



**Turkish Higher Education  
Quality Council**

# QUALITY AMBASSADOR Handbook

[for Higher Education Students]  
Version 2.0



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“Students Participate in Processes; the Quality Assurance System in Higher Education Strengthens”





### **The Turkish Higher Education Quality Council Students Commission**



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May 2023, ANKARA

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We thank all former members for their contributions to the work of the Commission.

**Cite:** Higher Education Quality Council [THEQC] [May, 2023]. Quality Ambassador Handbook [Version 2.0]. Higher Education Quality Council.

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## A. GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1. What Is Quality Assurance in Higher Education?

Quality assurance in higher education refers to a holistic approach that covers all processes in a higher education institution to serve students and all other stakeholders at the expected quality standards.

### 2. What Is Quality Assurance System in Higher Education?

It refers to the principles regarding internal and external quality assurance and accreditation processes of learning-teaching activities, research activities and administrative services of higher education institutions, and authorization processes of independent external evaluation agencies.

### 3. When Did Quality Work Start in the Turkish Higher Education System?

The first systematic work in the field of quality assurance in the Turkish higher education system started with Türkiye's inclusion in the Bologna Process in 2001.

### 4. What Is the Bologna Process?

- It is a reform process that aims to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It aims to make higher education systems in Europe more coherent.
- The Bologna Process officially started with the Bologna Declaration signed by the Ministers responsible for higher education from 29 European countries in Bologna, Italy in 1999.

### 5. What Are the Goals of the Bologna Process?

The goals of the Bologna Process are:

- To implement a quality assurance system to strengthen the quality and relevance of learning and teaching,
- To introduce a three-cycle higher education system consisting of bachelor, master and doctorate studies,
- To create easily understandable and comparable higher education diplomas and degrees (Diploma Supplement),

- To implement the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS),
- To ensure and expand the mobility of students and teaching staff, and
- To ensure mutual recognition of qualifications and learning experience gained in other universities abroad.

### 6. Which States Are the Members of the Bologna Process?



Figure 1. Member States

## B. THE TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COUNCIL (THEQC)

### 1. When Was THEQC Founded?

The Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) was founded with the Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulation promulgated in the 23/07/2015 dated and 29423 numbered Official Gazette and carried out its activities as a structure affiliated to the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) until 01/07/2017.

THEQC was restructured as per the provisions of the Additional Article 35 added to the 2547 numbered Law on Higher Education with the "7033 numbered Law on Amendment of Certain Laws and Decree Laws for the Development of Industry and Subsidisation of Production," promulgated in the Official Gazette dated 01/07/2017. With the said legal arrangement, it has become an institution with administrative and financial autonomy, public legal personality and a special budget.

### 2. What Is THEQC's Mission and Vision?

**THEQC's mission** is to strengthen the quality assurance system in higher education to contribute to the continuous development of Turkish higher education institutions and the individuals' attainment of universal competencies.

**The vision of THEQC** is to be an effective and internationally recognized institution in the field of quality assurance in higher education.

### 3. What Are the Duties of THEQC?

The duties of THEQC are:

- To define national policies and strategies for quality assurance in higher education system and publicly announce them,
- To evaluate the quality levels of learning and teaching, research and development, service to society and administrative services of higher education institutions,

- To evaluate higher education institutions for institutional accreditation purposes and to take the accreditation decisions within the scope of this evaluation,
- To monitor activities regarding quality assurance systems in higher education at national and international levels and organize joint activities at national and international levels, and
- To organize activities for the improvement and dissemination of quality assurance culture in the higher education system.

### 4. Who/Which Representatives Comprise THEQC?

THEQC consists of a Council and a President. The Council has 13 members, including the President (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Council Members

## 5. What Is THEQC's Main Goal?

THEQC aims to evaluate HEIs' learning and teaching processes, research and development activities, administrative structures, and service to society mechanisms in terms of quality assurance, reveal their areas for improvement, and contribute to their continuous development.

## 6. What Are THEQC's Main Fields of Activity?

THEQC's main fields of activity are:

- To evaluate higher education institutions within the scope of its Evaluation Programs,
- To authorize national independent external evaluation and program accreditation agencies,
- To recognize international independent external evaluation and program accreditation agencies, and
- To improve and disseminate the culture of quality assurance in higher education.

## 7. What Are the Commissions Within the Body of THEQC?

Seven commissions work within the body of THEQC in order to guide and improve the work of THEQC (Figure 3). The Students Commission consisting of students is one of these commissions.

1.	Commission on Institutional External Evaluation and Accreditation
2.	Commission on Recognition and Authorization of External Evaluation and Accreditation Agencies
3.	Commission on Publicity and Stakeholder Relations
4.	Commission on International Relations
5.	Commission on Appeals and Complaints
6.	Ethics Commission on Scientific Research and Evaluation Processes
7.	Students Commission

**Figure 3.** THEQC Commissions

## 8. According to Which Criteria Does THEQC Evaluate Higher Education Institutions?

THEQC conducts its evaluation processes according to its evaluation criteria. These criteria have been created by taking compliance with the standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance given in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) into account.

While the standards in ESG mainly focus on the learning and teaching activities of higher education institutions and other related activities, THEQC's criteria address the dimensions of leadership, governance and quality, learning and teaching, research and development, and service to society due to the structure and functioning of the Turkish higher education system.

The basic tool used in evaluation processes is the THEQC Rubric.

### 8.1. What Is the THEQC Rubric?

It is a rubric-type measurement tool used in the internal evaluation works of higher education institutions, the writing of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER), and the external evaluation processes. This tool comprises the criteria and the sub-criteria under four main headings.

In the THEQC Rubric, the quality assurance processes or mechanisms for each sub-criterion have been defined

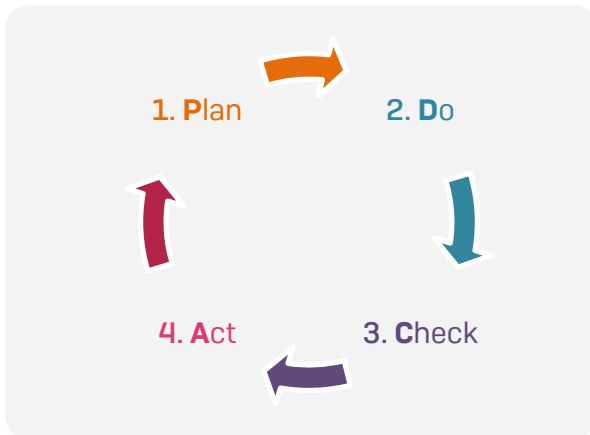


**Figure 4.** Main Headings of the THEQC Rubric



## 8.2. What Is the PDCA Cycle?

The PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) is one of the main elements of quality assurance (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** The PDCA cycle

- **“Planning”** is the first and most important step of the PDCA cycle. It is the stage where it is decided why, how, by whom, when and how long it will take to implement the aimed activities.
- **“Doing”**, is the stage in which the planned activities are carried out by the responsible people through the planned methods and at the planned time.
- **“Checking”**, is the stage where the data obtained through the statistical methods regarding the activities in the doing stage are generated. In other words, it is the stage where follow-up and related assessments are made.
- **“Acting”**, is the stage where the extent to which the planned targets are achieved is identified, and the necessary improvements are made. The activities at this stage are carried out within the action plans determined as a result of the follow-up and assessments made at the “Checking” stage.

## 9. How Does THEQC Evaluate Higher Education Institutions?

THEQC evaluates the institutional external evaluation works of the institutions regarding learning and teaching, research and development, service to society, and administrative services to increase the quality of HEIs and contribute to their quality assurance systems. In other words; Takes the “photo of the institution”.

THEQC ensures that institutions evaluate their internal quality assurance systems through the Institutional Self-Evaluation Reports (ISERs) written by higher education institutions annually.

### 9.1. What Is the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)?

It is an annual report written by the higher education institutions to monitor the quality assurance processes pertinent to their learning and teaching, research and development, and service to society activities and administrative services. ISER can be described as an institution’s taking its own photograph. We can think of this situation as a selfie.

### 9.2. What Is the Purpose of ISER Writing?

The aim of ISER writing is to help the institution recognize its strengths and areas for improvement and contribute to the institution’s improvement processes for its areas for improvement.

## **C. FAQ ABOUT THE EVALUATION PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THEQC**

### **1. Which Evaluation Programs Are Carried Out by THEQC?**

The evaluation programs carried out by THEQC are:

- Institutional External Evaluation Program (IEEP),
- Follow-up Program (FuP),
- Institutional Accreditation Program (IAP), and
- Mid-term Evaluation Program (MtEP).

### **2. Who Conduct the Evaluations for the Higher Education Institutions?**

THEQC evaluates higher education institutions through "evaluation teams" consisting of evaluators.

### **3. Who Are the THEQC Evaluation Team Members?**

The evaluation are comprised of, administrative staff, students, employer/professional practitioners and international experts experienced enough to engage in the evaluation work.

### **4. What Does a THEQC Evaluation Team Do?**

THEQC evaluation team takes part in the evaluation processes carried out by THEQC. The team learns about the HEI to be evaluated through the ISERs written by the institution and creates a report after a site visit in which the team examines the work and procedures of the institution.

### **5. Are the Evaluators in the Evaluation Teams Paid for Their Assignments?**

No. The evaluators work voluntarily; however, their accommodation, transportation, and other related expenses are covered as a part of the evaluation program.

### **6. Do Institutions Consider Evaluators to Be on Duty Leave During Site Visits?**

Those assigned as evaluators will be deemed on duty leave by their institutions during the site visit.

### **7. What Is the Institutional External Evaluation Program (IEEP)?**

It is an evaluation program consisting of the institution's preliminary evaluation through its ISER, a site visit, and the writing of an Institutional Feedback Report by the evaluation team assigned by THEQC.

#### **7.1. How Are Higher Education Institutions Included in the IEEP?**

Higher education institutions are evaluated in the scope of IEEP at the latest in the fifth year following the academic year in which the institution graduates its first cohort of students. THEQC creates and announces the IEEP calendar.

#### **7.2. What Is the Institutional Feedback Report (IFR)?**

It is a report written by an evaluation team for the higher education institution evaluated within the scope of the IEEP, containing strengths and areas for improvement of the reviewed institution.

#### **7.3. How Does the Process Work After the IEEP?**

Higher education institutions evaluated within the scope of IEEP are included in the Follow-up Program (FuP) by THEQC in the second year following the evaluation year at the earliest.

### **8. What Is the Follow-up Program (FuP)?**

It is an evaluation program in which strengths and areas for improvement specified in the IFR written for a higher education institution, which was previously evaluated within the scope of IEEP, are monitored.

### 8.1. What Is the Follow-up Report (FuR)?

It is the report written by an evaluation team for the higher education institution evaluated within the FuP.

### 8.2. How Does the Process Work After the FuP?

The higher education institutions evaluated within the scope of the IEEP apply to the Institutional Accreditation Program (IAP) conducted by THEQC in the fifth year following the IEEP at the latest. Higher education institutions to be included in the IAP are selected by THEQC among the applicants in the relevant year. Among the higher education institutions evaluated within the scope of IEEP, those who do not apply to the IAP within five years following the evaluation are directly included in the IAP by THEQC.

## 9. What Is the Institutional Accreditation Program (IAP)?

It refers to the evaluation program in which planning, doing, checking, and acting phases of higher education institutions in learning and teaching, research and development, service to society, and administrative services are evaluated by the Council qualitatively and quantitatively. The decision to grant accreditation is taken as a result of this evaluation.

### 9.1. What Is the Institutional Accreditation Report (IAR)?

This report includes the quality assurance system of a higher education institution, evaluated within the IAP, regarding its learning and teaching, research and development activities, and significant regional/national service to society activities, its administrative services and decision-making processes, as well as the institution's strengths and areas for improvement.

### 9.2. Which Higher Education Institutions May Apply to the IAP?

Higher education institutions to be included in the IAP are selected by THEQC among the applicants in the relevant year. Among the higher education institutions evaluated within the scope of IEEP,

those who do not apply to the IAP within five years following the evaluation are directly included in the IAP by THEQC.

### 9.3. Which Higher Education Institutions May Not Apply to the IAP?

Higher education institutions that have not been evaluated within the scope of the FuP may not apply to the IAP.

### 9.4. What Is an IAP Decision? Who Makes the IAP Decision?

The accreditation decision about higher education institutions evaluated within the scope of the IAP is given by THEQC, considering the IAR written by the evaluation team.

THEQC can take three different accreditation decisions (Figure 6).

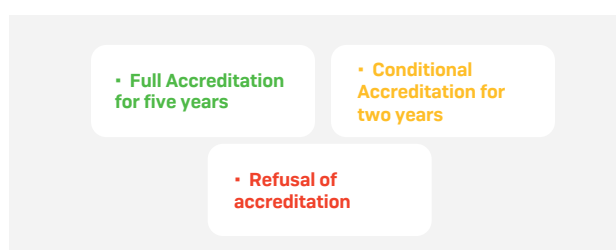


Figure 6. Types of Institutional Accreditation Decisions

### 9.5. What Is an Accreditation Decision Letter?

It is a letter written by THEQC and submitted to the institution together with the accreditation decision taken as a result of the IAP, and contains the issues that the institution is expected to develop. This letter is sent to the higher education institution through an official letter. You can scan the QR code or click on it to see the higher education institutions accredited by THEQC.



### **9.6. What Is the Mid-term Evaluation Program (MtEP)?**

Mid-term evaluation refers to the evaluation process in which the quality development processes of higher education institutions granted to two-year conditional accreditation or five-year full accreditation within the scope of the institutional accreditation program are evaluated by the Council, and full accreditation or refusal of accreditation is decided as a result of this evaluation.

### **9.7. What Is the Mid-term Evaluation Report (MtER)?**

It is the report written by an evaluation team for the higher education institution evaluated within the MtER. The improvement works carried out in the institution regarding the areas for improvement in the IAR and the Accreditation Decision Letter; if there are no improvement works regarding the areas for improvement, the reasons for these; whether the sustainability of the strengths in IAR is provided, and apart from the issues in IAR, the highlights of the evaluation team regarding the evaluation are included in the report.

### **9.8. Is a Higher Education Institution with a Two-Year Conditional Accreditation Re-evaluated?**

Yes. A higher education institution that received conditional accreditation for two years within the scope of the IAP is included in the Mid-term Evaluation Program.

### **9.9. Does THEQC Conduct Site Visit to a Higher Education Institution with a Two-Year Conditional Accreditation?**

Yes. The higher education institution that received conditional accreditation for two years within the scope of IAP is included in the Mid-term Evaluation Program, which consists of preliminary work and site visit stages, at the end of these two years.

### **9.10. What Decisions Can Be Made as a Result of the Mid-term Evaluation of a Higher Education Institution That Previously Received Conditional Accreditation for Two Years?**

The decisions that can be made as a result of the mid-term evaluation of higher education institutions that previously received conditional accreditation for two years are:

- The conditional accreditation of the higher education institutions, which carried out all or most of the improvement works within the scope of the areas for improvement in the IAR and the Accreditation Decision Letter, is upgraded to full accreditation (2 years + 3 years).
- If their internal quality assurance systems maintain the maturity level they had in the period when IAP was implemented and/or they made partial improvement work, the conditional accreditation granted to them is extended for two more years (2 years + 2 years).
- If their internal quality assurance systems failed to maintain the maturity level they had in the period when IAP was implemented, the conditional accreditation granted to them is revoked.

### **9.11. Is a Higher Education Institution with a Five-Year Full Accreditation Re-evaluated?**

Yes. Higher education institutions that are granted full accreditation for five years are included in the Mid-term Evaluation Program at the earliest in the second year following the grant of accreditation.

### **9.12. Does THEQC Conduct Site Visit to a Higher Education Institution with a Five-Year Full Accreditation?**

The Council may decide that a site visit is not necessary for higher education institutions with five-year full accreditation, considering the recommendation of the Commission on Institutional External Evaluation and Accreditation.

### 9.13. What Does It Mean Not to Conduct a Site Visit to a Higher Education Institution That Received Full Accreditation for Five Years?

If the Council decides not to carry out a site visit to the higher education institution with full accreditation for five years, the full accreditation of the higher education institution continues.

### 9.14. What Decisions Can Be Made About a Higher Education Institution That Received Full Accreditation for Five Years and to Which a Site Visit Was Made Within the Scope of Mid-term Evaluation Program?

The decisions that can be made about higher education institutions with full accreditation for five years and to which a site visit was made within the scope of the mid-term evaluation program are:

- If their internal quality assurance systems maintain the maturity level they had in the period when IAP was implemented and/or if they carried out improvement work towards the areas for improvement, the continuation of full accreditation is granted.
- If their internal quality assurance systems failed to maintain the maturity level they had in the period when IAP was implemented, the full accreditation granted to them is reduced to conditional accreditation.

### 9.15. May a Higher Education Institution Refused Within the IAP Reapply?

The higher education institutions for which a refusal of accreditation decision is given within the IAP may reapply at the earliest two years after this decision.

### 10. Are Full and Conditional Accreditation Decisions Published in the HEIE Higher Education Programs and Quotas Guide?

Yes, decisions to grant full accreditation and conditional accreditation regarding the IAP are sent to the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) by THEQC to be published in the HEIE Higher Education Programs and Quotas Guide.



Figure 7. HEIE Higher Education Programs and Quotas Guide

### 11. Are Institutional Accreditation and Program Accreditation the Same Thing?

No. Institutional accreditation and program accreditation are two separate programmes.

In the Turkish higher education system, the institutional accreditation process is carried out by THEQC, and the program accreditation processes are carried out by independent international external evaluation and program accreditation agencies recognised by THEQC, and independent national external evaluation and program accreditation agencies authorised by THEQC with the Quality Evaluation Authorization Certificate. As both processes are realised within quality assurance works, they supplement each other.

## 12. What Is Program Accreditation?

It refers to the external evaluation and quality assurance process performed by independent external evaluation and program accreditation agencies, measuring whether a higher education program meets the predetermined academic and field-specific standards in a specific field or not.

It strengthens program-level quality practices and increases institutional-level quality awareness. In this way, it ensures the internalization of quality processes.

### 12.1. What Are the National Program Accreditation Agencies Authorised by THEQC?

	The Association for Language Education, Evaluation and Accreditation - <b>DEDAK</b>
	The Association for Accreditation of Dentistry Education Programs - <b>DEPAD</b>
	The National Society of Assessment and Accreditation of Pharmacy Education - <b>ECZAKDER</b>
	Industrial Designers' Society of Turkey - <b>ETMK</b>
	The Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs - <b>EPDAD</b>
	The Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of University Programs in Mathematical, Natural and Social Sciences - <b>FEDEK</b>
	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Nursing Education Programs - <b>HEPDAK</b>
	Islamic Sciences Accreditation Agency - <b>IAA</b>
	The Communication Research Association (Education of Communication Evaluation and Accreditation Board) - <b>ILEDAK</b>
	Association for Accreditation of Architectural Education - <b>MIAK</b>
	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programs - <b>MÜDEK</b>
	Association for Landscape Architecture Education and Science - <b>PEMDER</b>
	Association of Evaluation and Accreditation of Health Sciences - <b>SABAK</b>
	Social Sciences, Humanities, and Basic Sciences Accreditation and Rating Association - <b>STAR</b>
	Sport Sciences Association (Evaluation and Accreditation Board for Sport Sciences Education Programs) - <b>SPORAK</b>
	Design and Planning Accrediting Association - <b>TAPLAK</b>
	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Medical Education Programs - <b>TEPDAD</b>
	Tourism Academicians Association (Tourism Education Evaluation and Accreditation Board) - <b>TURAK</b>
	Turkish Psychologists Association - <b>TPD</b>
	Turkish Psychological Counselling and Guidance Association - <b>Türk PDR-Der</b>
	The Association for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Veterinary Institutes and Programs - <b>VEDEK</b>
	The Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Agricultural Engineering Educational Programs - <b>ZIDEK</b>

**Figure 8.** Authorized National Accreditation Agencies

## 12.2. What Are the International Program Accreditation Agencies Recognised by THEQC?

	Agency for Quality Assurance - <b>AQAS</b>
	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business - <b>AACSB</b>
	Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation - <b>FIBAA</b>
	International Accreditation Council for Business Education - <b>IACBE</b>
	The Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences - <b>AHPGS</b>
	Accreditation Agency for Study Programs in Engineering, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics - <b>ASIIN</b>
	Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing - <b>ACEN</b>
	Aviation Accreditation Board Int'l - <b>AABI</b>
	The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education - <b>EAEVE</b>
	Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating - <b>IAAR</b>
	The Accreditation, Certification, and Quality Assurance Institute - <b>ACQUIN</b>

**Figure 9.** Recognised International Accreditation Agencies

### 12.3. Are Program Accreditation Decisions Published in the HEIE Higher Education Programs and Quotas Guide?

Information about the program accreditations approved by THEQC is sent to the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) to be published in the HEIE Higher Education Programs and Quotas Guide.

### 12.4. What Are the Advantages of Being a Student in an Accredited Program?

The advantages of being a student in an accredited program are:

- Receiving quality education,
- Increasing the visibility of the diploma,
- Increasing employment opportunities,
- Scholarship and financial support opportunities,
- Easy transfer opportunity while transferring between institutions.

## D. THEQC STUDENTS COMMISSION

### 1. When Was the THEQC Students Commission Established?

The Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) Students Commission was established on 1 October 2019 as decided by THEQC, to disseminate the quality culture in higher education, ensure the internalisation of quality processes, increase student involvement in the quality assurance system, and carry out work at the national and international levels.

### 2. What Are the Duties of the Students Commission?

- 1 To conduct activities to ensure the internalisation and dissemination of a quality assurance culture in higher education among students,
- 2 To increase student involvement in quality assurance processes of higher education,
- 3 To plan and present the activities to be carried out during an academic year to the Council,
- 4 To conduct works undertaken by students at national and international levels,
- 5 To suggest candidate students, who will take part in the evaluation programs carried out by the Council, to the Commission on Institutional External Evaluation and Accreditation,
- 6 To create an archive of the works carried out and present them to the Council,
- 7 To submit an annual report regarding the activities carried out by the Commission during the relevant year and submit it to the Council, and
- 8 To organise Quality Ambassador Training.

Figure 10. Duties of THEQC Students Commission



### 3. Who Are the Students Commission Members?

- The Commission consists of at least five (5) and at most eleven (11) members, including the Commission Chair.
- Minimum one (1) associate/bachelor's degree and minimum one (1) graduate student take part in the Commission.
- The Council President appoints a Coordinator to guide and support the work of the Commission and to ensure coordination between the Council and the Commission.

### 4. What Are the Units of the THEQC Students Commission?

Five units are present within the Students Commission to guide and improve the Commission's works (Figure 11). These units also work in cooperation with the other THEQC Commissions.

- Publicity, Communication and Information Unit:**
  - 1) To promote and announce the activities of the Commission,
  - 2) To write and share news about the activities of the Commission, and
  - 3) To communicate effectively with the stakeholders of the Commission.
- International Relations Unit:**
  - 1) To follow the higher education quality assurance works of international agencies,
  - 2) To follow the international relations of the Commission and plan collaborative work, and
  - 3) To follow the activities of THEQC's international stakeholders and inform the Commission about the developments.
- Program Accreditation Unit:**
  - 1) To inform higher education students about the program accreditation processes,
  - 2) To guide student involvement in program accreditation processes, and
  - 3) To follow the student involvement activities of national program accreditation agencies and inform the Commission.
- Quality Societies Unit:**
  - 1) To guide quality societies to contribute to the internal quality assurance system of the institution,
  - 2) To update the national quality societies' list and to follow their work, and
  - 3) To organize cooperative activities with quality societies.
- Archive and Publication Unit:**
  - 1) To record the activities of the Commission and create an archive,
  - 2) To write and publish the annual activity report of the Commission, and
  - 3) To conduct research on student involvement in higher education quality assurance and publish the results.

Figure 11. Students Commission Units and Their Duties

## **E. FAQ ABOUT THE THEQC STUDENTS COMMISSION AND ITS ACTIVITIES**

### **1. How Is the THEQC Student Member Assigned?**

One of the 13 members of THEQC is a student member. The student member is assigned by the Council among the members of the Commission in accordance with the "Directive on THEQC Council Student Member and Students Commission".

### **2. What Are the Conditions for Being a Student Member of the Council?**

One of the 13 members of the THEQC Council is a student member. This member is assigned among the members of the Students Commission. The student to be assigned as a student member of the Council should:

- Be in her/his second or third year, if s/he is an undergraduate student enrolled in a 4-year program,
- Be in the second, third or fourth year if s/he is a 5-year long undergraduate program student,
- Be in the second, third, fourth or fifth year if s/he is a 6-year long undergraduate program student,
- Be in the course period if s/he is a graduate or doctorate student.

For detailed information, please read "Directive on THEQC Council Student Member and Students Commission." You can scan the QR code or click on it to read the Directive.



### **3. What Is the Term of Office of a Student Member of the Council?**

The term of office of the student member of the Council is one (1) year. This period shall start as of the date when the Council assigns the member. The Council may extend the term of office of the Student Member of the Council for one (1) more year.

Graduation or ending of studentship status ends the student member's affiliation to the Council. A student can be a Council member for a maximum of two years.

### **4. Who Is the Students Commission Chair?**

The student member of the Council becomes the Commission Chair automatically.

### **5. What are the Conditions for Being a Commission Member?**

The conditions for being a Commission Member are:

- To be enrolled in an associate/bachelor's/master's or doctorate degree program of a higher education institution,
- Not to be on leave of absence at the time of the selection,
- To have a grade point average of 2.50 or higher out of 4.00,
- Not to have received a disciplinary penalty,
- Not to be member of or having no relations or connections with terrorist organizations,
- Not to have a criminal record,
- To have knowledge and experience in internal and external quality assurance works in higher education.

### **6. How Are Commission Members Selected?**

The members are selected in accordance with the "Directive on THEQC Council Student Member and Students Commission." Whether the application conditions are met is evaluated by the Pre-Assessment Commission, and the first 60 candidates who meet the application conditions are interviewed by the Interviews Commission. The Interviews Commission selects 30 candidates among the interviewed candidates and presents them to the Council. The Council selects the Commission members among students, whom the Interviews Commission advises to the Council, from different higher education institutions and fields, including education, fine arts, natural and applied sciences, engineering, health sciences, and social sciences programs. An equal number of the full and substitute members are announced.



## **7. Who Comprise the Pre-Assessment Commission?**

Under the chairmanship of the Vice President of the Council, the Commission consists of the Student Member of the Council [Students Commission Chair] and the Coordinator.

## **8. Who Comprise the Interviews Commission?**

The Interviews Commission consists of five people in total, including the student member of the Council [Students Commission Chair], an evaluator, a student evaluator and one of the current Commission members, under the chairmanship of an academic who has served before as a Council member or a rector.

## **9. How Is the Vice-Chair of the Commission Elected?**

The Commission elects a Vice-Chair amongst its members for a one-year term. The election is held by the secret ballot and open counting procedure.

## **10. What Is the Term of Office of the Students Commission Members?**

They serve for one [1] year. This period shall start as of the date when the Council assigns the members. After the expiry of the term of office of the members, the term of office may be extended for one [1] year with the proposal of the Commission and the decision of the Council. Membership shall not last more than two [2] terms. The Commission membership ends in the event that the member's studentship ends. The substitute member selected as per the procedures and principles shall serve as a Commission member to complete the remaining term instead of the member who leaves the Commission for any reason, whose commission membership period ends automatically or is terminated by a Council decision.

## **11. What Kind of Activities Does the Commission Carry Out?**

The Commission organizes face-to-face and online training, workshops, seminars, meetings, panels, etc., at national and international levels to facilitate internalization of the importance of the quality assurance system and student involvement by the students and actively participates in such events.

## **12. Do the Students Commission Members Get Scholarships/Fees?**

No, they do not. Members take part in the Commission work on a voluntary basis.

## **13. How Can I Be Informed About the Work of the Commission?**

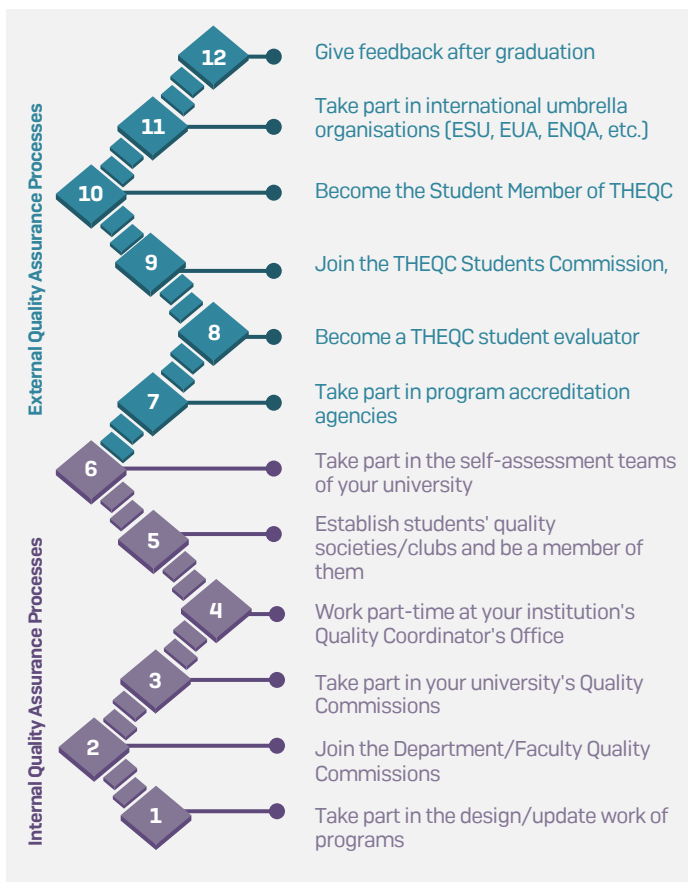
The work of the Commission is shared on THEQC's website and @kaliteelcisi social media accounts, and announcements and notifications are made through these channels. In addition, the activities of the Commission are included in the Status Reports published annually by THEQC.

## F. FAQ ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF "QUALITY AMBASSADOR"

### 1. Who Is a Quality Ambassador?

This refers to the higher education student(s) who carry out works to ensure student involvement in quality assurance processes in higher education and dissemination of quality assurance culture in line with the mission and objectives of THEQC.

### 2. How to Become a Quality Ambassador?



**Figure 12.** Stages for Students to Get Involved in the Quality Assurance Processes in Higher Education

### 3. Having Experience in the Internal Quality Assurance Processes During the Journey of a Quality Ambassador

You are expected to start your journey as a quality ambassador by gaining experience in internal quality assurance processes, that is, in your university's own internal activities related to Quality Assurance.

### 3.1. How Do I Get Involved in the Design and Update Work for My Study Program?

You can request your department (e.g. Department of Pharmacy) to offer new elective courses, participate in surveys about updating the content or teaching methods and techniques of existing courses, participate actively in course evaluation surveys, and share your opinions.

### 3.2. How Can I Take Part in the Department/Faculty Quality Commissions?

There may be quality commissions in units such as programs, departments, faculties, institutes, schools, and vocational schools. First, you can find out if there are quality commissions in these units, and then you can take an active role in these commissions.

### 3.3. How Can I Take Part in an Institution's Quality Commission?

Higher education institutions establish Quality Commissions to conduct quality assurance activities within their institutions. Each university has a Quality Commission. There is a student representative in this Commission. The student representative is assigned within the scope of the principles and procedures to be defined by university senates and serves for one year. In addition, a sub-working group consisting of students can be formed in the Quality Commissions and students can take part in these groups.

### 3.4. How Can I Be a Part-Time Working Student at an Institution's Quality Coordinator's Office?

If your university has a Quality Coordinator's Office, you can work for the office as a part-time student as specified in your university's Part-Time Student Employment Directive.

### 3.5. What Do Students' Quality Societies/Clubs Do?

Students' quality societies/clubs are important in ensuring student involvement in the internal quality assurance system of higher education institutions. Students are required to participate in the processes and give feedback about the systems for them to receive a more quality education.

Students' quality societies/clubs should be in communication and cooperation with the quality units of the institutions. Similarly, cooperation of the institution's Quality Commission, Quality Coordinator's Office and all other units with the students' quality societies/clubs is important to ensure student involvement in the quality assurance works.

#### 3.5.1. How Can I Establish a Students' Quality Society?

If there is no students' quality society at your institution and you want to establish one, you should read your institution's Student Societies Directive or similar documents/rules. In this regard, you can contact your university's Quality Commission/Quality Coordinator's Office, and request support. You can also contact students' quality societies/clubs of other universities to learn about their experience.

#### 3.5.2. How Can I Be a Member of a Students' Quality Society?

The majority of higher education institutions have students' quality societies. For the conditions of being a member of these societies, you can check your university's Student Societies Directive or similar documents/rules. You can scan or click on the QR code for the list of students' quality societies across Türkiye (you can also access them from the "About Quality Societies" tab).



### 3.6. How Can I Take Part in an Institution's Self-Evaluation Team?

Self-evaluation teams are the teams formed by an institution to evaluate its units. For example, the Engineering Faculty of X University can be evaluated by a team consisting of staff, students and other internal and external stakeholders from other units of X University.

The primary responsibility for ensuring quality assurance in higher education rests with higher education institutions. In this context, self-assessment works carried out by institutions constitute the most important step of the quality work. To take part in these teams, you can contact your university's Quality Commission and request support.

### 4. Having Experience in the External Quality Assurance Processes During the Journey of a Quality Ambassador

In the journey of becoming a quality ambassador, you are expected to take part in external quality assurance processes after gaining experience in internal quality assurance processes, that is, your university's internal works.

#### 4.1. What Is Program Accreditation?

It refers to the external evaluation and quality assurance process performed by independent external evaluation and program accreditation agencies, measuring whether a higher education program meets the predetermined academic and field-specific standards in a specific field or not. For example, accreditation of a Nursing program.

#### 4.1.1. How Can I Take Part in Program Accreditation Agencies?

National program accreditation agencies may also include student members in evaluation teams or include student commissions in their organisational structures. In this way, you can take an active role in them. However, we want to emphasize that you can only take part in the program accreditation agencies that give service in your study field. You can scan the QR code or click on it to see the program accreditation agencies authorised by THEQC.



#### 4.2. How Can I Be a Student Evaluator in THEQC Evaluation Teams?

The first step to participating in THEQC's evaluation teams as an evaluator is to be successful in the Quality Ambassador Training and receive a certificate of participation.



**Figure 13.** Stages of Being a Student Evaluator in THEQC's Evaluation Teams

#### 4.2.1. What is the Quality Ambassador Training Program (QAP)?

The Students Commission organises the Quality Ambassador Training Programs (QAPs) to ensure student involvement in the quality assurance processes in higher education and have them gain competence in disseminating the quality culture within the scope of its duty of "making recommendations to the Commission on Institutional External Evaluation and Accreditation to determine the student evaluator candidates to be included in THEQC's evaluation programs."

#### 4.2.2. Who May Apply to the QAP?

The enrollment announcement for QAP is shared on the THEQC website and @kaliteelcisi social media accounts. Students who are enrolled in an associate, bachelor's, or graduate degree program offered by any higher education institution and are in an active status as of the application date may apply to attend the program.

#### 4.2.3. Is a Certificate of Participation Awarded to Students Who Participate in the QAP?

Students, who become successful in the training given in the scope of the QAP, are awarded a certificate of participation. When you receive your certificate of participation, you should contact your university's Quality Coordinator's Office and declare that you have received a QAP certificate.

#### 4.2.4. How Does the Process Work After Receiving the QAP Certificate of Participation?

Students who became successful in the QAP and received a certificate of participation can register in the THEQC Evaluators' Pool upon their request. Applications of students who register in the evaluators' pool without a QAP certificate OF participation are deemed invalid.

#### **4.2.5. What is the Quality Ambassador Workshop (QAW)?**

It is an in-depth training organised to increase the competencies of the students, who became successful in the Quality Ambassador Training and registered in the evaluators' pool, regarding the evaluation processes. The need for student evaluators in THEQC's evaluation programs is taken into account in determining the number of students who will participate in the workshop.

#### **4.2.6. Is a Certificate of Participation Awarded to Students Who Participate in the QAW?**

Students, who become successful in the training given in the scope of the QAW, are awarded a certificate of participation.

#### **4.2.7. How Does the Process Work After Receiving the QAW Certificate of Participation?**

The Students Commission recommends the Commission on Institutional External Evaluation and Accreditation for the selection of student evaluator candidates among the students who become successful in the QAW and received the certificate of participation. The Commission on Institutional External Evaluation and Accreditation selects the student evaluator candidates considering the number of student evaluators needed in the teams to conduct an evaluation for THEQC's evaluation programs and submits them to the Council.

#### **4.2.8. How Does the Process Work After the Council Selects a Student as a Candidate Evaluator?**

You are expected to attend the Entry-level Training for Evaluation Programs, become successful and receive a certificate of participation. Entry-level training is given to candidate evaluators who applied to the THEQC evaluators' pool to acquire essential knowledge and skills about the evaluation processes.

#### **4.2.9. How Does the Process Work After a Student Gets the Certificate of Participation for the Entry-level Training for Evaluation Programs?**

Considering the need for student evaluators in THEQC's evaluation programs, the Council may

assign you to evaluation teams for the Institutional External Evaluation Program (IEEP), Follow-up Program (FuP), Institutional Accreditation Program (IAP) or Mid-term Evaluation Program (MtEP).

#### **4.3. How Can I Take Place in the THEQC Students Commission?**

The members of the Commission are selected by taking into account the articles in the Directive on the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council Student Member and the Students Commission. You can scan the QR code or click on it to read the Directive.



#### **4.4. How Can I Become a Student Member of the THEQC Council?**

The Student Member of the Council is assigned by taking into account the articles in the Directive on the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council Student Member and Students Commission. You can scan the QR code or click on it to read the Directive.



#### **4.5. How Can I Take Part in International Umbrella Organizations?**

You can find detailed information about the applications open to participate in evaluator training or work by following the social media accounts of the organizations such as ESU, EUA, and ENQA and examining their websites. [See. Page 20]

## 5. What Are the International Umbrella Organizations and What Is the E4 Group?

With the Bologna process, which is carried out to increase the efficiency of institutions and student mobility in higher education at the European level, the concepts of quality, equality and accessibility have gained even more importance. With these concepts coming to the fore, the activities of umbrella organizations in European higher education have increased. The four main umbrella organizations in Europe are known as the E4 group. These umbrella organizations are ESU, EUA, ENQA, and EURASHE. The first joint work of the E4 group is EQAR, which is responsible for quality processes in European higher education.

You can find detailed information on <https://www.eqar.eu/>



### 5.1. What is the European Students' Union (ESU)?

The European Students' Union (ESU), an influential and essential stakeholder at the European and international levels, defines itself as a professional advocacy and capacity-building board. ESU also aims to encourage and increase student involvement in higher education policy and decision-making processes at local, national and European levels, as well as representing European students' views, needs and perspectives.

You can find detailed information on <https://esu-online.org/>



### 5.2. What is the European University Association (EUA)?

It is an association that represents more than 800 higher education institutions from 48 European countries and provides them with cooperation and exchange of information on higher education and research policies.

You can find detailed information on <https://eua.eu/>



### 5.3. What Is the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)?

ENQA is an umbrella organisation responsible for coordinating higher education quality assurance activities across Europe. It aims to disseminate its knowledge and expertise among its members and stakeholders to improve quality assurance by promoting cooperation in the field of quality assurance in higher education and developing and sharing good practices.

THEQC was recognized as a full ENQA member by the ENQA Board of Directors on 28 April 2020.

You can find detailed information on <https://www.engq.eu/>



### 5.4. What Is the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)?

It is an association established to promote the international development of higher education at the European level and inter-institutional cooperation.

You can find detailed information on <https://www.eurashe.eu/>

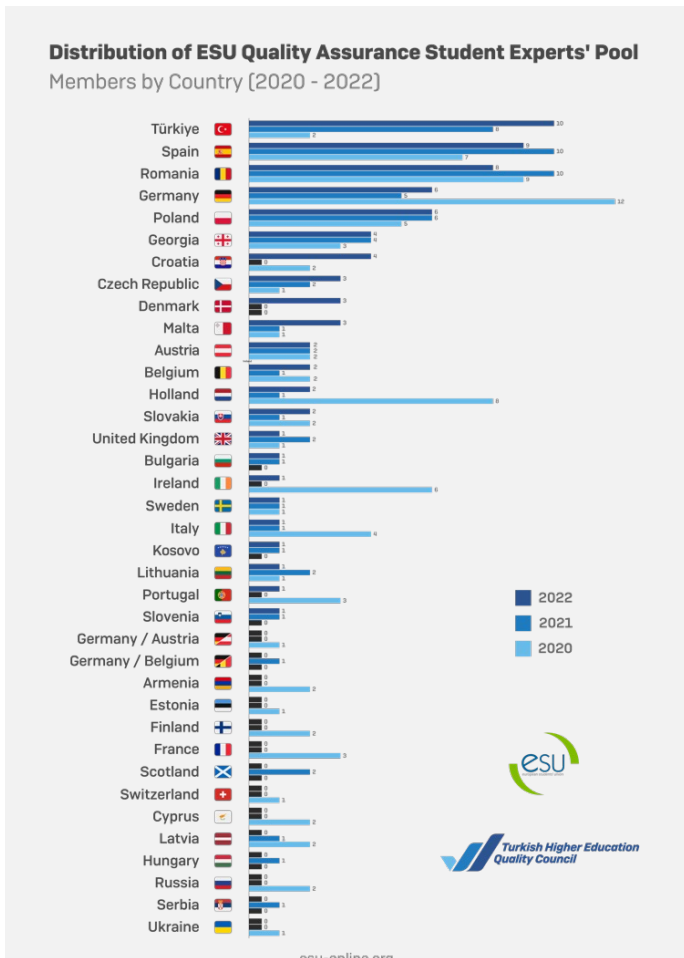


Figure 14. Distribution of ESU Quality Assurance Student Experts' Pool Members by Country (2020 - 2022)

## 6. What Is the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)?

In most European countries, higher education institutions or study programs are regularly subject to external review by a quality assurance agency. The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) is the official register of agencies working towards an agreed common framework to ensure the quality of higher education institutions and their study programs.

EQAR's vision is to create a coherent quality assurance framework for the European Higher Education Area, where higher education institutions have the freedom to apply to an appropriate EQAR-registered agency for external quality assurance reviews, whereby qualifications are universally recognized.

EQAR launched the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) in 2018 to provide direct access to the reports and decisions of agencies registered with EQAR. Thanks to DEQAR, all stakeholders can access the reports of institutions recognised by EQAR. THEQC successfully completed its EQAR registration on 3 March 2023.

You can find detailed information on <https://www.eqar.eu/>

## 7. What Are the Benefits of Students' Involvement in Quality Assurance Processes in Higher Education?

Student involvement in quality assurance processes in higher education has many benefits for students, their institutions, and the country.

### 7.1. Benefits to the Students

- Improve your communication skills,
- Receive various training,
- Expand your social circle,
- Develop your social and cultural characteristics,
- Have a broader perspective,
- Be aware of your country's and the world's agenda,
- Adopt lifelong learning,
- Have the opportunity to meet and work with students from other disciplines,
- Develop teamwork and collaboration skills,
- Provide time management in works,
- Acquire skills such as critical thinking, taking responsibility, and problem-solving,
- Acquire entrepreneurship, leadership and creativity skills,
- Get to know the Program/Department of which you are a student better,
- Have information about the accreditation agencies that give service in your study program,
- Use your right to speak in improving the quality of your education,
- Get to know your institution better,
- Communicate with other stakeholders of your institution,
- Have a sense of belonging to the institution,
- Have knowledge about the Higher Education System,
- Integrating the concept of quality into your profession,
- Be more visible in business life, adopt quality as a way of life, and reflect it in your behaviours.

## 7.2. Benefits to Quality Assurance Processes

- Students' experience in quality improves the quality process,
- The positive/negative aspects of the process come to light,
- Students' perspective contributes to follow-up, improvement and development activities.

## 7.3. Benefits to Higher Education Institutions

- Strengthens communication and interaction between institutions and students,
- Strengthens cooperation between institutions and students,
- Feeds the sense of belonging to the institution and thus increases student involvement,
- Facilitates the accreditation process of the institution by creating the students' quality awareness,
- Contributes to the quality assurance processes of the institution with student-graduate feedback,
- Develops the institution with a quality culture that is spread by the students,
- Increases the institution's national and international visibility and competitiveness with qualified graduates.

## 7.4. Benefits to Türkiye

- Spreads the culture of quality assurance in higher education,
- Continuous improvement of the higher education system,
- Contributes to quality assurance work at the national/international level,
- Achieves success in the Bologna equivalence processes,
- Increases the international success of Türkiye with qualified graduates,
- Achieves the goal of "a more visible TÜRKİYE" with qualified graduates.

## 8. Current Status of Quality Assurance in the Turkish Higher Education System

According to Bologna Process Implementation Report, student involvement in the quality assurance processes increases the visibility and score of Türkiye in the field of higher education year by year.

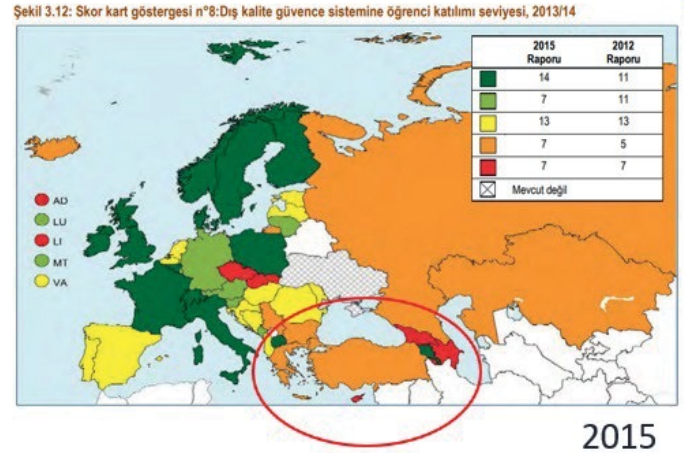


Figure 15: Bologna Implementation Report (EU, 2015)

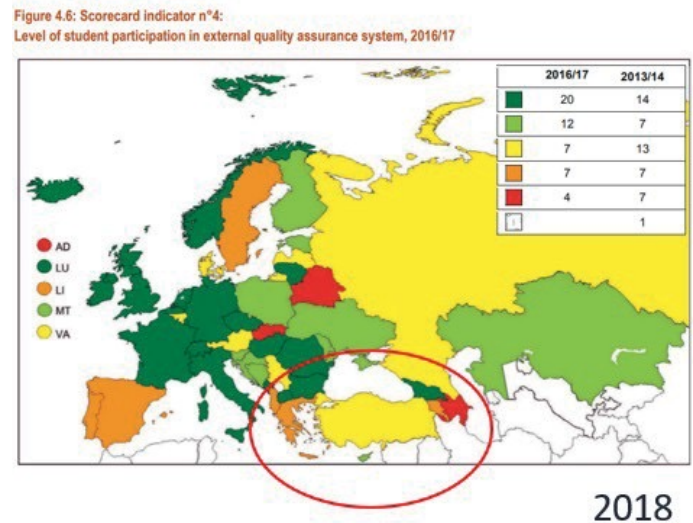


Figure 16: Bologna Implementation Report (EU, 2018)

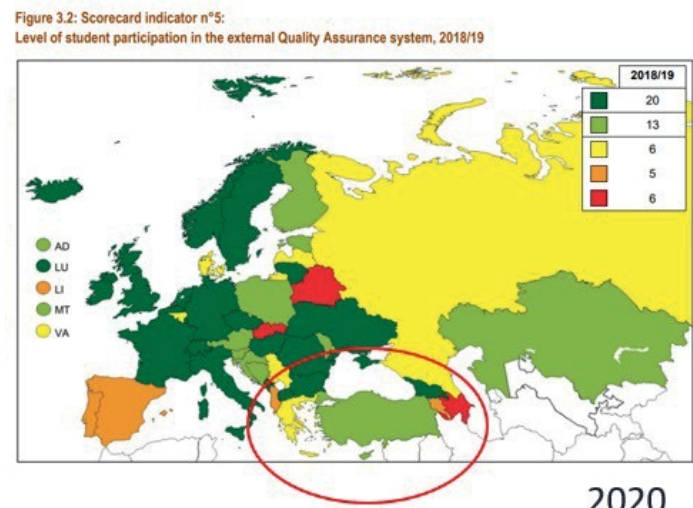
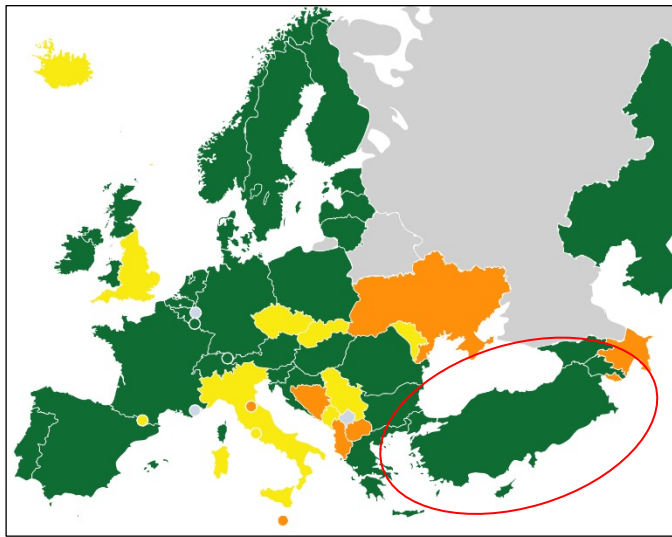


Figure 17: Bologna Implementation Report (EU, 2020)





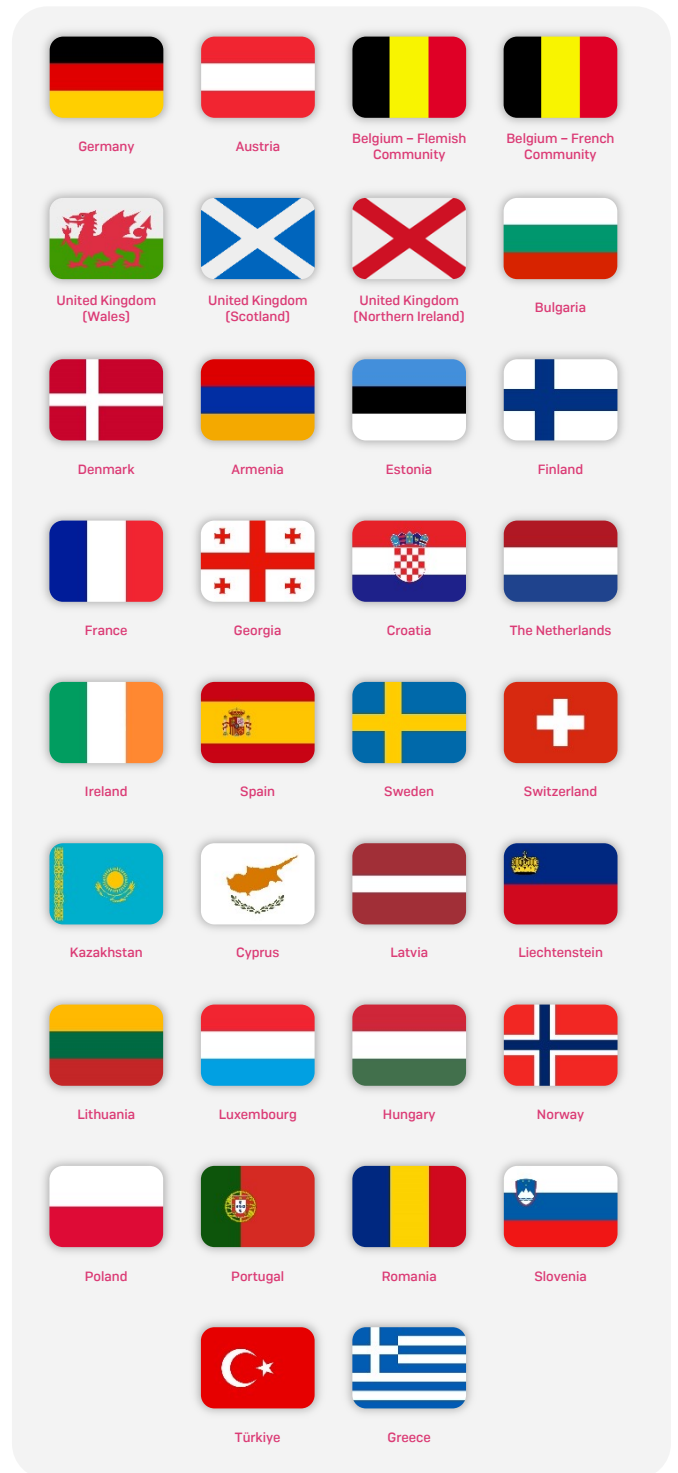
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**Figure 18:** Countries with Agencies Registered with EQAR [EQAR, no date]

**Scorecard categories**

- Students get involved in all quality assurance evaluation works in the following five levels:
  - in the governance structures of national quality assurance agencies,
  - as a full member or observer in external review teams,
  - in the self-evaluation report writing process,
  - in decision-making processes for external reviews, and
  - in follow-up procedures.
- Students are involved in the four or five levels mentioned above.
- Students are involved in three out of five levels mentioned above.
- Students are involved in two out of five levels mentioned above.
- Students are involved in only one or none of the five levels mentioned above.

**9. Countries Whose Higher Education Quality Assurance Systems Are in Full Compliance with the ESG\***



**Figure 19.** Countries Fully Compliant with ESG

\* **ESG:** Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

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“STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN  
PROCESSES, THE QUALITY ASSURANCE  
SYSTEM IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
STRENGTHENS”



