions will serve as appetisers for discussions and provide an opportunity to present a specific topic, question, testimonial, issue, or an innovative idea, involving the presenter's institution/organisation. The aim will be to provide an opportunity for peer-learning and a question & answer session.

Formal requirements

A discussion starter proposal should:

- Identify the presenter
- Include the presenter's short biography (up to 150 words)
- Provide an abstract of maximum 250 words explaining the case to be used as a discussion starter
- Provide two or three questions for a discussion with the participants
- Describe shortly how the contribution will be presented

Evaluation criteria

The discussion starter proposals will be assessed by members of the EQAF Programme Committee based on the following criteria:

- The proposal is relevant to the theme of the Forum
- The proposal provides an engaging insight or perspective that will be of interest to the participants and contribute to keeping the discussion going
- No proposal for commercial purposes will be accepted

PROCEDURE

All proposals should be submitted using the forms attached to this call, in Word format, by **26 July 2021** to egaf@eua.eu. Please do not send a hard copy or a PDF file.

All contributions will be reviewed separately by two members of the EQAF Programme Committee. Attention is paid to avoid potential conflict of interest when allocating contributions for review. Please see Question 10 in the Frequently Asked Questions for further details of the review and selection process. 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 presenting. Please note that due to limited resources no comments can be provided to unsuccessful proposals.

Unless the author indicates otherwise, the full text of all selected papers will be posted on the EQAF website after the event and the page will be assigned an ISSN number.

IMPORTANT: If you have submitted a proposal, please do not register for the Forum online until the results of the selection process have been announced. Paper and discussion starter presenters will benefit from one reduced fee per contribution, which will be applied through a special registration process.

All correspondence with authors will be conducted by e-mail.

In order to assist contributors, frequently asked questions are included as an annex to this call for contributions.

CALENDAR

26 July 2021: Full proposals must be submitted in Word format using the forms attached to this call to egaf@eua.eu. Proposals received after this date will not be considered. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.

Early September 2021: Notification of acceptance or rejection will be sent by e-mail to all authors. Accepted proposals may be accompanied by comments.

October 2021: 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.

18-19 November 2021: the 2021 European Quality Assurance Forum takes place online.

EQAF PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

ENQA:	Ronny Heintze and Rikke Warming
ESU:	Pegi Pavletić and Liv Teresa Muth
EUA:	Tia Loukkola (chair) and Geneviève Le Fort
EURASHE:	Gea van Zutven and Joaquim Mourato
Academic advisor:	Jens Jungblut

Annex 1: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

This informal annex aims to provide indicative answers to frequently asked questions related to the EQAF call for contributions. For any further questions, please contact eqaf@eua.eu.

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 a paper proposal are listed under the section “Paper sessions” of the call for contributions. If you wish to submit a paper proposal, it must be a fully written paper of maximum 3000 words (references excluded), accompanied by an abstract of up to 150 words.

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

Answer: Proposals submitted jointly by two or several authors are very 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 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.

3. 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. However, one reduced fee will be granted to each selected contribution at EQAF. This will be applied through a special registration process after the selection of contributions is finalised.

4. 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 the Call for contributions for the list of evaluation criteria for each category of a proposal). Please also consider the answer to question 3 related to funding for attending EQAF.

5. 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 and reduced registration fees are available to students.

6. 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 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. Therefore, EQAF might not be the right platform if you intend to discuss a generic quality assurance management tool.

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

Answer: The full text of all papers will be published on the EQAF website, unless the authors request otherwise. The webpage on which they are published will be assigned an ISSN number.

8. 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 what are the next steps.

9. Is a paper that has been already published elsewhere eligible under this call for contributions?

Answer: Yes. Please however indicate on your submission form where and when it was published. Your proposal should still fulfil the evaluation criteria as stated in the call for contributions, and be of relevance for the EQAF participants.

10. What is the evaluation procedure?

Answer: The evaluation procedure works as follows: each proposal is reviewed separately by two different members of the EQAF Programme Committee from different backgrounds, taking into account potential conflicts of interest and imperatives of impartiality. In practice this means that submissions from QA agencies are not reviewed by the ENQA representatives on the Programme Committee, contributions from universities are not reviewed by the EUA representatives on the Programme Committee, students' contributions are not reviewed by ESU representatives, and so forth. Reviewers are also asked to declare any conflict of interest when they receive their contributions to be reviewed and an alternative reviewer will be found if necessary. Each reviewer will give a score according to a standard scale for grading, and provide comments as necessary. The EQAF Programme Committee then meets to discuss and decide on the final selection based on scores given to contributions, the maximum number of proposals to be selected for each type of contribution, and the need to ensure a balanced programme.

11. 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, any proposal that presents serious distortions to the basic principles for original contributions, i.e. papers with examples of plagiarism or copyright issues will not be accepted.

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

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