

**Approval of the Application
by Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register**

Register Committee

23 March 2026

Ref. RC49/A168

Ver. 1.0

Date 2026-03-30

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Application of:	2024-09-17		
Agency registered since:	2020-12-01		
Type of review:	Full	Site visit:	2025-05-21
External review report of:	2025-10-22	Submitted:	2025-12-18
Review coordinated by:	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)		
Review panel members:	Adrian Korzeniowski, Inge Enroth, Mark Frederiks, Pegi Pavletic		
Decision of:	2026-03-23		
Registration until:	2030-12-31		
Absented themselves from decision-making:	/		
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. External Review Report, 2025-10-22 2. Applicant's statement on the report, 2025-12-17 		

1. The application of 2024-09-17 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 2024-10-11.
3. The Register Committee considered the external review report of 2025-10-22 on the compliance of UKÄ with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).
4. The Register Committee further considered the applicant's statement on the report of 2025-12-17

Analysis:

5. In considering UKÄ's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account the following activities:
 - Institutional reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance processes (of education solely);
 - Programme evaluations;

- Appraisal of applications for degree-awarding powers;
- Thematic evaluations

6. The activities *Legal supervision of higher education, Monitoring efficiency, follow-up and horizon scanning*, as well as *Statistics in the higher education sector* are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the application for inclusion on the Register.

7. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on UKÄ's level of compliance with the ESG.

8. With regard to the specific European Standards, the Register Committee considered the following:

ESG 2.1 – Consideration of internal quality assurance

9. Since the registration of UKÄ on EQAR (on 2020-12-01), the agency has changed the guidelines of all of its ESG aligned methodologies¹. From the review report, the Register Committee learned that the revision entailed simplification of the external quality assurance processes by reducing the number of criteria and their details.

10. From the report, the Committee learned that UKÄ now addresses most of the ESG Part 1 through its institutional reviews only, while fully covers only three ESG standards of Part 1 in all of its ESG aligned methodologies (ESG 1.2, ESG 1.5 and ESG 1.6). UKÄ now addresses ESG Part 1 in a limited manner in its programme reviews, appraisals of applications for degree-awarding powers and thematic evaluations.

11. In addition, the panel explained that one of the standards (ESG 1.4) is not covered by any of the agency's ESG aligned methodologies, but is rather evaluated by a body outside of the agency.

12. The Committee found that following the recent changes UKÄ is addressing ESG Part 1 in a limited manner in most of its ESG aligned methodologies. Furthermore, the Register Committee found that an evaluation of standard(s) through national legislation and external bodies does not substitute coverage through external QA procedures. Following this, the Committee was unable to concur with the panel and found the agency partially compliant with the standard.

ESG 2.3 – Implementing processes

13. In the decision for registration on EQAR (of 2021-03-18), the agency was found partially compliant with the standard due to the absence of standardised framework for evidence gathering in the thematic evaluations, as well as the suitability of online interviews instead of regular site visits in the program evaluations and appraisal of applications for degree-awarding powers.

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¹ See decision on Substantive change report of 2024-04-04 available here: <https://www.eqar.eu/register/agencies/agency/?id=63>

14. From the report, the Register Committee learned that no major changes were implemented by UKÄ since the last review – the agency continues to conduct most of the interviews online without any supporting procedural documents.

15. While the Committee agreed with the panel that online visits are comparatively less resource-intensive, it concluded that they cannot satisfy the standard’s requirement for site visits, which allow reviewers to directly observe real conditions and interactions, yielding more authentic and reliable evidence than virtual formats. In Committee’s view online visits should be consider as an alternative only in cases of force majeure rather than a standard tool for evidence gathering.

16. In addition, the Committee agreed with the panel that “ *the lack of procedural documents on conducting online interviews could lead to inconsistencies in drawing up conclusions and forming judgements*”.

17. Taking in consideration the deficiencies related to the evidence gathering methods in the programme reviews, the appraisal of applications for degree-awarding powers and the thematic evaluations, as well as the lack of proper procedural documents on conducting online interviews, the Register Committee continued to find the agency partially compliant with the standard.

ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals

18. In the last decision, UKÄ was found to be partially compliant with the standard as no formal complaints procedure was in place, as well due to the advisory role of the appeals body.

19. From the report, the Committee learned that the agency has established a complaints’ procedure, supported by publicly available guidelines for handling complaints. Furthermore, the Committee learned that UKÄ also established a permanent Appeals Committee.

20. The Register Committee welcomed the improvements, and was now able to concur with the panel’s conclusion of compliance. The Committee, still, found that the recommendations regarding the appeals committee should be made obligatory in order to strengthen the authority of this body (see also previous external review report of 2020-12-10)².

ESG 3.3 – Independence

21. In the last decision for inclusion on the register (of 2021-03-18), UKÄ was found partially compliant with the standard due to concerns about Government’s control in the agency’s work, including the major appointments as well as in the decision making.

22. From the report, the Committee learned that the Government is still responsible for selection of the Director and the members of the Advisory

² Available at: https://backend.deqar.eu/reports/EQAR/2021-03_A89_UKA_Approval_Decision.pdf

Board, and that the Director is solely responsible for taking the final decision on the accreditation. On the latter, to address the concerns, the agency has created a new position – Deputy Director, which acts in cases when the Director has a conflict of interest.

23. The Committee welcomed the changes for strengthening the policies for preventing conflict of interest and introducing the position of Deputy Director. The Committee, however, found that the overall independence of the agency from the Government has not changed significantly, and is still not sufficiently secured. Following this, the Register Committee was unable to concur with the panel’s conclusion and found the agency to be partially compliant.

24. For the remaining standards, the Register Committee was able to concur with the review panel's analysis and conclusion without further comments.

Conclusion:

25. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that UKÄ demonstrated compliance with the ESG (Parts 2 and 3) as follows:

Standard	Previous decision (2021-03-18)	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Compliance	Compliance	Partial compliance
2.2	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.3	Partial compliance	Compliance	Partial compliance
2.4	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.5	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.6	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.7	Partial compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.1	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.2	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.3	Partial compliance	Compliance	Partial compliance
3.4	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.5	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.6	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.7	Compliance	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

26. **The Register Committee considered that UKÄ only achieved partial compliance with some standards. In its holistic judgement, the Register**

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Committee concluded that these are specific and limited issues, but that continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.

27. The Register Committee therefore renewed UKÄ's inclusion on the Register. UKÄ's renewed inclusion) shall be valid until 2030-12-31³.

28. The Register Committee further underlined that UKÄ is expected to address the issues mentioned appropriately and to resolve them at the earliest opportunity.

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³ Renewal of registration is valid for five years from the date of expiry of the previous registration, see §4.13 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

OFFICIAL NOTE

EQAR Register Committee

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Submission of review documents for EQAR application, Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ)

Reference # 27938461 of 17/09/2024

To the attention of the EQAR Register Committee,

Please find accompanying this letter the following documents, as required for the EQAR Register Committee's decision on renewal registration of the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ):

- UKÄ's self-assessment report for the ENQA Agency Review 2025 (PDF)
- ENQA external review report, October 2025 (PDF)
- Declaration of Honour completed and signed by the ENQA review coordinator (PDF), with the full curricula vitae (CVs) of all review panel members annexed, November 2025 (PDF)

Additional documentation

- ENQA Agency Review Committee's statement on validation of the external review report of UKÄ, October 2025 (PDF)

UKÄ would also like to inform the EQAR Register Committee that changes to the grading scale for institutional reviews have been introduced after the completion of the external review which the application is based on.

Institutional reviews initiated from 2026 will be assessed according to a revised scale; from a three-point scale¹ as described in the self-assessment report under 5.5.1 to a two-point scale². Furthermore, UKÄ has introduced the possibility for the assessment panel to highlight

¹ Approval of the quality assurance processes, approval of the quality assurance processes with reservations, or a decision that the quality assurance processes at the HEI will be under review.

² Approval of the quality assurance processes, or non-approval of the quality assurance processes.

commendations for specific aspects of the reviewed HEI's quality assurance system that the assessment panel considers to be of particular interest.

The change has been introduced in order to maximise accuracy, impact, and quality enhancement (see self-assessment report ESG 2.2.) through placing greater emphasis both on quality enhancement and recommendations that are valuable for HEIs that already have well-functioning quality assurance processes, and on HEIs where the assessment panel does not have overall confidence in the design and efficiency of the quality assurance system.

These changes have been communicated to the HEIs during 2025, through the biannual open digital meetings (see e.g. figure 3 in the self-assessment report), and presented at an annual network conference for all quality coordinators at Swedish HEIs. The revised scale is incorporated in the new guideline, valid from January 1st, 2026, for HEIs undergoing institutional reviews with start from 2026 (see also self-assessment report 6.5.1. for a description of the use of guidelines). The guidelines are published and available on UKÄ's website³. An English translation of the guidelines will be available during 2026.

Martin Norsell

Director General

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<https://www.uka.se/download/18.582f5ba4199c8c6b8b42e/1760098407975/V%C3%A4gledning%20f%C3%B6r%20granskning%20av%201%C3%A4ros%C3%A4tenas%20kvalitetss%C3%A4kringsarbete%20avseende%20u....pdf> (in Swedish).

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