

External Evaluation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee

Final report, June 08

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1. Executive summary

The external evaluation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) took place during the period December 2007 to May 2008, involving a self-evaluation exercise and report, a site visit by an external review panel, and this report. The main purpose of this process was for the HAC to be able to renew its full membership in European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and to be considered in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). In addition, the HAC wished to learn how experts judge its activities in the Hungarian context, and to obtain expert feedback and comments on its implementation of the recommendations of a previous external evaluation of its activities which took place in 1999/2000.

Having examined the evidence carefully in conjunction with each of the ESG standards, it is the external panel's considered opinion that the HAC is substantially compliant with the ENQA membership criteria and the ESG. Furthermore, the panel considers that the HAC has contributed substantially to improving the overall quality of higher education in Hungary over the last ten years, and can continue to do so for the foreseeable future. In this perspective, the external panel has presented a number of outline recommendations which it considers will assist the HAC in achieving this objective.

2. Composition of panel

The Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture and the Hungarian Rectors' Conference who jointly commissioned the review were responsible for selecting and appointing the members of the external review panel. The Ministry and Rectors' Conference considered the recommendations of the HAC International Advisory Board regarding review panel members. Members of the review panel were not current members of the HAC or any of its expert committees, or representatives of a higher education institution or study programme under evaluation by HAC in 2007-2008.

The review panel consisted of six foreign and Hungarian members and included:

- two experts with international experience in quality assurance of HE, one of whom acted as Chair and the other as Secretary for the review;
- two representatives of higher education institutions (one Hungarian and one foreign);
- one student (Hungarian);
- one external stakeholder (Hungarian).

The external panel members were:

- Ferdinand Devínsky, panel chair, former rector of Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia, member and chair of EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme pool of evaluators, member of IEP steering committee;
- Árpád Balogh, panel member, former rector of Nyíregyháza College, member of the Hungarian Higher Education and Research Council, former member of HAC expert committee for biology;

- Tove Bull, panel member, former rector of University of Tromsø, Norway, member of EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme pool of evaluators, member of IEP steering committee, and a regular participant in quality assessments nationally and internationally;
- Lajos Nyiri, external stakeholder panel member, business consultant, former president of the National Committee of Technology Development in Hungary, member of the Strategy Committee of the Higher Education and Research Council;
- András Bohák, student panel member, president of the student organisation at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics;
- Lewis Purser, panel secretary, director for academic affairs at the Irish Universities Association, member of EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme pool of evaluators.

3. Main stages of review

The review took place over 3 main stages. These were:

3.1 Self-evaluation

The HAC was responsible for writing a self-evaluation report. Based on the ENQA *Guidelines for National Reviews*, the self-evaluation report included the context and aims of the evaluation, an outline of the Hungarian higher education system, a detailed description and analysis of the external quality assurance activities undertaken by the HAC, including issues linked to financing and international activities, and a step-by-step analysis of HAC compliance with ESG Parts 2 and 3. The self-evaluation report also covered actions taken on recommendations following the previous external evaluation of the HAC (2000), a SWOT analysis, and substantial annexes.

The self-evaluation phase took place between December 2007, when the HAC self-evaluation team was appointed, and 10 March 2008, when the self-evaluation report and all annexes were sent to the external panel.

The external review panel would like to record its positive appreciation of the self evaluation report, which was written in a very open and useful way, allowing for a good initial understanding of the issues, and high quality interaction with all those met during the site visit.

3.2 Site visit

The review panel made a site visit to Hungary from 21 – 24 April 2008, in order to verify the validity of information contained in the self-evaluation report, and to gather additional evidence as to the HAC's operations and its compliance with the ESG.

The review panel was responsible for determining the duration of the evaluation visit,

and drew up an outline list of organizations, institutions and persons which it wished to meet during the visit. The review chair and secretary were responsible for approving the finalized timetable of the site visit and of all interviews. The panel would like to record its appreciation of the helpful and efficient interaction with the HAC staff during this process. The complete visit schedule can be found in Annex 1.

The HAC provided the local administrative support for the site visit, including the organization of interviews, meeting rooms for the panel and interviews, some of which took place in parallel sessions, as well as computers with internet access.

At the end of the site visit, the review panel delivered a brief oral report of its major findings to the HAC president, secretary general and contact person.

3.3 Evaluation report

The review panel was responsible for delivering this evaluation report within six weeks following the end of the site visit, according to the timeframe set out in the terms of reference. The draft evaluation report, which the terms of reference stipulated should not exceed thirty pages, excluding annexes, was drawn up by the panel secretary based on the findings of the panel. Panel members then commented on the draft and the finalised draft was sent to the HAC to check for factual errors. The panel finalised the report after making the necessary factual corrections, and sent it to the Ministry, to the Rectors' Conference and to the HAC by the end of July 2008.

According to the terms of reference, the HAC will then formulate its comments to the report, including its planned follow-up measures on the report's recommendations, which will constitute part of the final publication of the report.

The HAC shall make the evaluation report public on its website and in print, together with the evaluation decision, its own comments and follow-up measures, by the end of September 2008.

4. Contextual information

4.1 Hungarian quality assurance structures

The Hungarian Accreditation Committee was established in 1993, in the framework of Hungary's first post-socialist higher education law. It is one of the earliest bodies of its kind in Central and Eastern Europe, a product of intense negotiations between policy-makers, higher education institutions and academics that had begun after the fall of the socialist government in 1989/90.

The HAC is the only official body in Hungary responsible for higher education accreditation. According to the Higher Education Act Section 109 (1), "The Hungarian Accreditation Committee of Higher Education is an independent national body of experts assessing quality in education, research, and artistic activities in

higher education, and examining the operation of the institutional quality development scheme.”

4.2 HAC mission and activities

The Higher Education Act has been amended a number of times, often changing one or the other of the HAC’s tasks. Its fundamental mission, however, has remained the same, namely to ensure the quality of Hungarian higher education via external evaluation and accreditation. From the beginning, an improvement orientation has been an integral element of the HAC’s mission.

The HAC's main activities are:

- ex ante accreditation of new higher education institutions;
- ex ante accreditation of new faculties;
- ex ante evaluation of education and outcome requirements of Bachelor programmes;
- ex ante evaluation of education and outcome requirements of Master programmes;
- ex ante accreditation of Bachelor programmes to be launched at an institution;
- ex ante accreditation of Master programmes to be launched at an institution;
- ex ante accreditation of new doctoral schools at universities;
- ex ante evaluation of applications for professorial positions by institutions;
- ex post accreditation of institutions in eight-year cycles;
- ex post accreditation of degree programmes and doctoral schools in eight-year cycles.

The first full cycle of institutional accreditation was completed in 2000, and the second cycle began in 2004. This new institutional accreditation procedure focuses on institutional governance, management and the internal quality assurance mechanisms of a college or university, without looking also at each programme in the given procedure, in contrast to previous practice.

In 2004, the HAC also began a pilot project where it evaluated all study programmes in the country in two disciplines, history and psychology, within a short timeframe and with the same visiting teams. This parallel disciplinary accreditation has been continued since then. By the end of 2007, programmes in law, medicine, pharmaceuticals and dentistry had also been evaluated.

In order to receive state recognition and to issue degrees, private higher education institutions must undergo accreditation. The HAC’s mandate also extends to the secular programmes provided by church-maintained, denominational higher education institutions in receipt of Hungarian state financing. The HAC must also review applications by foreign higher education institutions to function in Hungary, whether they wish to operate alone or in conjunction with a Hungarian institution.

4.3 Engagement with the ESG

The HAC is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in

Higher Education (ENQA) and of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), as well as of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEE Network).

As such, the HAC has been involved with the development of the ESG since their inception, and has incorporated elements of the ESG into its work, in so far as this is possible given that many elements of the HAC's operations are written into legislation. This use of the ESG includes, for example, modelling the HAC guidelines for institutional accreditation on the ESG Part 1. It has also restructured its own approach by separating institutional and programme accreditation. These elements are part of the ongoing embedding of Hungarian higher education in the European Higher Education Area, and the HAC has accompanied and supported, through the accreditation process, the introduction of the Bachelor and Master degree cycles in Hungarian higher education institutions. The last major phase of ex-ante programme accreditation for these is now in process.

4.4 Reasons for commissioning the evaluation

The Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) initiated the external evaluation with the purpose of renewing its full membership in ENQA and of showing its compliance with the ESG. In addition, the HAC wished to learn how experts judge its activities in the Hungarian context. This involves the legal environment in which HAC works and the degree with which it is able to comply with the legislation as well as with the HAC's internal regulations, standards and procedures.

The first external evaluation of the HAC, conducted in 1999/2000, produced a set of recommendations. In this second external evaluation, the HAC sought expert feedback and comments on its achievements and failures with regard to those recommendations from 2000 which are still relevant.

The framework for external evaluation of the HAC was accepted by the HAC plenary on 5 October 2007, and subsequently agreed with the Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture (OKM) and the Hungarian Rectors' Conference, who jointly commissioned the external evaluation.

4.5 Purpose and scope of evaluation

The external evaluation of the HAC is a type B evaluation, as defined in the ENQA *Guidelines for national reviews of ENQA member agencies* p. 7. This means that the purpose of the review is twofold:

- to check compliance with the ESG and thereby the ENQA membership criteria, and
- a wider purpose, namely to determine the effectiveness of the HAC's activities within the context of Hungarian higher education quality, and to comment on the HAC's progress on the recommendations set down in the report on the *External Evaluation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee*, conducted by a panel coordinated by CRE (now EUA) in 1999/2000.

4.6 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria against which the review panel assessed the HAC were:

- the ESG Part 3, European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies, as well as ESG Part 2, European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education;
- legislation governing the HAC and the HAC's internal regulations and criteria;
- the recommendations contained in the external evaluation report of 2000.

The full terms of reference for the external evaluation can be found in Annex 2.

5. Summary of evidence gathered

The review panel collected information by:

- studying the self-evaluation report and other documents relevant to the operation of the HAC;
- a site visit to the HAC offices;
- interviews with the HAC leadership, including its President and Secretary General;
- interviews with HAC members and expert committee members, including representatives of employers' organizations;
- interviews with the HAC Appeals Committee and Financial Supervisory Board members;
- interviews with HAC staff members;
- interviews with representatives of the National Conference of Student Unions and of the National Union of Doctoral Students;
- interviews with rectors and deans from higher education institutions evaluated by the HAC in the last two years;
- interview with the state secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Based on these meetings and interviews, and on the basis of the evidence available, the external panel examined whether HAC meets each criterion in the ESG Sections 2 and 3, as follows.

5.1 Compliance with ESG Part 2: European standards for the external quality assurance of higher education

The specific inclusion in this external evaluation of an examination of the HAC's compliance with the ESG Part 2 was noted favourably by the external panel.

ESG 2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures: External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

The external panel found ample evidence to show that the HAC takes into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes in institutions. It should be noted that these institutional processes are heavily influenced by the work of the HAC itself, through its guidebook for institutional accreditation and annexes, which describe in detail the various elements an institution's quality assurance and development should cover. These are an adapted version of the ESG Part 1.

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.

Recommendation: Hungarian HEIs should take a more proactive approach to their own internal quality assurance procedures. The HAC should assist them in doing so by moving further towards an institutional approach to accreditation and QA.

ESG 2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes: The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

As already outlined, the HAC must meet a number of different aims and objectives through its activities. The external panel found that these aims and objectives are well known within Hungarian higher education and published. The relevant attendant processes are likewise known and published. Stakeholders are involved in these processes, including in assessment of the impact of the HAC's activities through various channels, including the current external evaluation.

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.

ESG 2.3 Criteria for decisions: Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

The external panel found that HAC decisions are based on explicit and published criteria. Both the decisions and the criteria are published.

However, in the case of licensing a programme or granting the title of professor, the final decision resulting from the application of these criteria does not lie with the HAC, but with the Minister for Education. The HAC self-evaluation report stated that in these areas the Minister has overturned HAC's negative recommendations on a number of occasions, even after a full and independent appeal process. This situation was confirmed during the external panel's meeting with the Ministry officials. The HAC's own original decisions regarding programmes were however published on both its website and in its journal. Regarding professorships, only total figures are published.

Concerning the HAC's internal decision making process, the external panel was informed that, in a small number of cases, internal ad hoc committees appear to have been created to "moderate" the reports of the HAC visiting panels before these reached the HAC plenum for formal decision. The external panel was concerned that this practice, although apparently very limited, could lead to a perception of

interference with the HAC's own criteria and decision making processes.

Opinion of the panel: Partly compliant.

Recommendation: The power of the Minister to change any recommendation of HAC should be removed. If this is not possible to change, then the Minister's reasons for changing a recommendation should be made public and in writing. This applies equally to appointment of professors and to the approval of academic programmes, following the appeals process in both cases.

Recommendation: The chair of each visiting panel should report directly to the HAC plenum when it is considering the final report from that visiting panel.

ESG 2.4 Processes fit for purpose: All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

Although the basic aims and objectives of HAC's various activities are published and well known, as previously stated, the external panel found a need to ensure greater differentiation between the two specific processes of external evaluation and accreditation, in order to enhance their fitness for purpose, and to encourage greater understanding of these different processes among the HAC's main stakeholders. In particular, there is a need to enhance the improvement orientation in these processes.

Opinion of the panel: Partly compliant.

Recommendation: Include a greater focus on improvement in the HAC's external evaluation processes, and include greater international participation in all HAC processes to enhance general fitness for purpose.

ESG 2.5 Reporting: Reports should be published and should be written in a style, which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

The external panel saw evidence that HAC reports are published and accessible in full on the HAC website. Reports on parallel disciplinary programme accreditation have been published in hard copy form as well.

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.

Recommendation: Better communication activity would ensure that these reports are more widely known outside the core target audience.

ESG 2.6 Follow-up procedures: Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

The HAC procedures include follow-up on its various activities, where relevant.

However, the HAC acknowledged in its SER that it does not have the resources to monitor properly the implementation of all follow-up recommendations. This should in any case be the primary responsibility of each higher education institution, and be verified in the next evaluation cycle. Moving from the current accreditation procedures to a greater focus on external evaluation will encourage greater emphasis on the follow-up process.

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant

ESG 2.7 Periodic reviews: External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

The HAC cycle for periodic reviews is every eight years. The external panel found that this is clearly defined and published. (Higher Education Act, Section 110 (1) c)

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.

ESG 2.8 System-wide analyses: Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analyzing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

Currently, the HAC publishes comprehensive yearly reports and summary tables of activity. There is also a well structured presentation of its work, with documentation, on the HAC website, in both Hungarian and English language versions. It has also undertaken a previous external evaluation, including a self-evaluation, and has produced a number of system-wide reviews of some professional programmes.

However, in its self-evaluation, the HAC stated that, under pressure of the current high workload, it does not have the resources for greater system-wide analyses, and in discussion with the external panel review this lack of resources was acknowledged as a weakness in terms of meeting the needs of HAC stakeholders. In the future, such capacity will be important.

Opinion of the panel: Partly compliant.

Recommendation: HAC has the potential to do much more system-wide analytical work, and already has the materials for this. Such analyses would be of great benefit for higher education policy makers (both in the Parliament and in the Ministry/government), the HEIs, HAC and other stakeholders.

5.2 Compliance with ESG Part 3: European standards for external quality assurance agencies

ESG 3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education: The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the

European Standards and Guidelines.

As noted in 5.1 above, the external panel found that the HAC has well functioning external quality assurance processes as described in the ESG Part 2.

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.

ESG 3.2 Official status: Agencies should be formally recognized by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

The HAC and its functions with regard to external quality assurance are written into Hungarian primary and secondary legislation. In the opinion of the panel, the HAC also complies with the requirements of this legislation.

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.

ESG 3.3 Activities: Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institution or programme level) on a regular basis.

The HAC has completed its first full cycle of institutional accreditation and is engaged with the second cycle. In addition, it is in final stages of the process of accrediting all new Bachelor and Master programmes at Hungarian HEIs.

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.

ESG 3.4 Resources: Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organize and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.

HAC obtains its resources through support from the State budget, as decided by the Parliament set in a separate item within the chapter of the Ministry of Education and Culture (the relative amount of this support, in proportion to the overall state HE budget, is defined by the Higher Education Act), and from the fees it charges for some of the services it provides to HEIs. However, despite successfully increasing revenue from the provision of services, HAC has not been able to know with certainty what its allocation from the state budget will be. It therefore has difficulties planning its activities and human resources. Furthermore, there are legal restrictions regarding its ability to generate income from its own sources, and the overall levels of the fees it can charge are defined by legislation.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the HAC would be enhanced if it were able to budget with certainty, and to receive an annual lump sum as per the legislation in force. The HAC's client HEIs already pay for some services, and the external panel encourages HAC to explore with them which additional services they would be prepared to pay for.

Opinion of the panel: Partly compliant.

Recommendation: HAC should develop further its own sources of funding, for example by charging fees for all types of appeals.

Recommendation: Greater precision regarding the allocation of the annual state budget support for the HAC would allow it to budget and plan more effectively.

ESG 3.5 Mission statement: Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

The external panel found that the HAC has a mission statement with a clear and explicit set of goals and objectives for its work. This has been used to develop a HAC quality policy and a strategy document. These are all publicly available on the HAC website.

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.

ESG 3.6 Independence: Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

Hungarian legislation grants HAC an independent and autonomous position. The external panel found that the HAC reports are published without external influence.

However, as noted above under ESG 2.3, the Minister for Education and Culture has the authority to overturn HAC decisions in the cases of negative accreditation of professors and programmes. This power, if and when used, does not affect the status of the original HAC decisions, which are published.

HAC membership is dominated by academics from Hungarian higher education institutions, nominated either by the Hungarian Rectors' Conference or through the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. While the external panel found no evidence to suggest that the independence of the HAC was compromised by this situation, changing the balance of HAC membership would provide greater symbolic reassurance regarding its independence.

It should be noted that the HAC has had an Ethics Committee in place since 2000, and has an active policy (Code of Ethics) regarding possible conflicts of interest, which all members and members of standing committees are required to sign. External evaluators also sign a no conflict of interest statement with their contract.

As previously noted under ESG 3.4, the financial independence of HAC needs strengthening. The Ministry should provide clearer and earlier details of funding, and the HAC's own sources of revenue need to be developed.

Opinion of the panel:

Fully compliant – in terms of HAC’s operations and decision making.
Partly compliant – in terms of financial autonomy.

Recommendation: Decrease the number of the HAC’s Hungarian academic members and increase the numbers of student, stakeholder and international members.

Recommendation: Strengthen the HAC’s financial independence by providing greater clarity and regularity regarding the Ministry’s funding, and strengthen alternative sources of revenue.

ESG 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies: The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- *a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;*
- *an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the HAC;*
- *publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;*
- *a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.*

As stated already in this report, the external panel found that the external quality assurance criteria and processes used by the HAC are pre-defined and well known. These include a self-assessment procedure by the institution under evaluation, and an external evaluation by a group of experts, including students and involving a site visit. Reports containing decisions, recommendations and other formal outcomes are published, and follow-up procedures are in place. The HAC has a fully-functioning independent appeals procedure.

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant.

ESG 3.8 Accountability procedures: Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

The external panel found that the HAC has in place an independent Appeals Board and a Financial Supervisory Board, each with three members.

The HAC has its own quality assurance policy and instruments in place to ensure its effective functioning and provide the basis for its own ongoing development. It regularly collects feedback from evaluated HEIs and also from review panel members. Summaries of these surveys are accessible on the HAC website. It publishes comprehensive yearly reports and summary tables of activity. There is also a well structured presentation of its work, with documentation, on the HAC website, in both Hungarian and English language versions. It has also undertaken a previous external evaluation, including a self-evaluation, and has produced a number of system-wide reviews of some professional programmes. All HAC documents and

reports are available on its website in Hungarian, and many also in English.

Opinion of the panel: Fully compliant

Summary opinion:

Based on the evidence above, in the opinion of the evaluation panel, the HAC is substantially compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines.

5.3 HAC effectiveness in the context of Hungarian higher education quality

In November 2005 the Hungarian parliament passed a new Higher Education Act, which launched a major reform of higher education degree structures, governance, management, and financing, following similar changes in other European countries aimed at creating a European Higher Education Area. With effect from the 2006-07 academic year, the bachelor and master degrees were introduced, as well as a doctoral school structure for the PhD. The regulations regarding admission to higher education were reformed, with students now competing based on choice and school leaving results. Student and staff mobility has been provided with greater support, and greater emphasis has been placed on career tracking, information and support services.

All these important reforms imply a key role for enhanced quality in higher education, and for improved quality assurance policies and practices across the entire system. As the only such agency, the role of the HAC is therefore central in the successful implementation and monitoring of these reforms. This role obviously includes, but is not limited to, the ex-ante accreditation of the new bachelor and master degree programmes and doctoral schools, and of new faculties and higher education institutions.

These reforms should be seen and understood in a wider European context, in which all countries are undertaking similarly ambitious reforms of their higher education and training structures, governance and financing mechanisms, as part of the Europe-wide Bologna process, and towards achieving the objectives of the Lisbon agenda.

The fundamental mission of the HAC is to ensure the quality of Hungarian higher education via external evaluation and accreditation, with an improvement orientation. Prior to the start of the current reform process, it should be noted that there was a rapid increase in the size of the higher education sector in Hungary, both in terms of the number of higher education institutions – despite a number of mergers between public universities, and in terms of students. This growth has obviously also had effects on the work of the HAC, which has had to ensure its mission and functions for this expanded sector.

With the introduction of the 2005 reforms, the HAC has likewise had to face new challenges, including the accreditation of all new bachelor and master programmes, which during the period 2005-2007 totalled in excess of 1150 new programmes. During these same three years, the HAC made over 2400 accreditation decisions,

including a small number concerning the creation of new doctoral schools, over 550 concerning applications for university professorships, and 11 concerning applications for new higher education institutions. This large-scale activity shows clearly the central role that the HAC has played in Hungarian higher education in recent years.

It is scarcely surprising therefore that there has been a significant demand on the HAC's human and financial resources. The self-evaluation report prepared in advance of this external evaluation drew attention at several stages to the critical issue of HAC resources and their suitability for the tasks currently undertaken. It is clear to the external panel that HAC activities are limited by the current level of resources available. Of particular importance is the need for the HAC to produce more analyses and research on the effects of its actions and decisions, and to feed these effectively into the ongoing reform process.

Although it can be expected that the level of HAC activity will stabilise once the current round of ex-ante accreditation of bachelor and master programmes is complete, and that in fact HAC activity in these two specific areas will decrease, there is a corresponding need for the introduction and implementation of these programmes within each institution to be monitored closely at sectoral level, in order to ensure effective steering and quality assurance of these elements, and to feed the findings of these into the wider reform process.

This refocusing of HAC activity will also need to accord greater emphasis on the outcomes of higher education, including the outcomes of teaching, learning and research activities. To a certain extent, this will be a natural evolution as part of the move from a predominant accreditation process to one of external quality assurance, but it is likewise crucial for the HAC's future effectiveness in ensuring the quality of Hungarian higher education. Such a renewed focus on outcomes will also help ensure that the improvement orientation of the HAC's mission is brought into the centre of activity.

One measure of the effectiveness of any organisation such as the HAC is the extent of public knowledge and awareness regarding its activities, and most importantly, of the outcomes of these activities. In the current reform process, in which fundamental changes are being made to many aspects of Hungarian higher education, affecting all students, staff and major stakeholders, it is crucial that effective communication take place regarding the role of quality assurance and the outcomes of the HAC's activities.

5.4 Progress on the recommendations made in the 1999/2000 external evaluation

The external panel was also asked to comment regarding HAC's progress in implementing the recommendations made as part of the *External Evaluation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee*, conducted by a panel coordinated by CRE (now EUA) in 1999/2000.

The external panel therefore paid special attention to these recommendations and, where still relevant, the panel examined the evidence available to assess to what extent they had been implemented. In the opinion of the panel, most of the recommendations from 2000 have been addressed. However, there are still a number of recommendations where the HAC has acknowledged clearly that that further work remains to be done. These include, for example, producing analyses of the HAC's overall evaluations and operations, creating a system of internal QA for HAC, continuing to diversify the profile of HAC evaluation experts, and reducing the number of HAC committees.

In more detail, the external panel's opinions can be summarised as follows:

2000 Recommendation 1: The present mode of operation of the HAC can be improved within its traditional definition of tasks and objectives. The following suggestions would be relevant, even if the HAC did not change its scope, as suggested by the Panel, towards a closer linkage of the criteria of academic quality and social relevance, or towards increased emphasis on an improvement-oriented function of quality assurance.

Given that the scope of HAC's tasks and objectives have not changed fundamentally since 2000, even following the provisions of the 2005 Higher Education Act, this recommendation is still valid. There is considerable scope for an enhanced focus on quality improvement. As already noted, such a focus will become naturally clearer once the current round of ex-ante accreditation activity has been completed.

2000 Recommendation 2: The SER presented by the HAC contains suggestions intended to rectify some of its perceived weaknesses. In general the Panel agrees with those suggestions, but some are not seen as being very effective (for instance, WB3: it is hoped that the level of interest...will rise in the near future, WB4: we shall draw the attention of committee chairmen... WC2: We have drawn the attention of program officers... WC3, WC5, WC7, WC8, WC9: Program officer should lay even more stress...). Some are seen as very negative (for instance WC6 - allowing expert committee members to vote without being present to discuss the resolutions).

As already mentioned in the discussion of ESG 2.3, in order to assist with ensuring consistency, the Chair of each visiting panel should report to the HAC Plenum when it is considering the final report of that panel. The work associated with finalising each report and checking these with laws and regulations should be the work of the HAC secretariat, rather than the work of a standing or ad hoc committee.

2000 Recommendation 3: Standards of performance for the HAC, in addition to time schedules and adherence to the law, should be developed and implemented. Such standards should include criteria for reporting, for committee decisions and for feedback to higher education institutions and the society at large. This should enable the HAC to demonstrate where it has achieved its goals and to identify areas for further action and improvement. This implies a move away from presenting the outcomes of HAC's work (SER page 30 and annual reports) purely in statistical terms, or as a series of procedural matters and announcements, towards a presentation of reports that analyses trends and highlights good practice.

As already recommended under ESG 2.8, given adequate resources it would be desirable for the HAC to undertake greater activity in the analysis of trends and good practice in Hungarian higher education. This would help in the ongoing evolution of quality assurance in the country, with benefits for the HEIs, the HAC, and other stakeholders.

2000 Recommendation 4: HAC urgently needs to address the problem of excessive bureaucracy and overly complex demands in the collection of material for self-reporting. This has negative consequences for the process. The Panel was informed by institutions that the process was tiresome and, as a result, the component of quality improvement has been neglected. A very thick self-evaluation report is not likely to be heeded or even read. In this respect, the Accreditation Guidebook needs revision.

The guidelines have been fundamentally revised since 2000, in several stages. The external panel was informed by representatives of HEIs that the new guidelines were substantially improved. The problem now reported is that there has been constant change in recent years and that it would be helpful for HEIs to have less changes over the next number of years, in order to allow stakeholders to become accustomed to working with the new guidelines.

While the problem of bureaucratic self-reporting has been improved, notably in terms of data collection issues, the external panel found that it is still seen as heavy by HEIs.

2000 Recommendation 5: The HAC needs to establish clear guidance for Visiting Committee Chairmen on proposals for the composition of the Visiting Committees. This means ensuring a balance of expertise and avoiding over-representation of any one higher education institution or of institutions from the capital. More consistent monitoring of the composition of Visiting Committees by the Secretariat, better guidance to Visiting Committee Chairmen on the optimal composition of Visiting Committees and clear guidance on 'over-representation' of any particular institution or constituency on other committees are all strategies which could mitigate this problem.

The external panel was informed that the need for training of review teams has been addressed and is now seen as very satisfactory from the perspective of team members. In line with its recommendations under ESG 3.6, the external panel recommends increasing the involvement of students, external stakeholders, and international experts as members of review teams.

2000 Recommendation 6: The HAC needs to publish a Guidebook with a clear code of conduct for members of Visiting Committees, addressing matters such as training and briefing, the purpose of pre-visit meetings, prior study of applications, behaviour during the visits, reporting, etc.

The external panel found evidence to indicate that this recommendation had been fully implemented.

2000 Recommendation 7: The HAC needs to create an internal system of quality assurance. The Panel suggests that the opinions of accredited institutions on the accreditation procedures should be systematically solicited after the visits. Issues such as the behavior of the visiting experts, their degree of proficiency and their knowledge of the self-accreditation report should be considered. The HAC needs to act on the basis of these assessments as, in its interviews, the Panel heard opinions to the effect that the quality and performance of Visiting Committees were uneven.

Following exploration of these issues during the external panel's discussions, it appears that feedback is now collected from HEIs and team leaders on an annual basis. However, systematic feedback following the accreditation process is not provided by HAC to the visiting review teams, who would be interested in learning about the feedback obtained from the respective HEI .

2000 Recommendation 8: The HAC needs to establish a clear strategy for training members of the Visiting Committees and of the Secretariat.

The external panel found that this recommendation had been partly implemented. Training members of expert teams now takes place on a regular basis. Such training is of course a continuous activity, needed to ensure the preparedness and suitability of new experts, and also to keep existing experts up to date with recent developments and changes.

However, the external panel also found that staff development for the HAC Secretariat does not take place, due to pressures of work and budgetary constraints. The external panel considers that support for professional development opportunities for the HAC Secretariat should be seen as a normal investment in the quality of the overall HAC operations.

2000 Recommendation 9: The HAC needs to review the format, transparency and accessibility of accreditation reports. The current position of two final reports - one detailed and semiconfidential, the other public but often containing no more than a yes/no decision does not provide the sort of information needed by constituents in the society at large. The public impact of these reports, through wide dissemination, is the only real power evaluation agencies can wield.

The full reports have been published since 2004-05, so this recommendation has been implemented. However, the external panel considers that these publications should be communicated better among key stakeholders in order to raise awareness about the HAC activities and the quality of its work.

2000 Recommendation 10: The importance given to experts holding a scientific degree needs to be attenuated, as it tends to reduce the membership pool for the HAC and limit the choice of experts eligible for the Academy (see 274). This would allow the pool of reviewers to be extended to experts having a background in the arts or in subjects better adapted to the vocational emphasis of the college sector. It would also facilitate participation on the part of representatives of the society at large.

There would not appear to have been much progress achieved in the implementation of this recommendation. The external panel has already emphasised the need to re-examine the composition of the HAC membership, and to enlarge the pool of expertise to include a broader concept of quality.

2000 Recommendation 11: The HAC needs to consider options that would better address the more vocationally oriented characteristics of the college sector. One possible solution to this problem would be the establishment of separate chambers for the accreditation of universities and colleges.

The introduction of the Bologna process in Hungary since 2000 has changed the nature of this recommendation. The inclusion of an employer, and generally a broader range of expertise in each team, would be helpful in working towards the underlying concept of this recommendation.

2000 Recommendation 12: The HAC may consider reviewing the utility and purpose of committees, with a view to reducing their number.

The external panel found no progress had been achieved regarding this recommendation, and would like to echo the need to reduce the number of committees. It is suggested that using the Frascati manual might be a useful way to group subject areas, leading to a substantial reduction in the number of committees needed. The HAC college structure could also be used. As part of the HAC's overall move towards a greater institutional emphasis in the external evaluation, it will also be necessary to move away from the current large numbers of specific subject committees.

2000 Recommendation 13: The Panel suggests that the HAC consider new ways of addressing the issue of programme breadth and interdisciplinarity. For example concurrent review of a group of fields of study, including related interdisciplinary fields, might be a suitable way of solving some problems.

There is a clear need for HAC policies and guidelines to give greater consideration to interdisciplinary fields. While the introduction of interdisciplinary ad hoc committees has certainly helped address the issue, reducing the overall number of specific subject committees will likewise help improve interdisciplinarity.

2000 Recommendation 14: The HAC should continue its international cooperation in the exchange of good practice and benchmarking of standards.

The external panel notes the substantial engagement of HAC at international level, and recommends that this international cooperation continue. In particular, greater participation by international experts in HAC activities would be useful for HEIs and HAC itself.

6. Recommendations for improvement

Based on its examination of the documents provided, and on the high quality discussions which took place during the site visit, the external panel has outlined a number of recommendations which it considers would be useful for HAC in its ongoing quality improvement. Some of these are clearly linked to the ongoing use of the European Standards and Guidelines, and have already been mentioned at the relevant place in this report. Others are linked to broader issues of quality and quality improvement. It should be noted that some of these recommendations may need changes in primary and / or secondary legislation, in order for them to be feasible.

6.1 Moving to an institutional, ex-post approach to quality

- More focus on output, not only input.
- Move to ex-post, phasing out ex-ante evaluations and accreditation.
- Once the current mass of bachelor and master programme accreditation is over, refocus on institutional approach, moving away from programme approach, which can be maintained for ad hoc needs.
- Encourage wider view of quality, not just academic content, as part of move towards institutional approach. This will involve matching of academic criteria and other elements of quality.
- This will also move towards greater follow-up of institutional issues.
- This will involve rethinking the composition of the HAC staff and structures.
- HAC should then consider moving from an 8 year cycle to a 5 year cycle for institutional reviews.

6.2 Structure and operations of HAC

- Start to think about decreasing the number of HAC members, increasing the variety within its membership:
 - more stakeholders,
 - more students
 - less academic representatives (universities and Hungarian Academy of Sciences)
 - include international representatives.
- Students need voting rights on the HAC.
- HAC Presidency should have more contacts with major external stakeholders (employers).
- There is a need for improved internal staff communication at the HAC.
- Use Frascati manual to define major academic areas, and reduce the number of discipline committees, or remove all of them so that the current college structure takes this responsibility.
- The Chair of each visiting panel should report to Plenum when it is considering the final report from that visiting panel.
- Tidying up the report of the visiting panel and checking with laws and regulations should be the work of the HAC secretariat.

- Whenever possible, ensure greater transparency, and develop the HAC communications policy with key stakeholders and wider public.
- Undertake more system-wide analytical work, using materials already available.
- Build on the positive experience of a paper-less evaluation of doctoral schools, and move towards this paper-free approach in the other accreditation procedures.
- Look at all possible options for rationalization of HAC processes, in order to reduce bureaucracy.
- Include a greater focus on improvement in the HAC's external evaluation processes.
- Involve international experts in the external evaluation processes

6.3 Role of Minister

- The power of the Minister to change the recommendation of HAC should be removed.
- If this is not possible to change, then the Minister's detailed reasons for changing the recommendation should be made public and in writing.
- This applies equally to appointment of professors and to the approval of academic programmes.

6.4 On internal quality in institutions

- HAC guidelines and procedures have improved considerably since 2000, it would now be useful to develop some stability in the process, and not change the procedures on an annual basis.
- Need to develop a culture of an open competition for professorships, with international advertising, search committee, international selection panel.
- Need to find possibilities to foster more joint programmes both between Hungarian institutions and between Hungarian and foreign institutions.
- It should be normal to prepare self-evaluation documentation in English, to allow international experts to participate in the process and to encourage international benchmarking.
- Need to develop the follow-up and monitoring systems by HEIs and by HAC on institutional and programme indicators

6.5 Financing

- Ministry should be more transparent regarding annual allocation.
- HEIs should pay for all appeals processes.
- Universities could see, under exactly defined conditions and rules, the possibility to support HAC in some specific cases.

7. Conclusions

The external panel has found that, in its considered opinion, the Hungarian Accreditation Committee is substantially compliant with the ENQA membership criteria and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). In addition, the external panel has examined the implementation of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the HAC activities which took place in 2000, and found that considerable progress has been achieved in the implementation of these recommendations, many of which were of a long-term nature and which have also been raised in the examination of the HAC's compliance with the ESG.

Based on these, the external panel has made a number of comments on the overall effectiveness of the HAC's activities in the current context of Hungarian higher education. The external panel has also put forward a number of summary recommendations, in five main areas, which it considers will assist the HAC in the continued implementation of its mission and key activities.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Site visit schedule 21-24 April 2008

Annex 2: Terms of reference for the external evaluation of the HAC

Annex 1

Visit Schedule

Dates: 21-24 April 2008

Place unless otherwise indicated: HAC offices, 1061 Budapest, Kiraly Street 16, 4th floor, conference room "B"

Day	Time	Interview objective	Meeting participants Team and:
<i>Mon.</i> <i>21 April</i>	afternoon	Arrival	
	8.30 p.m.	Dinner reserved at Carat Hotel	
<i>Tue</i> <i>22 April</i>	9.30 a.m.	Clarify aim of review and HAC background issues	HAC President György Bazsa, Secretary General Tibor Szántó
	10.00 a.m.	Discuss self-evaluation process	SER group: György Bazsa, László Trencsényi HAC members & Tibor Szántó, Christina Rozsnyai programme officer for foreign affairs
	11.00 a.m.	Internal meeting , coffee and refreshments	
	11.15 a.m.	Discuss HAC tasks and procedures	HAC presidium and HAC membership: György Bazsa, István Greiner, Károly Iványi, László Keviczky, Péter Lenkei, Judit Padisák, László Trencsényi, Vanda Lamm
	12.30 noon - 1.30 p.m.	Discuss HAC quality development and strategy	Quality Development Committee: László Trencsényi chair, István Páczelt, Edit Szücs Varga, Mariann Veres Somos, Attila Horvát and Strategy Expert Committee: László Keviczky, József Mecs, Pál Tardy, (László Trencsényi)
	1.45 - 3.00 p.m.	LUNCH on invitation of HAC Vista Café VI. Budapest Paulay Ede u. 7 268-0888	External evaluation coordinators: György Bazsa, Tibor Szántó, Christina Rozsnyai HAC; Gábor Mészáros Education Authority of Min. of Ed. Equivalence Centre and ENIC/ NARIC
	3.15 p.m.	Taxi to Ministry	
	3.30 p.m.	Discuss HAC in relation to government, HE quality and HAC financing	Ministry of Education and Culture: Károly Manherz, Deputy Secretary of State for HE and colleagues
	4.30 p.m.	Taxi to HAC offices	
	4.45 p.m.	Internal meeting , coffee and refreshments	

Day	Time	Interview objective	Meeting participants Team and:
	5.00 – 5.30 p.m.	Discuss HAC experience with previous president	HAC previous President László Fésüs
	5.30 – 6.30 p.m.	Discuss professorial appointments	HAC Expert College for University Professorships: Gábor Makara, P. P. Pálffy
	Evening	FREE	
<i>Wed 23 April</i>	9.00 a.m. parallel	Discuss staff work	HAC staff members
	9.00 a.m. parallel	Discuss HAC management -in Secretary General's office	HAC Secretary General Tibor Szántó, Deputy Secretary General Eva Ruff, Financial Director László Gémesi
	10.00 a.m.	Discuss HAC in relation to external recognition and employer satisfaction	HAC External Stakeholders Expert Committee: Ákos Lukács, Pál Stern
	11.30 a.m.	Internal meeting , coffee and refreshments	
	11.45 a.m.- 12.45 p.m.	Discuss HAC in HEI perspective	Hungarian Rectors' Conference: József Bayer, Ferenc Hudecz, László Solti, and Zoltán Dubéczki General Secretary
	1.00 – 2.30 p.m.	LUNCH on invitation of Ministry	Rectors Conf.: József Bayer, László Solti, and Zoltán Dubéczki, Secr. Gen.; Gábor Mészáros, Júlia Juhász, Ed. Authority; György Bazsa, Tibor Szántó, Christina Rozsnyai, HAC
	2.45 p.m.	Discuss team preparation and visit procedure	Institutional and Disciplinary Evaluation Teams: Erzsébet Dimány, László Kacsirek, László Lasztovicza student, Gábor Medveczki student, László Módis, Tibor Palánkai, Győző Petrányi, Dezső Sima
	3.45 p.m. parallel	Discuss issues relating to institutional and programme accreditation	State HEI leaders: Ferenc Farkas, Vice- Rector Pécs U.; Ferenc Hudecz, Rector Eötvös Lóránd U.; Ferenc Ternovszky, Budapest Business School; János Fodor, Budapest Tech
	3.45 p.m. parallel	Discuss issues relating to institutional and programme accreditation - in HAC conference room "A"	Private HEI leaders József Bayer, Rector King Sigismund College; László Vass, Budapest College of Communication and Business; Denominational Colleges: representatives L. Hangyás, Rector Adventist College; Szabolcs Szuromi, Péter Pázmány Catholic University; Gábor Sonkoly, Bhaktivendanda Buddhist College

Day	Time	Interview objective	Meeting participants Team and:
	5.15 p.m.	Internal meeting , coffee and refreshments	
	5.30 – 6.30 p.m.	Discuss HAC through students' eyes	Students representatives of National Student Union HÖÖK and National Union of Doctoral Students DOSZ: László Lasztovicza, DOSZ, 2 from HÖÖK
	Evening	FREE	
<i>Thu</i> <i>24 April</i>	9.00 a.m.	Discuss appeals	HAC Board of Appeals: András Ronatás (HAC Founding President), Péter Bíró, Júlia Szekeres
	10.00 a.m.	Discuss HAC finances	HAC Financial Supervisory Board: András Patkós
	11.00 a.m.	Internal meeting Sandwiches, refreshments	
	11.30 a.m.	Visit round-up, clarification of findings	HAC President György Bazsa, Secretary General Tibor Szántó and Christina Rozsnyai
	afternoon	Departure	

Annex 2**Terms of Reference****For the external evaluation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee**

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) adopted by the European Ministers of Education in Bergen in 2005 call for the external review of a European quality assurance agency's activities at least every five years. In addition, the regulations for membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) call for an external review every five years, according to the ESG criteria. The *Hungarian Accreditation Committee* (HAC) initiates its external evaluation for the purpose of renewing its full membership in ENQA and in compliance with the ESG.

The framework for external evaluation of the HAC was accepted by the HAC plenary on 5 October 2007, and subsequently agreed with the Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture and the Hungarian Rectors' Conference, who are commissioning the review.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The external review is a type B evaluation of the HAC as defined in the ENQA *Guidelines for national reviews of ENQA member agencies* p. 7. This means that the purpose of the review is twofold:

1. To check compliance with the ESG and thereby the ENQA membership criteria, and
2. A wider purpose, namely to determine
 - a. the effectiveness of the HAC's activities within the context of Hungarian higher education quality, and
 - b. to comment on the HAC's progress on the recommendations set down in the report on the *External Evaluation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee*, conducted by a panel coordinated by CRE (now EUA) in 1999/2000.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria against which the Review Panel shall assess the HAC are

- for Purpose and Scope, 1.: the ESG Part 3, European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies, as well as Part 2, European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education,
- for Purpose and Scope, 2.a: legislation governing the HAC and the HAC's internal regulations and criteria
- for Purpose and Scope, 2.b: publication titled *External Evaluation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee* (Budapest: HAC, 2000).

REVIEW PANEL

The Ministry and Rector's Conference who commission the review are responsible for selecting and appointing the members of the external Review Panel. The Ministry and Rector's Conference may consider the recommendations of the HAC's International Advisory Board for Review Panel members. Members of the Review Panel may not be current members of the HAC or any of its expert committees, or representatives of a

higher education institution or study program under evaluation by HAC in 2007-2008.

The Review Panel shall consist of six foreign and Hungarian members and include

- a. two experts with international experience in quality assurance of HE, one of whom shall act as Chair and the other as Secretary for the review (foreign)
- b. two representatives of higher education institutions (one Hungarian and one foreign)
- c. one student (Hungarian)
- d. one external stakeholder (Hungarian)

All panel members should be familiar with the ESG.

The Review Panel chair shall be responsible for coordinating the review process. The Secretary shall be responsible for liaising between the Panel members and the Ministry and Rector's Conference as commissioning parties, the HAC Secretariat as organizers for the evaluation process and site visit.

The Review Panel will collect information by

- studying the Self-Evaluation Report and other documents relevant to the operation of the HAC
- a site visit to the HAC offices
- interviews with the HAC leadership, including its President and Secretary General
- interviews with HAC members / expert committee members, including at least one representative of an employers' organization
- interviews with HAC's Appeals Committee and Financial Supervisory Board members
- interviews with HAC staff members
- interviews with representatives of the National Conference of Student Unions and the National Union of Doctoral Students
- interviews with at least two rectors and/or deans as well as institutional quality assurance managers from higher education institutions evaluated by the HAC in the last two years.

SELF-EVALUATION

The HAC is responsible for writing a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). Based on the ENQA *Guidelines for National Reviews*, the elements of the SER shall cover the following,

- a brief outline of the national higher education system, the history of the HAC and of the evaluation of higher education in Hungary in general
- evidence of the external quality assurance undertaken by the HAC
- details of the evaluation method applied by the HAC including the elements of the methodology; an account of the role of the external expert group
- documentation of the HAC's processes and procedures
- details of the system of appeal
- details of the HAC's own internal quality assurance procedures
- information and opinions on the HAC from its key stakeholders.

Moreover, the SER shall give an overview of the major operational developments and

measures taken by the HAC since its previous external review.

Additional documents supplied to the Review Panel and added to the SER in appendices may include

- ESG
- ENQA guidelines for reviews
- HE Act
- HAC evaluation criteria
- Any other documents requested by the Review Panel.

SITE VISIT

The Review Panel shall make a site visit to Hungary. The aim of the site visit is to check the validity of information contained in the SER and gather additional evidence as to the HAC's operation and its compliance with the ESG.

The Review Panel will be responsible for determining the duration of the evaluation visit within a timeframe of two or three days. The Review Panel will draw up a timetable for the site visit and interviews at least six weeks prior to the visit.

The HAC shall provide the local administrative background for the site visit (meeting room for the Panel, 2-3 computers with internet access, organization of interviews).

The Review Panel may consider drawing up an oral report of its major findings at the end of the site visit, which it will present to representatives of the Ministry, Rector's Conference, HAC, and other invited participants as needed.

EVALUATION REPORT

The Review Panel shall be responsible for delivering an Evaluation Report within the Timeframe set down in Section 8 below.

For fulfilling the Purpose and Scope, 1. (compliance with the ESG) the Evaluation Report shall contain the elements set down in the ENQA *Guidelines for National Reviews* listed below,

- an executive summary (including an overall conclusion regarding compliance with the ENQA membership criteria)
- the identity of all panel members and administrative support arrangements
- a description of the main stages of the review
- contextual information:
 - reason(s) for the commissioning of the review
 - the place of the HAC in the quality assurance structure of its jurisdiction
 - the main functions of the HAC
 - the engagement of the HAC with the ESG
- a summary of the evidence gathered
- an analysis of how far, based on the evidence available, the HAC does (or does not) meet each criterion in the ESG Sections 2 and 3
- a summative conclusion stating whether the HAC is fully or substantially compliant; partially compliant; or non-compliant

- any recommendations for improvement
- the terms of reference of the review
- the details of the timescale over which the review was conducted.

For fulfilling the Purpose and Scope, 2 (wider purpose), the Evaluation Report shall describe in how far the HAC complies with

- legislation governing the HAC and its internal regulations and criteria, and with
- the recommendations set down in the publication titled *External Evaluation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee*.

Key pieces of evidence – i.e. extracts from legislation, policies and procedures etc. – may be added to the report in the form of appendices.

The Review Panel Secretary will draw up the draft Evaluation Report based on the findings of the Panel. The Evaluation Report shall not exceed 30 pages, excluding appendices. The Panel members will comment on the draft and finalize the Report as set down in the timeframe in Section 6. The Panel will send the Report to the HAC to check for factual errors. The Panel will finalize the Report after making the necessary corrections and send it to the Ministry and Rector's Conference and the HAC. The HAC will formulate its comments to the Report, including its planned follow-up measures on the Report's recommendations, which will constitute part of the final publication of the Report.

The HAC shall make the Evaluation Report public on its website and in print.

COST

The cost of the Review, which includes travel to and within Hungary and accommodation expenses incurred by the members of the Review Panel related to the site visit, as well as the fee of the Panel members, shall be covered by the Ministry as one of the parties commissioning the Review. The HAC shall cover all expenses incurred in the self-evaluation process, including staff time and material expenses.

TIMEFRAME OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Activity	Deadline	Party responsible
Concept finalization, preparation for evaluation	10 Oct. 2007	HAC
TOR preparation	(31 Oct. 2007) 26 Nov.2007	(input from HAC) Ministry / Rector's Conference
Preparation of cost break-down for the evaluation, securing funding sources	30 Nov.2007	Ministry
Notification of ENQA Board	30 Nov.2007	Ministry / Rector's Conference
Appointment of Self-Evaluation Team	5 Dec.2007	HAC

Collecting Review Panel member recommendations	15 Dec.2007	Ministry / Rector's Conference
Appointment of Review Panel	31 Jan. 2008	Ministry / Rector's Conference
Writing SER, collecting background documents	28 Feb. 2008	HAC
Sending SER to Panel (and Ministry / Rector's Conference)	7 March 2008	HAC
Preparing visit	28 March 2008	HAC, in consultation with Panel
Panel conducts visit, including possibly a briefing on the day before the visit	2-3 days between 7- 30 April 2008	Panel, HAC
Panel writes draft Evaluation Report	6 weeks following end of site visit (no later than 11 June 2008)	Panel
HAC receives draft Evaluation Report and makes factual corrections, sends these to Panel	1 week after receipt of Evaluation Report (no later than 18 June 2008)	Panel, HAC
Panel finalizes the Evaluation Report, sends it to the Ministry / Rector's Conference and the HAC	2 weeks after receipt of Report (no later than 2 July 2008)	Panel
HAC writes comments to the Report	1 week after receipt of finalized Evaluation Report (no later than 9 July 2008)	HAC
Ministry / Rector's Conference sends Evaluation Report and HAC's comments to ENQA	31 July 2008	Ministry / Rector's Conference
ENQA Board makes decision	Sept. 2008	ENQA
ENQA General Assembly approves decision	26 Sept. 2008	ENQA General Assembly
HAC publishes Evaluation Report together with the evaluation decision, the HAC's comments and intended follow-up measures on the HAC website and in print	30 Sept. 2008	HAC