

STRATEGY 2019 – 2024

Icelandic universities strive to deliver education and research of the highest quality. The Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education (QB) supports their aspirations through the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF).

The QEF is designed to be in line with the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG 2015). It specifies the respective roles and responsibilities of the universities and of the QB in safeguarding standards and improving quality levels. Specifically, the universities have ownership of the Subject-Level Reviews (SLR) process while QB is responsible for the Institution-Wide Reviews (IWR).

The second review cycle of QEF (QEF2) was launched in 2018 and includes the establishment of the Research Evaluation Advisory Committee (REAC) as a subcommittee of the Board. REAC is charged with supporting the evaluation of research management in the universities and proposing ways that research outputs could be evaluated in the future, in line with international best practices.

This strategy has been developed in consultation with the Quality Council, the Rectors’ Conference, the National Union for Icelandic Students, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. It is accompanied by a rolling action plan. The strategy and associated action plan will be reviewed periodically to adjust to new circumstances.

Mission

Safeguarding the standards and enhancing the quality of Icelandic higher education and research.

The Six Principles of the Quality Enhancement Framework

- 1** Acknowledging the primary role of autonomous higher education institutions in managing and enhancing the quality of their core activities.
- 2** Committing to the continuous enhancement of the learning experience for all students in an inclusive way.
- 3** Involving students as partners in the learning process and as active participants in the quality assurance and enhancement of their learning.
- 4** Anchoring QEF in the Icelandic context while maintaining an international perspective.
- 5** Promoting a partnership with all Icelandic stakeholders while retaining the independence of the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education.
- 6** Embracing transparency as an explicit value of an open consultative processes.

Strategic Goals

Ensure that the Quality Enhancement Framework secures the standards and improves the quality of Icelandic higher education, by

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Providing evidence of positive change in Icelandic higher education.
Developing and embedding REAC and providing evidence of its effectiveness.
Ensuring that QEF3 is deployed in a timely and appropriate manner.

Promote the independence, competence and professionalism of QB, by

2

Ensuring the independence of QB in line with the “*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*” (2015, ESG 3.3), while fostering a culture of collegiality and openness.
Benchmarking QB processes against those of peer QA agencies through ENQA activities.
Monitoring international trends in higher education and contextualizing these for Iceland.
Developing internal quality mechanisms and implementing recommendations arising from the regular surveys conducted in relation to the QB activities and the ENQA review.

Enhance QB’s national and international reputation, by

3

Consulting regularly with national stakeholders to ensure their support and collect their feedback on current activities and input in the development of new activities and services.
Engaging regularly with international organisations to promote the work of the QB.
Becoming a full ENQA member, participating in the activities of the Association, and integrating QB into the European Quality Assurance Register.
Becoming an organisation that provides authoritative advice and expertise in the field of quality assurance nationally and internationally.

ROLLING ACTION PLAN: 2019 – 2025

Goals	KPI	Process	Timeframe
1. Ensure that the Quality Enhancement Framework secures the standards and improves the quality of Icelandic higher education, by			
Providing evidence of positive change in Icelandic higher education.	Identifications of strengths/weaknesses Evidence of improvement Satisfaction rate	Analysis of QEF1 and QEF2 reports. A comparative analysis of the results of QEF1 and QEF2. Evaluation questionnaires of universities, students, experts and stakeholders.	2019/2023 2024 Ongoing
Developing and embedding REAC and providing evidence of its effectiveness.	Securing agreement about the role of REAC in Icelandic higher education.	Continual monitoring by the Quality Board Review/Analysis of REAC in QEF2 based on evaluation questionnaires of universities, students, experts and stakeholders.	Ongoing End of QEF2, by 2023
Ensuring that QEF3 is deployed in a timely and appropriate manner.	Develop QEF3 with effective consultation of partners and stakeholders	Development based on (1) evaluation questionnaires of universities, students, experts and stakeholders; (2) focus group discussions and (3) international trends.	End of “Year of reflection” in QEF2, by 2024
2. Promote the independence, competence and professionalism of QB, by			
Ensuring the independence of QB in line with ESG 3.3, while fostering a culture of collegiality and openness.	Demonstrated independence in HR and budget allocations	New Regulation Yearly meetings with QC, LÍS, Rectors’ conference and individual universities, and MESC and targeted communication.	January 2019 Ongoing

Goals	KPI	Process	Timeframe
Benchmarking QB processes against those of peer QA agencies through ENQA activities.	Number of events attended.	Involvement of Board Manager in as many ENQA activities as time and resources permit. Keeping track of QA developments internationally and sharing key information with QC and REAC.	Ongoing Ongoing
Monitoring international trends in higher education and contextualizing these for Iceland.	Topicality of annual conferences. Number of subscribers to QB Newsletter.	Monitoring the literature and attending conferences as time and resources permit. Sharing pertinent information with QC and REAC and disseminating information to stakeholders via Board newsletter (periodicity: January, April, late August and November). Develop a QB Newsletter and a mailing list from Iceland (deans, research directors, quality and equality officers, academic affairs, CTLs, etc.)	Ongoing First issue in Autumn 2019
Developing internal quality mechanisms and implementing recommendations arising from the regular surveys conducted in relation to the QB activities and the ENQA review.	A QB manual of internal quality assurance	Collecting material and developing process maps, checklists and fact sheets on various aspects of QB operation to ensure consistent approach and institutional memory.	Ongoing

Goals	KPI	Process	Timeframe
3. Enhance QB's national and international reputation, by			
Consulting regularly with national stakeholders to ensure their support and collect their feedback on current activities and input in the development of new activities and services.		Organising a focus group every year while varying the composition of the external stakeholders in order to reach the maximum number possible. Targeted communication to external stakeholder groups.	Yearly meetings As required
Engaging regularly with international organisations to promote the work of the QB.	Number of events attended.	Involvement of Board Manager in as many activities as time and resources permit, while prioritising Nordic cooperation. QB Newsletter to be sent to Scandinavian and West Nordic colleagues	Ongoing 1 st issue in August 2019
Becoming a full ENQA member, participating in the activities of the Association, and integrating QB into the European Quality Assurance Register.	ENQA membership EQAR listing	Bringing QB operation in full compliance with ESG.	ENQA membership by 2020 EQAR listing by 2021
Becoming an organisation that provides authoritative advice and expertise in the field of quality assurance nationally and internationally.	Number of contacts per year	Making QB's expertise available to other organisations by hosting visits and visiting other countries.	Ongoing as time and resources permit