

## Appendix 7: The Education Quality Board: Role and Composition

### 1. Context

In the light of Ghent University's Quality Conduct 1.0 (ERGO, see Appendix 1), the Board of Governors established the Education Quality Board (EQB) on 12 June 2015. Since then, this specialist executive body is responsible for monitoring (the efficiency of) quality assurance processes. The EQB systematically collects and analyses quality assurance data (including peer learning visits and the Annual Quality Meeting). It translates that information into an assessment of, and if applicable, specific remedial actions for every Ghent University study programme. This assessment may involve making specific study programmes “a ward of the EQB” or even discontinuing them altogether. In other words, the EQB is the governing body responsible for closing the quality cycle at top level. These powers were laid down by the Board of Governors on 3 July 2015 in the Education Policy Delegation Decree.

The EQB's composition, as laid down by the regulations regarding the functional composition of (advisory) councils and committees (**Board of Governors 3 July 2015, amended by the Board of Governors on 4 December 2015**) is as follows:

- Chair: Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- Voting members in addition to the chair:
  - the Director of Education
  - four senior members of the professorial staff,
  - two student representatives
  - a representative of the assistant academic staff,
  - two external experts from the field (profit and non-profit)

Regularly appointed members (i.e. other than the (Deputy) Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Education) hold four-year mandates, except for the students and the assistant academic staff, who each hold one-year mandates. The Quality Assurance Office provides secretariat services for the Education Quality Board.

After extensive consultation with all parties involved (including Directors of Studies, Programme Committee chairs, quality assurance staff, the Education Council, and the Education Quality Board), and intensive discussion sessions in various task forces, it was decided to optimize the Quality Conduct 1.0 and to eventually install an adapted quality system Quality Conduct 2.0 (see also Appendix 3: Quality Conduct 1.0 Under Review). In the Quality Conduct 2.0, the peer learning visits will be discontinued and replaced by an internal 'critical self-reflection' carried out by study programmes and faculties based on their Education Monitor (see Appendix 6), and including a thorough 'external perspective' on programme content (see Appendix 4). These evolutions will also have an impact on the role and composition of the EQB.

## 2. The EQB: a Renewed Role

The new quality assurance system is based on 'trust' in study programmes' and faculties' reflective capacity. In the new Quality Conduct, the Education Quality Board (EQB) will **continue to monitor and guarantee the quality culture in every study programme**.

The EQB, in other words, needs to check whether the study programmes are able to pursue an efficient education policy and set up concomitant quality assurance processes. In this light, the EQB will perform a one-time screening of all study programmes in the years 2021-2023 (i.e. the 'quality reflection phase'). The screening is based on trust: the EQB does not aim at assessing programme-specific contents – after all, that aspect is covered by the external perspective - but rather at gaining clear insight into the study programmes' quality culture and actual improvement capacity. In the Quality Conduct 1.0, the peer learning visits were an intermediate step towards assessing study programme quality. In the Quality Conduct 2.0, the EQB takes over the task of external assessment panels and will pronounce quality assurance resolutions for every Ghent University study programme (positive, positive with crucial points of concern, negative). This new role requires a thorough knowledge of education policy and education quality processes.

The implementation of the Quality Conduct 2.0, the discontinuation of peer learning visits and the renewed role for the EQB all lead to an adjustment of the powers delegated to the Chair of the Education Quality Board:

1. monitoring study programmes' quality culture
2. pronouncing quality assurance resolutions about study programmes

## 3. The EQB: a New Composition

With the new role for the EQB as detailed above naturally follows a new composition. The EQB consists of members with complementary expertise, as did the external assessment panels of old. The Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organization (in Dutch: NVAO) sets the following conditions for external assessment panels:

*"Each panel features a combination of specific forms of expertise, which are required to conduct an authoritative assessment: **specialist expertise, international expertise, practical expertise, educational expertise, quality assessment or audit expertise and student-related expertise**. The panel members do not need to be experts in a single field, each panel member may contribute multiple forms of expertise. The panel members are expected to be capable of conducting a substantive and in-depth interview with the programme or institution within the context of the assessment. Furthermore, each panel member must be independent. This means that they must not have any interest, in either a positive or a negative sense, in the result of the assessment"*<sup>1</sup>

To achieve this, **a doubling of the external delegation is proposed (i.e. from two to four)**.

As far as the in-house experts are concerned, the aim is to achieve a balanced constellation of **experts** who can contribute ideas and take quality assurance decisions **independently** of their statute. The members do not act as **representatives of their section or faculty**, but become part of the university's monitoring and guiding body. A diversity of statutes offers added value in terms of complementary expertise. For that purpose, **a doubling of assistant academic staff representatives** (i.e. from 1 to 2), **and inviting 2 representatives of the technical and administrative staff**. This way, the EQB wants to validate the expertise of this section with regard to education quality assurance, while increasing its screening capacity at the same time.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nvao.net/en/assessment-panels-in-flanders>, consulted on 27 November 2019.

### Proposed composition EQB:

- Chair: Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- Voting members in addition to the chair:
  - Director of Education
  - four professorial staff members,
  - two students
  - **two** assistant academic staff members,
  - **two** technical and administrative staff members
  - **four** external experts from the field (profit and non-profit)

The **Quality Assurance Office provides secretariat services for the Education Quality Board.**

Nominal appointment of EQB members is determined by the Executive Board on the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

Based on the criteria above, and considering a complementary composition, EQB members will be appointed by September 2020 at the latest. Regularly appointed members (i.e. except the (Deputy) Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Education) hold four-year mandates (i.e. the period of the Quality Conduct 2.0), except for the students and the assistant academic staff, who each hold one-year mandates.

Interested candidates can submit their candidacy to the section representatives, who in turn submit a list of suitable candidates to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, taking into account the required expertise. It is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor who submits a final list of candidates to the Executive Board.

The composition of the EQB is reviewed every four years. Regularly appointed members may serve for a maximum of two four-year terms. Looking ahead at the Quality Conduct 3.0, the composition and role of the EQB will be assessed in the course of 2023.