

HAQAA2 Initiative

Preparing the site visit

Nathalie Lugano and Anna Gover

ENQA

HAQAA EQA training – 11 October 2021



Harmonisation, Accreditation
and Quality Assurance in
African Higher Education

This initiative is implemented on behalf of the European and African Union Commissions by:

Objectives of a site visit

- 1 Explore the level of alignment with the ASG-QA
 - In meetings (oral evidence)
 - Through additional documents (additional written evidence)
- 2 Share impressions gained from the SAR (share reflection)
- 3 Engage in a dialogue with the agency/ministry on operations (joint reflection)
- 4 Share preliminary findings/impressions of the panel
- 5 Prepare EER material for the post site visit phase (panel)

How does the schedule look like ?

The site visit is usually 2-4 days long (face-to-face meetings)

HAQAA2: online or in a hybrid format, spread over 3-5 days as needed

1. First meeting is an internal meeting of the panel, usually followed by meeting with an agency/ministry representative to brief on the context / national system (no assessment here, but context understanding)

2. Followed by interviews with key people and stakeholders

3. At the end panel takes final internal meeting and final meeting with agency/ministry (feedback/exit meeting)

Typical interviewees depend on individual case

Either individual or group interviews



SAR writing team



Staff responsible for QA activities/reviews



Management/leadership of the agency/ministry



Reviewers



Reviewed institutions (governance, QA staff, academics)



Relevant stakeholders (authorities, professional/student organisations, rector conferences)

Things to consider

Enable a **free exchange** of views (separation of team/leadership, reviewers/coordinators, students/academics)

More interviewees bring different viewpoints but also impact the **flow of discussion** (max 10 representatives, ideally limit participants to 6)

Confidentiality of discussion (interviewees will not be quoted in the report)

Select participants to be **representative** for the work of the agency/ministry

Setting the stage



For internal meetings and interviews, panel must have its interview room with ensures confidentiality (separate and sufficiently soundproof, no change of place)



Panel will require time for internal discussion (breaks and meals should be private for the panel)



Interviewees will need to be invited / grouped / welcomed / catered for



Interviewees should understand the context of the situation before entering the room

Hybrid site visits

- 2 African experts on site
- 1 European expert online
- Stakeholders/meeting participants on site (as far as possible)

- Same principles apply for all types of site visit but differences in the practicalities
- Important that the online expert is able to participate fully – they are an equal member of the evaluation team
- ‘Side meetings’ without the online expert should be avoided
- Programme to be adapted to take into account online expert (incl. timezone difference)



Hybrid site visits – contingency plans

In case connection drops and cannot be quickly re-established:

- Interview will continue without online expert
- Panel will have agreed all questions in advance so questions from online expert can still be covered by another expert
- One of the experts on site will take notes
- Online expert will be briefed afterwards

Technical requirements

- One Zoom meeting room for whole visit
- Large screen and microphone to display online expert
- Good quality microphone(s) to pick up sounds from everyone in the room
- Webcam that shows everyone in the room (or can be moved to show the person speaking)
- Test everything in advance!

Practical arrangements

- Onsite experts will book own international travel
- Agency/ministry to arrange local travel, accommodation and meals
- Site visit takes place one meeting room at the agency/ministry office (or other venue as appropriate)
- Agency/ministry to make technical arrangements
- In case of a tour of premises, this can be done without the online expert

Covid precautions

- Keep experts informed of changes to your national regulations (e.g. testing requirements for international travel)
- Precautions for meetings:
 - Hand sanitiser provided by agency/ministry
 - Room large enough for social distancing
 - Well ventilated room
 - Compliance with any additional local regulations
 - Experts/stakeholders to bring own
- Be flexible: online arrangements can also be used in case local stakeholders unable to attend on site

Fully online visits

If needed, fully online visits can be implemented:

- All experts participating online
- Local stakeholders participating online or on site as needed
- All meetings via Zoom with experts and stakeholders joining from their own computers (or from meeting room at agency if appropriate for local stakeholders)
- Agency/ministry responsible for practical arrangements for any stakeholders joining on site

Any questions?

