

Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB)

External evaluation 2022

Self-Assessment Report

November 2022



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List of abbreviations

ACPUA	Agencia de Calidad y Prospectiva Universitaria de Aragón (Aragon Agency for Quality Assurance and Strategic Foresight in Higher Education)
AIKA	Augstākās izglītības kvalitātes aģentūra (Quality Agency for Higher Education)
ANVUR	Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca (National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes)
ARACIS	Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul Superior (Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)
ASHE	Agency for Science and Higher Education
BAC	Board of Appeals and Complaints
BFUG TPG C on QA	Bologna Follow-up Group Thematic Peer Group on Quality Assurance
CEENQA	Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
CHARM-EU	Challenge-driven, Accessible, Research-based, Mobile European University
DEQAR	The Database of External Quality Assurance Results
DOK	Doktori Akkreditációs Kollégium (College for Doctoral Accreditation)
DOSZ	Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége (Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates)
DS	Doctoral School
ECAQA	Eurasian Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Health Care
EEA	European Economic Area
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EMMI	Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma (Ministry of Human Capacities)
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EPDAD	Öğretmenlik Eğitim Programları Değerlendirme ve Akreditasyon Derneği (Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs)
EQAR	The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
ESQA	Effective Involvement of Stakeholders in External Quality Assurance Activities
ESU	European Students' Union

EUA	European University Association
FIR	Felsőoktatási Információs Rendszer (Higher Education Information System)
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HAC	former official English abbreviation of MAB
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
HÖOK	Hallgatói Önkormányzatok Országos Konferenciája (National Union of Students in Hungary)
IAB	International Advisory Board
IMINQA	Implementation and Innovation in QA through Peer Learning
ITM	Innovációs és Technológiai Minisztérium (Ministry of Innovation and Technology)
KIM	Kulturális és Innovációs Minisztérium (Ministry of Culture and Innovation)
MAB (f.k.a. HAC)	Magyar Felsőoktatási Akkreditációs Bizottság (Hungarian Accreditation Committee)
MEQAF	Middle European Quality Assurance Forum
MICROBOL	Microcredentials linked to the Bologna Key Commitments
NAB	National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education
NAQA	National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance
NCEQE	National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement
NCFMEA	National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation
NEAQA	National Entity for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education
NQF	National Qualification Framework, aligned with European QF
NVAO	Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie (Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAK	Programakkreditációs Kollégium (College for Programme Accreditation)
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act
PKA	Polska Komisja Akredytacyjna (Polish Accreditation Committee)
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
QA	Quality assurance
QE	Quality enhancement
RRF	Recovery and Resilience Facility

SAAVS	Slovenská Akreditačná Agentúra pre Vysoké školstvo (Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education)
SAR	Self-Assessment Report
SKVC	Studiju Koybes Vertinimo Centras (Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education)
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TIR	Titkársági Információs Rendszer (MAB Secretariat Information System)
TSI	Technical Support Instrument
V4QA Forum	Visegrád Four Quality Assurance Forum
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WFME	World Federation for Medical Education
WFME BME standards	World Federation for Medical Education Basic Medical Education standards

1. Introduction

The Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB, formerly abbreviated as “HAC” in English) was established among the first accreditation organisations in Europe and is the only higher education quality assurance agency in Hungary. As a national-level, independent body of experts it is mandated to evaluate the internal quality assurance (IQA) systems of higher education institutions (HEIs) and to conduct external quality assessment of educational activities in Hungary¹. It develops its own rules of procedure and evaluation criteria, operates in line with the National Higher Education Act (hereinafter: Higher Education Act) and other relevant legislations, and follows the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in developing its assessment processes.

MAB’s mission is to provide high quality assessment services to HEIs, to contribute to the further improvement of their internal QA systems and culture, and to support all stakeholders at all levels in higher education. Aiming to increase the international reputation of Hungarian higher education, MAB focuses on improving the quality of its services and activities under the ESG². In recent years, the agency has expanded its international relationships and has placed special emphasis on enhancing cooperation with QA agencies abroad by exchanging experiences, sharing best practices and providing peer support at international level.

MAB has been a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since 2002, and underwent review against the ESG in 2008, 2013 and 2018 by ENQA. In 2017, the agency applied for inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and was awarded listed status in 2019³. By preparing this self-assessment report, MAB aims to renew its ENQA membership and EQAR listed status while at the same time this process allows the agency to review its current state, strengths, and weaknesses. Throughout the whole report the agency has sought to reflect on the 2018 ENQA and EQAR recommendations.

The official relationship with ENQA and EQAR is of high importance to MAB: it provides the agency with the opportunity to play an active part in an international community within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and is also essential feedback to all stakeholders that MAB fulfils international quality assurance standards. The agency welcomes the recommendations of the Review Panel, which will enable it to further develop and enhance its processes and activities.

¹ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 70 (1)

² MAB’s Mission Statement: <https://www.mab.hu/en/about-mab/> under *Activities*

³ Registration of MAB on EQAR: <https://www.mab.hu/en/about-mab/> under *External quality assurance*

2. Development of the self-assessment report (SAR)

To ensure continued compliance with ESG, there has been ongoing preparation and monitoring at MAB since 2018. In October 2019, representatives of MAB participated in a seminar in Porto, Portugal, organized by ENQA for QA agencies that had recently undergone an external review against the ESG 2015. In the same year, they also attended an ENQA webinar on how to prepare a good self-assessment report for an ENQA agency review.

On March 25, 2022, the MAB Board adopted a formal decision at its plenary meeting to apply for its external evaluation to renew its ENQA membership and its listed status in EQAR. At the same time, the Board elected the members of a working group to oversee and guide the preparation of the self-assessment report (SAR). The working group included members from all levels of the decision-making process, including QA experts, members representing HEIs and their stakeholders, a student representative, and current and former members of the MAB Secretariat.

On April 12, 2022, the President of MAB sent an official letter to the ENQA Secretariat requesting the initiation of a review procedure for the renewal of MAB's membership in ENQA, which would include registration in EQAR.

In May 2022, members of the MAB Secretariat, coordinated by the Director of International Affairs, started to collect the necessary background documents and supporting evidence for the draft SAR, such as the previous MAB self-assessment report prepared in 2018, the MAB Follow-up report to ENQA in 2020, the external review report prepared by ENQA and the letter of recommendations from EQAR, as well as various MAB documents, extracts from the Higher Education Act in force and different Government Decrees.

From May 31 to June 1, 2022, representatives of the MAB Secretariat participated in the “*ENQA Agency Reviews’ seminar for agencies planning to undergo a review in 2022-2023*” in Cologne, Germany, which focused on the whole review process, from preparation to follow-up. After the ENQA seminar, the MAB Secretariat held a meeting on further tasks related to the preparation of the SAR, where the conclusions, good practices, and practical steps learned from the seminar were also shared. Taking into account the information gained from the seminar, the Secretariat prepared the first draft of the SAR, which was forwarded to the working group members for comments, evaluation and suggestions. The working group also provided a comprehensive summary of the preparation stages of the SAR and discussed it with the members of the MAB International Advisory Board at their in-person meeting held in Budapest on September 1-2, 2022.

As part of the preparation of the SAR, a SWOT analysis was conducted among the members of the MAB Board, members of all MAB standing committees and the MAB Secretariat staff. Their responses were analysed by the MAB IQA officer, as well as by external sociology and economy experts – the latter were invited by MAB to provide an unbiased approach and a professionally supported analysis of the results – and were presented in the SAR.

The SAR was also reviewed by Christina Rozsnyai, former MAB officer and member of the ENQA Board, the management, the MAB President, and the MAB Board and was finalised on 28 November 2022.

3. Higher education and QA of higher education in the context of the agency

Hungary has been a full member of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) since 1999. By joining the Bologna Process, its former dual system of universities (university degree after 5-6 years of education) and colleges (college degree after 3-4 years) was adjusted in 2006 to a three-cycle – BA/BSc degree, and MA/MSc and PhD/DLA system – in both types of higher education institutions (HEIs). Universities shall deliver a minimum of eight Bachelor and six Master programmes and also offer doctoral programmes, while colleges are authorized to provide academic student workshops.⁴

Transformed from former colleges, universities of applied sciences were introduced in 2014 in Hungary⁵, which must offer at least four Bachelor and two Master programmes, and at least two dual trainings (provided their accreditation involves engineering, IT, agriculture, natural sciences or business studies) in their education portfolio. Furthermore, HEIs are permitted to run trainings and programmes that do not lead to a tertiary degree.⁶

Currently, Hungary has 64 state-recognised HEIs, as listed in Annex 1 of Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: 5 state universities, 24 non-state universities (18 foundation-owned, 6 church-run), 10 non-state universities of applied sciences (9 foundation-owned, 1 church-run) 1 state college, 24 non-state colleges (5 foundation-owned, 19 church-run).⁷

According to data from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal), the total number of students in Hungarian higher education in the 2021/2022 academic year was 293 566, the highest in the last five years.⁸

Academic year	Total number of students in VET programmes	Total number of students in BA/BSc programmes	Total number of students in MA/MSc programmes	Total number of students in single cycle Master programmes*	Total number of students in specialization and further education programmes	Total number of PhD/DLA candidates enrolled in formal programmes
2017/2018	12 236	170 320	34 854	41 834	16 430	7 676
2018/2019	11 182	168 799	34 043	42 922	16 950	7 565
2019/2020	11 197	172 104	33 081	43 519	15 795	9 414
2020/2021	11 834	169 699	34 933	44 536	16 344	10 147
2021/2022	11 956	171 446	37 526	44 955	17 164	10 519

*A single cycle master programme is a one-tier programme leading to a master degree, requiring the completion of 10-12 semesters and 300-360 credits.

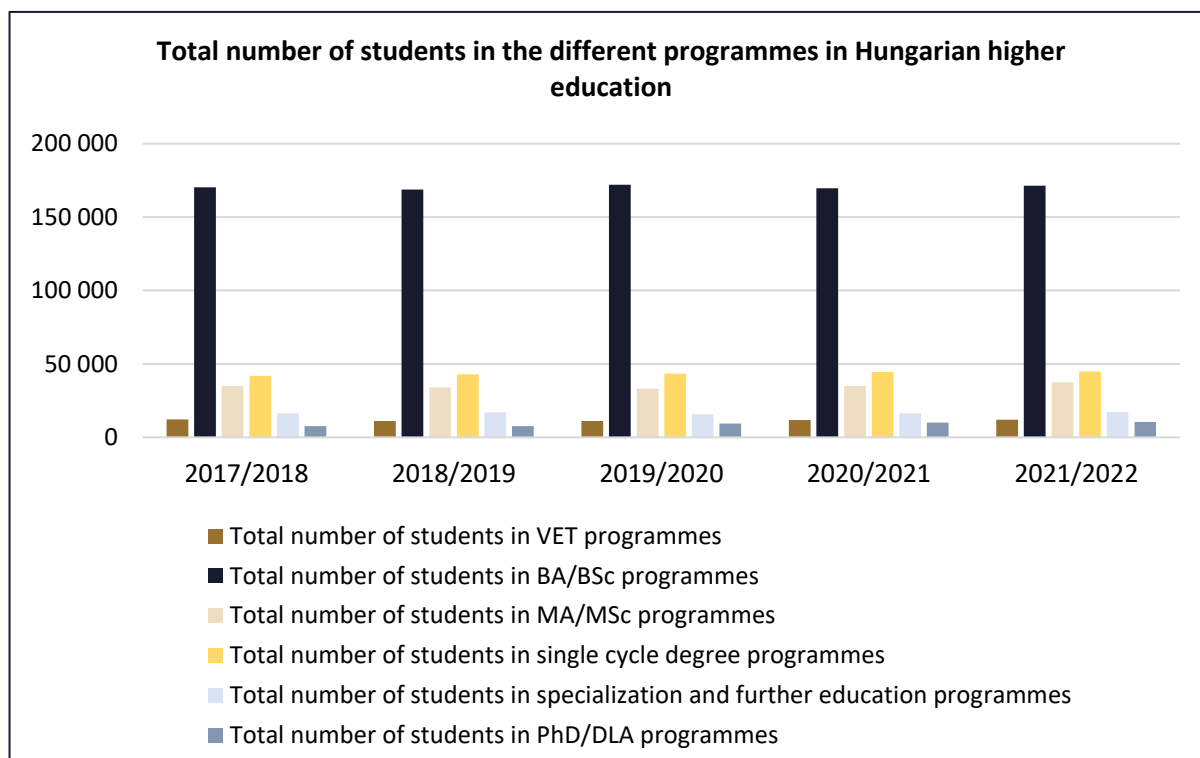
⁴ Eurydice - Hungary: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/hungary/higher-education>

⁵ Overview of the Hungarian Higher Education System by OECD: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/industry-and-services/supporting-entrepreneurship-and-innovation-in-higher-education-in-hungary/overview-of-the-hungarian-higher-education-system_9789264273344-6-en#page4 p.24.

⁶ Eurydice - Hungary: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/hungary/higher-education>

⁷ Annex 1 of Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1100204.tv>

⁸ KSH data on higher education (in Hungarian): https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/okt/hu/okt0020.html



The Higher Education Act aims “to create the necessary conditions for raising the standard of higher education and for the transfer and acquisition of competitive knowledge, and to ensure the operation of the national system of higher education institutions within the framework established in Article X (3) of the Fundamental Law. The rules governing the management of higher education institutions shall be laid down in a Government Decree, within the framework set by law.”⁹ The Act describes the basic principles of higher education and sets out detailed rules regarding the operation of HEIs, the persons employed in higher education, students, the organisation and governance of higher education, provisions with international relevance, funding and asset management in higher education, and specific provisions on operation. As set out in the Act, the core activities of higher education institutions are “the performance of educational, academic research and artistic creative activities.”¹⁰

An institution's study programmes shall be in line with the relevant legal provisions, for which the rector of the HEI is responsible.¹¹ The programme and learning outcome requirements describe the overall knowledge, attitudes, skills and competences, which, if acquired, can lead to the award of a diploma in the given field.¹² The programme and learning outcome requirements of the study programmes of HEIs in Hungary are defined at the national level, to standardize the outcome requirements of all Hungarian HEIs. The objectives of the educational programmes of HEIs are to fulfil the programme and learning outcome requirements of vocational education training (VET), bachelor

⁹ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 1 (1)

¹⁰ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 2 (1)

¹¹ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 13 (7 ab)

¹² Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 108 (16)

and master programmes.¹³ Although the completion of a VET programme leads to a certificate, but not to a higher education degree, the credits earned in such programmes can be recognised later in related bachelor studies.¹⁴

Official bodies in the Hungarian higher education system

Governance of higher education is a vital role for the Government and the minister responsible for higher education (in May 2022, the operation of higher education was transferred from the Ministry for Innovation and Technology to the Ministry of Culture and Innovation), by fulfilling organisational, development, and legal oversight duties.¹⁵ The **Higher Education Planning Board**, supervised by the minister responsible for higher education, provides suggestions and advice on higher education development-related issues.¹⁶

HEIs, as well as their study programmes are officially registered by the **Educational Authority**. The Authority grants operating licenses to the institutions, and also conducts the higher education admission procedure, authorises the production and distribution of diploma and diploma supplement forms, performs tasks regarding the registration of the requirements for the Hungarian state scholarship, conducts official inspections, participates in the implementation of student competency assessments and operates the Higher Education Information System (FIR).¹⁷ FIR is “a central register that contains the data necessary for the exercise of state competences related to higher education, for planning at the level of the national economy and for the exercise of the rights and fulfilment of the obligations of participants in higher education”¹⁸.

By law, the Educational Authority must obtain the expert opinion of the **Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB)** in the following cases:

- “the authorisation¹⁹ of the operation of a HEI and the review of a HEI's operating licence every five years”,
- launch of bachelor, master, or VET programmes: an official procedure for the registration of the start of a bachelor, master or VET degree programme, which is applied for by the HEI to the Educational Authority.
- the establishment of a doctoral school and the launch of its doctoral programme, as well as the start of education in a new discipline”.²⁰

Higher education institutions and students are represented by several official bodies in Hungary:

- The **Hungarian Rectors' Conference** represents and protects the interests of higher education institutions; the members of the Conference include the rectors of all higher education institutions.²¹

¹³ Programme and learning outcome requirements (in Hungarian): <https://kormany.hu/dokumentumtar/kepzesi-es-kimeneti-kovetelmények-1>

¹⁴ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 15 (2)

¹⁵ Eurydice - Hungary: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/hungary/higher-education>

¹⁶ Higher Education Planning Board (in Hungarian): <https://www.oktatas.hu/felsooktatas/felsooktatasi-tervezesi-testulet>

¹⁷ 121/2013 (IV. 26.) Government Decree on the Educational Authority (in Hungarian): <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1300121.kor> Articles 3 (d), 16.

¹⁸ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education (in Hungarian): <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1100204.tv> Article 19 (1)

¹⁹ The authorisation includes MAB's (or any other ENQA member's) decision on institutional accreditation based on ESG 2015

²⁰ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education (in Hungarian): <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1100204.tv> Article 67 (3 (a,c,e)), (4)

²¹ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 72 (1), (2)

- University and college students, and PhD and DLA²² candidates are represented by the **National Union of Students in Hungary (HÖÖK)** and the **Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (DOSZ)**, respectively. HÖÖK addresses higher education and youth policy tasks that cannot be solved at institutional and regional level and cooperates with other national and international higher education and youth organisations.²³ DOSZ, besides representing its members' interests, also plays a significant role in organizing scientific conferences for young researchers.²⁴ Both organizations represent their members in national and international fora.
- The role of the **National Scientific Students' Associations Conference** is to represent and coordinate the student association movement and the scientific and artistic activities of students in higher education institutions, as well as to organize scientific and artistic student forums at national level.²⁵
- The **Dual Training Council** contributes to the development of quality, performance-based higher education through the quality assurance of dual training (Mission Statement of the Dual Training Council).²⁶
- The **Hungarian Doctoral Council** is a body composed of chairs of the doctoral councils of higher education institutions providing doctoral studies (29 universities), represents their interest, provides advice on issues related to doctoral education and awarding the degree in science (PhD) or arts (DLA).²⁷

Model Change in the Hungarian higher education system (since 2019)

To increase the efficiency and competitiveness of the Hungarian HEIs, a major transformation has been taking place in the past three years; within this transformation, twenty-one formerly state-run HEIs have undergone a change in their governance and are now managed by Boards of Trustees. The aim of the Hungarian Government with the model change was to enhance the level of education in higher education by providing a more flexible and feasible operational environment.

The first HEI out of these twenty-one institutions became foundation-owned in 2019, which was followed by 8 institutions in 2020, and further 10 institutions in 2021. In addition, two new public foundation-maintained and Board of Trustees governed HEIs were established in 2021: the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, (predecessor: Szent István University), and the Tokaj-Hegyalja University.

The Boards of Trustees determine the budget, the organisational and operational regulations, the plan and implementation of the institution's development, as well as the asset management plan of the institution. Except for one university (Corvinus University of Budapest), which has an independent financial basis, the institutions receive state financing based on multiple indicators, set down in five-year and longer-term contracts. The academic, research and administrative staff are no longer public servants but private sector employees.²⁸

²² The degree of Doctor of Liberal Arts (DLA) is the academic degree awarded by a doctorate in arts education.

²³ National Union of Students in Hungary (in Hungarian): <https://hook.hu/cms/szervezetunk>

²⁴ Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (in Hungarian): <https://www.dosz.hu/bemutakozas>

²⁵ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 63

²⁶ Mission Statement of the Dual Training Council: https://www.oktatas.hu/pub_bin/dload/felsooktatas/dualis_kepzes/Dualis_Kepzesi_Tanacs_kuldetesnyilatkozata.pdf

²⁷ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 72 (5)

²⁸ Hungarian Accreditation Committee – Report for the year 2020 until September 2021: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Annual-Report-2021_v2..pdf p.3.

4. History, profile, and activities of the agency

MAB is an independent professional body that is authorised by the national government. It was established with the country's first Higher Education Act in 1993 as one of the earliest HE QA agencies in Europe. As stated in its Deed of Foundation, "HAC is established to perform external evaluation of the quality of education, scientific research, and artistic activities in higher education, as well as of the internal quality assurance systems of higher education institutions, and to enhance the international recognition of Hungarian higher education."²⁹ The agency began operations in 1992, as a body evaluating the new PhD programmes that were introduced in the country at the time. MAB started its first institutional accreditation procedure in a pilot phase in 1994 and, at this time, the procedure also involved the accreditation of all HEI study programmes.

The latest Higher Education Act was passed in 2011 in Hungary. Article 70 (1) defines MAB as "...an independent national expert body established for the purposes of the external evaluation of the quality of educational, academic, research and artistic activities performed in higher education and the internal quality assurance systems operated by HEIs, and the provision of expert services in the procedures related to HEIs, as provided for in this Act."³⁰ Adhering to the Bologna process in the EHEA, MAB follows the Standards and Guidelines of Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015), and is a member of ENQA and listed in EQAR. MAB is also a member of CEENQA (Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education), accredited by the U.S. National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) since 1997, and has recently gained recognition status by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME).

Activities of MAB

MAB's activities involve ex-ante evaluations and ex-post accreditation processes within the scope of ESG.

Ex-ante evaluations are conducted on:

- **New HEIs (universities, universities of applied sciences, and colleges):**

Pursuant to the Higher Education Act, at a certain stage of the establishment of a higher education institution, the Hungarian Educational Authority requests MAB to evaluate the programmes to be launched by the new higher education institution. If the evaluation procedure is successful, an institutional accreditation process will be conducted by MAB.

- **New programme and learning outcome framework requirements of VET, Bachelor, and Master programmes:**

MAB evaluates programme and learning outcome framework requirements, which are part of the quality evaluation process for the initial licensing of new VET, Bachelor, and Master programmes. In the accreditation process of such programmes, the MAB evaluators examine the compliance with the criteria and conditions set out in the framework requirements reported in the application for a new programme.

- **New VET, Bachelor, and Master programmes:**

When a new VET, Bachelor, single cycle or Master programme is launched by an institution, the Hungarian Educational Authority must obtain the official evaluation of MAB on the

²⁹Deed of Foundation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Deed-of-foundation.pdf> p.1.

³⁰ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 70 (1)

programme. In such a case, MAB is invited by the Educational Authority to prepare an expert review on the given programme. In the case of the launch of a Master programme, the Educational Authority is bound by result of the MAB's expert opinion before granting the programme's operating license.

- **New doctoral schools, including the addition of a new branch of science to an existing doctoral school:**

At the request of the Hungarian Educational Authority, MAB provides an expert review on the compliance criteria of the establishment and launch of doctoral programmes. MAB examines if the quality assurance system of the doctoral programmes is in line with the ESG 2015 standards and meet the requirements given in the Hungarian Higher Education Act and decrees.³¹

Ex-post accreditation procedures are carried out on:

- **Existing HEIs in five-year cycles:**

At the request of a higher education institution (including higher education institutions abroad), MAB carries out an institutional accreditation process and prepares an expert report on the HEI's compliance with the standards required. The aim of the accreditation is to certify that the quality of conduct is in accordance with the ESG, to review the HEI's management of its internal quality assurance system including continuous development, monitoring with view on effective PDCA cycles. The accreditation report does not only focus on the HEI's QA when it evaluates compliance with the ESG standards, as the recommendations given in the report serve the institutions' quality enhancement (QE) together with the assessment results, which help the development of processes supporting the implementation of these standards.

MAB can also conduct **institutional cross-border accreditation processes** for Hungarian programmes in foreign countries (off-site programmes), mostly in neighbouring ethnically Hungarian regions that offer programmes by some Hungarian HEIs. The external review of these institutions is conducted in accordance with the standards and requirements applied in the ex-post accreditation of Hungarian HEIs. In these cases, HEIs must submit their application, taking the specialties of off-site programmes into account (teaching staff, infrastructure etc.). In 2021, MAB conducted the institutional accreditation of a foreign HEI for the first time; the request was received from the Il. Ferenc Rákóczi Hungarian College in Beregovo, Ukraine.

- **Existing doctoral schools in five-year cycles:**

At the institution's request, MAB conducts an accreditation process and prepares a report certifying the ESG compliance of the doctoral school's quality assurance system.³² The doctoral school is responsible for its own QA and QE, while MAB is responsible for examining and evaluating the quality assurance system the doctoral school operates to achieve its defined objectives.

³¹ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 71/B(d)
Government Decree No 387/2012 of 19 December 2012 on doctoral schools, doctoral procedures and habilitation: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/No-387-2012-on-doctoral-schools-procedures-and-habilitation.pdf> Section 6(3)
Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Expercts-of-Government-Decree-on-certain-aspects-of-quality-assessment-and-improvement-in-higher-education.pdf> - Section 24

³² The documents related to the accreditation of doctoral schools are available in Hungarian at: <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/> under *Doktori iskolák akkreditációja*

- **The basic medical programmes of existing medical schools, following the MAB medical standards based on WFME BME 2020:**

To expand its accreditation portfolio, MAB applied for and was granted recognition status from the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) in 2022. The expansion of the accreditation portfolio ensures the competitiveness of Hungarian medical education and contributes to the support of the internationalization of higher education. The accreditation procedure is conducted by a group of experts in line with the WFME BME 2020 standards. The proposal for accreditation by the experts, including foreign reviewers, is discussed by the MAB Committee for Medical and Health Sciences to ensure that the proposal and the accreditation report covers all assessment criteria. The decision on accreditation is made by the MAB Board.

By gaining recognition status from WFME in 2022, MAB may carry out WFME BME standards-based accreditation procedures for medical schools both in Hungary and abroad.

MAB may also conduct **ex post programme accreditation in disciplinary clusters**; the accreditation is extended to a given discipline in the whole country, investigating all the currently active programmes under it all at once. Such discipline accreditation was last carried out in 2016. The whole procedure was closed in 2018 and no other discipline accreditation has been conducted ever since. Since the evaluation of an entire discipline was a labour-intensive and time-consuming process for the agency – and therefore not all disciplines were evaluated – and the criteria were not fit for purpose, the process was not sustainable as it did not deliver the expected results and did not provide sufficient support to quality enhancement. At present, programme accreditation in disciplinary clusters may be carried out by law at the request of the Minister responsible for higher education. Currently, a much more effective ex-post evaluation system based on study fields is being developed, described in Section 10 and Annex 5.

Regarding the recognition of evaluations conducted by foreign QA agencies, Article 67 (4b)³³ of the National Higher Education Act states that external quality assurance activities (both ex-ante and ex-post) may be conducted (and recognised by the Educational Authority), at the request of the institution concerned, by a QA agency which is a full member of ENQA and is registered in EQAR.

MAB also provides the following activities outside the scope of ESG:

- **External evaluation of full professorship applications on institutional request:**

The evaluation of applications for the title of university professor aims to ensure high quality academic staff in leadership positions overseeing research and research-based teaching as well as doctoral education and training at universities. The evaluation is conducted by experts on set criteria on the applicant's academic teaching, research, and publishing background on the national and international level. The expert evaluations are discussed by field-specific expert committees and subsequently by the MAB College for University Professor Applications, which ensures the consistent interpretation of the criteria. The decision is passed by the MAB Board.

- **Evaluation of foreign clinical practice sites:**

MAB conducts an NCFMEA (National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation) standards-based accreditation procedure for the examination of the operation of foreign clinical practice sites belonging to the general medical education of Hungarian HEIs. The aim of the procedure is to certify that the specified medical units of a clinical practice site comply with and operate in line with the accreditation requirements set by the MAB, and their quality assurance system continuously monitors, assesses and maintains the conditions of compliance throughout the period of accreditation. The procedure for the evaluation of

³³ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education (in Hungarian): <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1100204.tv>
Article 67 (4b)

foreign clinical training sites was renewed in 2021: it became possible to reaccredit previously accredited training sites on the basis of simplified data and declarations requested (not on-site visits).

Decision-preparatory and decision-making bodies of MAB

MAB Board

The composition of and the delegating bodies to the MAB Board, which is the decision-making body of MAB, are set out in the Higher Education Act.³⁴ The Board has 20 members, all Hungarians. Nine members are academics delegated by the Minister responsible for higher education (at present the Ministry of Culture and Innovation); two by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; one by the Academy of Arts; three by the Hungarian Rectors' Conference; two by representatives of Churches that maintain HEIs; and one each by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the National Union of Students, and the Union of Doctoral Students in Hungary. The President of MAB is appointed according to a mutual nomination by the minister responsible for higher education (Ministry of Human Capacities in 2018) and the President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The current President of MAB, Prof. Dr Valéria Csépe, was officially appointed on 1 September 2016, and started her first full term as President on 1 March 2018, together with a newly elected MAB Board, with a mandate expiring on 29 February 2024.

All members of the MAB Board except for the student delegates must hold a scientific degree. The term of the Board members is six years and may be renewed once, except for students, whose term is two years. Seven members of the Board, including the president, are members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (5) and the Hungarian Academy of Art (2).

Expert committees

The decision-making process of MAB proceeds through a hierarchy of levels. In MAB, there are nine expert committees (decision-preparatory bodies to the MAB Board) representing the main fields of disciplines:

Agricultural Science, Art, Economics, Engineering and Technology, Humanities, Medical and Health Sciences, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Sport Science.

In addition, there are eight expert committees responsible for special tasks: two focusing on issues not involving the disciplinary committees (Committee on Legal Issues and Committee for Quality Assurance, Development and Strategy), and six responsible for second level evaluation prior to the Board decisions and other different areas (Committee for Multidisciplinary Programmes, College for University Professor Applications, Committee for Teacher Training, College for Doctoral Accreditation, College for Programme Accreditation, and College of Religious Studies).³⁵

Chairpersons and members of the above committees (preparatory bodies) are elected by the MAB Board. Committee members are required to be knowledgeable about the field, discipline, and higher education in general, enabling the body to operate effectively and to a high professional standard. Committee members – approximately 220 experts – are invited from HEIs, and representatives of stakeholders from different fields. The final decision on any procedure falling within the remit of MAB, except for appeals, is taken by the MAB Board.³⁶

³⁴ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 71 (1)

³⁵ Organisational Structure: <https://www.mab.hu/en/about-mab/> under *Organisation* and in Annex 4

³⁶ Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> I.1.2.(2)

Board of Appeals and Complaints

MAB operates a Board of Appeals and Complaints to ensure an impartial and objective expert opinion when a new opinion is required on the same subject or on the same person in a procedure. The decision of the Board may be appealed, which must be lodged by the rector of the HEI. A complaint may be lodged by anyone presuming a procedural error.³⁷

Hungarian Advisory Board and International Advisory Board

MAB's work is supported by the Hungarian Advisory Board and the International Advisory Board. The Hungarian Advisory Board is responsible for providing feedback on the needs and requirements of employers in terms of the qualifications of higher institution graduates and on the quality of higher education in Hungary. The current members of the Hungarian Advisory Board, representing different stakeholders from business and industry, were appointed in 2018 and 2021.

The International Advisory Board is responsible for following up and advising on the work of MAB, especially at its annual meetings, where it issues recommendations based on the MAB annual report, presentations on MAB's activities and other documents. It may also be occasionally invited by MAB to recommend experts for external evaluations or to consult on other issues. At present, there are 6 international members of the Board, appointed in 2014 and 2016.³⁸ As the term of the members appointed in 2014 will expire at the end of 2022, MAB is currently recruiting new members to complete the International Advisory Board, and from 2023 it will be renamed the Strategic Planning Board, underlining MAB's commitment to involve experienced experts from or working with QA agencies and higher education associations in the EHEA in strategic planning processes.

External relations of MAB

MAB is in contact with several international organizations:

- It has been a full member of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) since 2002³⁹ and listed in EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) since 2019.⁴⁰
- Since 1997, MAB has been reviewed and accredited by the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA).⁴¹
- It is a founding member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (CEENQA) since 2001.⁴²
- It gained recognition status by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) in March 2022.⁴³

Also, MAB is a member of the Bologna Follow-up Group⁴⁴ and cooperates with the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) on quality assurance of digital education in Hungary.⁴⁵

Furthermore, MAB participated in the MICROBOL quality assurance working group, which aims to explore, in the context of the Bologna Process, whether and how the existing Bologna tools can be used for or adapted to micro-credentials.

³⁷Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> 1.5.1.,2.,3.

³⁸ <https://www.mab.hu/en/about-mab/> under Organisation

³⁹ENQA: MAB: <https://www.enqa.eu/membership-database/hac-hungarian-accreditation-committee/>

⁴⁰ EQAR: MAB: <https://www.eqar.eu/register/agencies/agency/?id=58>

⁴¹ NCFMEA: Comparability Decisions: <https://sites.ed.gov/ncfmea/comparability-decisions/>

⁴² CENQA: Hungary: <https://www.ceenqa.org/members/full-members/hungary/>

⁴³ WFME: Countries served by agencies with accreditation status: <https://wfme.org/accreditation/accrediting-agencies-status/>

⁴⁴ EHEA: Full members: http://www.ehea.info/page-full_members

⁴⁵ MAB News: Ensuring quality digital higher education in Hungary: <https://www.mab.hu/en/ensuring-quality-digital-higher-education-in-hungary/>

MAB is currently involved in the IMINQA (Implementation and Innovation in QA through Peer Learning) project in peer-learning activities on the legal environment of ESG and in the working group on micro-credentials in cooperation with BFUG TPG C on QA (Bologna Follow-up Group Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance).⁴⁶

MAB's international activities/external relations abroad

SKVC – MAB cooperation

In May 2011, the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) from Lithuania and MAB signed a cooperation agreement for developing measures to harmonize activities regarding QA in higher education, and to promote cooperation on accreditation and QA processes. The agreement covered the exchange of good practices on quality assessment, the recommendation of experts for projects planned by SKVC or MAB, and the sharing of non-confidential information on their higher education systems. As a result of this cooperation, the SKVC invited the then Deputy Director of MAB to participate in an external review in 2021, which proved to be a useful experience.

ECAQA – MAB cooperation

In October 2019, the Kazakh Agency for Quality Assurance in Medical Education, ECAQA (Eurasian Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Health Care) asked MAB to propose medical education experts for one of their processes. The expert recommended by the MAB Committee for Medical and Health Sciences successfully participated in an ECAQA procedure in Kazakhstan. As a result, the two agencies signed a cooperation agreement, which includes the exchange of experts, the sharing of the quality assurance practices of the partner agency and the organisation of joint events.⁴⁷

DEQAR

At the end of 2019, EQAR, together with 9 other ENQA agencies, invited MAB to participate in an EU call for proposals to learn about the EQAR accreditation database (DEQAR) and prepare for data uploading of accreditation assessments. The DEQAR CONNECT project, with the participation of MAB, aims to implement the ongoing reforms in the EHEA. The uploading of accreditation material to the DEQAR database started in early 2020, and since then, decisions and reports on institutional accreditation and doctoral school accreditation have been continuously available there.

EQAR membership of Hungary

On January 1, 2021, Hungary became a governmental member of the European Register of Quality Assurance, EQAR.⁴⁸ MAB considers this to be a major achievement as it will improve the knowledge of the Ministry responsible for higher education on quality assurance and enhance cooperation.

TSI project

In 2021, through the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument (TSI) programme, the OECD and the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (now Ministry of Culture and Innovation) started a project entitled "Facilitating the Digital Transformation of Higher Education in Hungary". The aim of the project, in which MAB participates as an expert partner, is to promote high-quality digital

⁴⁶ EHEA: Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance: <http://www.ehea.info/page-peer-group-C-QA>

⁴⁷ Hungarian Accreditation Committee: Presidential Report for the year 2019 to September 2020: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Presidents-Report-2019_20.pdf p.10.

⁴⁸ Hungarian Accreditation Committee: Report for the year 2020 until September 2021: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Annual-Report-2021_v2..pdf p.11.

education in Hungarian higher education, especially in the field of teaching and learning, and to develop digital competences.⁴⁹

The project is continuing under the name "Ensuring Quality Digital Higher Education in Hungary," funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM). The aims of the project are as follows:

- support of the development of quality assurance policies, standards, and practices, to be implemented by MAB, that can advance the development of high-quality digital higher education in Hungary,
- identifying further supports to enhance the capacity of Hungarian higher education institutions to plan and manage the quality of digital teaching and learning they provide.

International communication – Hungarian Accreditation Review

MAB launched its online periodical, the Hungarian Accreditation Review, in 2020. The aim of the periodical, published twice a year in both Hungarian and English, is to become a leading journal on quality assurance.⁵⁰

Cooperation with EPDAD

EPDAD, the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs, signed a cooperation agreement with MAB in March 2021. The Turkish EPDAD and MAB agreed on organising mutual exchanges and seminars in the field of digital education and teacher training.⁵¹ The President of MAB is a regular lecturer at EPDAD forums.

V4QA Forum and Middle European Cooperation

The leaders of the higher education QA agencies of the four Visegrád countries – Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary – established the Visegrád Four Quality Assurance Forum (V4QA Forum) in October 2021, in Budapest. The Forum provides a regular exchange of experiences in QA, facilitates the development of an international network of experts, and initiates staff exchange. The four organisations (the Polish PKA, the Czech NAB, the Slovak SAAVS, and the Hungarian MAB) agreed to formulate policy proposals for the 2022 Czech EU Presidency on higher education quality assurance issues concerning the European Higher Education Area within their professional competence. The Forum is open to wider international collaborations and projects as set out in the V4QAF Memorandum.⁵²

Beyond the cooperation of the higher education quality assurance agencies of the four Visegrád countries, MAB has developed an international network with the neighbouring countries in Central Europe. In 2021 December, MAB signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Romanian higher education QA agency, ARACIS. Furthermore, negotiations are ongoing between the Croatian QA agency, ASHE, and MAB. The V4QA Forum is open to wider international collaborations and projects as set in the V4QAF Memorandum. The main goal is to expand international partnerships, strengthen cooperation and conduct professional dialogues with quality assurance agencies for higher education in Central Europe (MEQAF - Middle European QA Forum). At the V4QA Forum's meeting in October 2022, the organisations decided to conduct a joint interactive training on ESG Parts 2 and 3 in the near future.

⁴⁹ MAB Report 2022: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Report-2022.pdf> p.9.

⁵⁰ Hungarian Accreditation Committee: Report for the year 2020 until September 2021: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Annual-Report-2021_v2..pdf p.13.

⁵¹ The second issue of the Hungarian Accreditation Review, p.5.: <https://www.mab.hu/en/publications/> under *Hungarian Accreditation Review*

⁵² MAB News: V4QA Forum launched: <https://www.mab.hu/en/v4qa-forum-launched/>

ARACIS – MAB cooperation

In December 2021, the Presidents of MAB and the Romanian ARACIS signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations. In the future, MAB and ARACIS will participate in joint projects, organize professional exchange programmes, publish in each other's publications, and support each other's work through regular exchanges of experience.⁵³

MAB Webinar Series

MAB launched its online webinar series in 2021, which is open to national and international partner organisations, experts, and national HEIs. To date, online sessions have been held on the involvement of stakeholders in external quality assurance, on universities in the DEQAR system, and on quality assurance of the European Universities Initiative.

The MAB webinar on the involvement of stakeholders in external quality assurance was held on 27 January 2021. The principal guests of the event were Dr Norma Ryan, Chair of the ENQA Review Panel for the evaluation of MAB in 2018, and Dr Mark Frederiks, International Policy Coordinator at the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO). In the event, participants from HEIs, the ministry, the Educational Authority and MAB discussed, among other issues, the involvement of stakeholders in QA processes and the ways to engage students in these procedures.⁵⁴

On 16 February 2022, the guest speaker of the MAB webinar was Colin Tück, Director of EQAR. The topics of the online event were the DEQAR database (Database of External Quality Assurance Results), the possibilities of using DEQAR data, especially in the field of credit recognition, and the interoperability of the database with other systems.⁵⁵

The webinar held on 9 March 2022 focused on quality assurance of the European Universities Initiative. The guest speakers of the English-language webinar were Prof. Daniela Cristina Ghitulica, Vice President of ENQA and ARACIS, and Dr Ferenc Takó, Head of Office of ELTE CHARM-EU, one of the European Universities in Hungary.⁵⁶

Online consultations with QA agencies

MAB has had an online session to provide the Latvian QA agency AIKA with information on its QA accreditation procedures and experiences, and provided several online consultation sessions to QA agencies, such as ANVUR from Italy and SKVC from Lithuania, on its experiences about the WFME recognition procedure to support them in preparing for the process.⁵⁷

European Approach

In 2022, on the proposal of MAB, it was included in the Higher Education Act that in the case of a joint programme between a Hungarian and a foreign HEI, the organization conducting the external evaluation shall give its opinion considering the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in addition to the Standards and Guidelines of Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.⁵⁸

⁵³ MAB News: ARACIS-MAB Cooperation: <https://www.mab.hu/en/aracis-mab-cooperation/>

⁵⁴ Hungarian Accreditation Committee: Report for the year 2020 until September 2021: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Annual-Report-2021_v2..pdf p.10.

⁵⁵ MAB Report 2022: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Report-2022.pdf> p.7.

⁵⁶ MAB Report 2022: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Report-2022.pdf> p.7.

⁵⁷ MAB News: Webinar on the WFME accreditation procedure of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/en/webinar-on-the-wfme-accreditation-procedure-of-the-hungarian-accreditation-committee/>

⁵⁸ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education (in Hungarian): <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1100204.tv> Article 78 (7)

MAB has contributed to the development of such a process, namely the CHARM-EU, a European University Alliance, participating in every step of the procedure. In addition, an expert was invited to the alliance based on MAB's suggestion, who proved to be of efficient help in the process.⁵⁹

In September 2022, CHARM-EU informed MAB that they were planning to apply for the "European Degree Label" as part of a group led by the Una Europa alliance, including the Catholic University of Leuven, and invited MAB to join the group as an associate partner. One of the central elements of the initiative is to coordinate and develop a common position with national organisations and agencies. MAB fully supported the initiative and joined the project as an associate partner.

MAB is founding member of the GAIN Network in cooperation with QQI

The Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN) was formally launched on 18 October 2022 by Simon Harris, Irish Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, on behalf of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and Australia's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) at QQI's 10th-anniversary conference in Dublin. MAB, as a member organization, joined the launch of GAIN at the conference.

MAB's international plans for 2022-2023

Increasing international activities and expanding the MAB's international working group is an important vision and mission in the MAB strategy. A new international department of MAB will be responsible for increasing project activity, both in its own coordination and participation in other projects, involving foreign experts in different procedures, participation in the work of international organizations, providing peer support to other international agencies, as well as increasing and promoting mobility.

- To extend its international partnerships with further quality assurance agencies, MAB is planning to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), Croatia, with whom MAB has already had a workshop in Zagreb. MAB aims to sign a similar agreement with the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria) and with the Aragon Agency for Quality Assurance and Strategic Foresight in Higher Education (ACPUA) in the near future.
- MAB is planning to obtain an associate membership in the European University Association (EUA).
- MAB is planning to actively use the European Approach and participate in the external evaluation(s) of EUI alliances.
- MAB intends to aid QA agencies which have not yet achieved compliance with ESG. MAB is in contact with the Serbian QA agency, National Entity for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NEAQA), to provide support in improving quality assurance in Serbian higher education and its internationalization processes. MAB has offered cooperation to the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (NAQA) in Ukraine to share its experiences on institutional accreditation based on the ESG; the Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies will be signed soon.⁶⁰
- MAB also considers organizing a Middle European QA Forum, inviting agencies with similar cultural, historical, and economic backgrounds and sharing the European values on QA and QE.

⁵⁹ Hungarian Accreditation Committee: Report for the year 2020 until September 2021: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Annual-Report-2021_v2..pdf p.9.

⁶⁰ The Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies was signed on January 5, 2023.

- MAB, together with DOSZ, is planning to cooperate with PhD and DLA organisations in neighbouring countries to provide them with QA training.
- MAB aims to increase staff mobility by involving as many colleagues as possible and to apply for further staff mobility opportunities.
- MAB intends to raise the number of international experts involved in its procedures.

A priority is to increase the number of training and education sessions for more effective involvement and continuous training, for employees, reviewers, and MAB experts. The plan is to increase the number of internal and international training courses. MAB participates in a mobility programme for agency staff organized by the BFUG. The aim is to familiarize participants with other QA agencies' quality practices, exchange good practices and share experiences. One of the members of the MAB Secretariat is going to visit the Italian agency ANVUR within the framework of the mobility programme, and in December 2022 the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) from Georgia will visit MAB.

Last year the MAB Director for International Affairs visited the Romanian agency ARACIS in Bucharest. As a result of the visit, on 15 December 2021, the Presidents of MAB and ARACIS signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations (see above).

5. Profile, functioning and (EQA) activities of the agency (compliance with Part 3 of the ESG)

5.1 ESG Standard 3.1 Activities, policy, and processes for quality assurance

Standard: Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

MAB's activities – within the scope of ESG – are ex-ante evaluations processes, including the evaluation of

- new HEIs
- new VET, Bachelor, and Master programme and learning outcome framework requirements
- new VET, Bachelor, and Master programmes
- new doctoral schools and adding a new branch of science to an existing doctoral school

and the ex-post accreditation of

- existing HEIs in five-year cycles, including the monitoring of program supervision performed by HEIs as requested by the National Higher Education Act,⁶¹
- existing doctoral schools in five-year cycles,
- basic medical programmes of existing medical schools, based on the MAB WFME standards.

Further information on the activities and related procedures is available in Section 4 under “History, profile and activities of the agency” and in Section 6.3 under “Implementing processes”.

The table below shows the numbers of MAB's completed procedures in the past five years:

Number of MAB procedures carried out between from 2018 to October 2022

Level and type of procedure	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1. Procedures at institutional level					
1.1 Ex post accreditation of existing higher education institutions in five-year cycles					
Approved	6	10	19	8	7
Rejected	0	0	1	0	0
Total	6	10	20	8	7
Monitoring procedures of higher education institutions					
Approved	5	1	5	1	1
Rejected	0	0	0	0	1
Total	5	1	5	1	2*

⁶¹ In the course of the discipline-based ex-post accreditation procedures that are being developed, MAB will specifically examine whether HEIs supervise their programmes every five years, in accordance with Article 15 (1) of the National Higher Education Act (ESG 1.2 and 1.9) https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf

Level and type of procedure	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1.2 Ex post accreditation of existing doctoral schools in five-year cycles					
Approved	9	93	14	26	16
Rejected	5	7	3	1	1
Total	14	100	17	27	17
Monitoring procedures of doctoral schools					
Approved	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6
Rejected	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6
2. Procedures at programme level					
2.1 Initial evaluation of programme and learning outcome framework requirements of VET, bachelor, and master programmes					
Approved	11	12	7	4	6
Rejected	10	11	11	3	3
Total	21	23	18	7	9
2.2 Initial accreditation of VET, bachelor, and master programmes					
Approved	68	81	22	66	37
Rejected	52	67	58	45	38
Total	120	148	80	111	75
2.3 Accreditation of bachelor and master programmes in disciplinary clusters					
Approved	0	0	0	0	0
Rejected	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0
2.4 Accreditation of medical schools (programmes) based on MAB's WFME standards					
Approved	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	0
Rejected	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	0
3. Procedures at individual level					
3. University professor applications					
Approved	116	124	107	86	143
Rejected	29	29	35	16	36
Total	145	153	142	102	179

* By the end of October 2022, ten institutional monitoring procedures have been carried out by MAB in 2022. Two of the ten procedures have already been closed by decisions of the MAB Board. Eight of the procedures have been conducted, but not yet closed by the Board.

With the adoption of its new Strategy 2019–2024, MAB has further developed its processes and activities, underpinned by its mission and key values set out in its Mission Statement:

“... to provide evaluation services to facilitate high standards of learning in Hungarian higher education institutions and to promote quality assurance to support all levels of education and all stakeholders involved. The MAB works in line with the laws relevant to higher education, performs the tasks assigned to it, meets the ESG criteria and proceeds in line with the objective, complex and modern guidelines developed by its disciplinary committees and the MAB Board. Through its activities, the MAB promotes the independence of operations. It applies, develops and/or adapts assessment methodologies conforming to international standards. The MAB's work as an expert, accreditor, analyst, and submitter of proposals follows the values specified in the international standards, is based

on objective criteria and is independent, unbiased, and free from politics. Through all of its activities, the MAB endeavours to solidify the quality culture of higher education institutions in order to improve the standards of Hungarian higher education and strengthen its international reputation.

Throughout its processes, the MAB consistently applies the ESG quality assurance criteria and adheres to the values adopted by ENQA and reflected in the MAB Strategy

(1) Transparency: the MAB makes the principles underlying its decisions and analyses public and publishes its position statements as well as the criteria used in its decision-making and analysis.

(2) Independence: autonomy in its operations ensures and facilitates the high standards and recognition of the work performed by the MAB, while its independence as an organisation guarantees respect and support for the autonomy of higher education institutions.

(3) Cooperation: the MAB regularly consults higher education stakeholders and works with higher education bodies, peer agencies in quality assurance and reputable international quality assurance organisations.

(4) Integrity: the MAB acts in an irreproachable, fair, unbiased, objective, and professional manner at all times.

The agency's key goals are:

- To protect all stakeholders in higher education with regard to quality.
- To support the improvement of quality standards in higher education.
- To report on the quality of higher education to the government and to Hungarian society.

Through these activities MAB performs quality certification services by assessing whether an institution or programme meets the quality criteria specified and published by the MAB in advance. The MAB will grant accreditation to an institution or programme if it meets these criteria. The core activity of the MAB is therefore the accreditation of institutions and doctoral schools.”⁶²

With its evaluation and accreditation processes, MAB fulfils its mission to assess and promote high quality learning in Hungarian HEIs and to support all levels and participants in higher education.

HEIs are responsible to develop their own quality assurance systems and cultures, and MAB provides them broad support to achieve these goals. Also, MAB aims to enhance the quality culture of higher education not only through its accreditation activities, but also by participating as experts and speakers at conferences and other professional workshops. These are regularly reported on the agency's website and social media platforms.⁶³ As a result of the initiation of the ESG-based assessment system, HEIs have taken further steps to improve their QA systems and cultures.

MAB's external quality assurance activities include expanding its international relations to provide higher education institutions with a direct link to international higher education trends through the opinions and recommendations of international experts. This has been included in the development of MAB's quality assessment tasks in its strategic goals for 2019-2024.

According to the agency's strategy, "increasing the MAB's domestic and international activity is a key task for the whole strategic period. This will be based on the stabilisation of MAB's image in the previous strategic period, and on the strengthening of its visibility and acceptance at home and

⁶² MAB's mission statement and key goals: <https://www.mab.hu/en/about-mab/> under *Activities*

⁶³ MAB website: News: <https://www.mab.hu/en/home-page/#news> and MAB LinkedIn site: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/mabhu/mycompany/>

abroad. To achieve this, MAB's assessment, cooperation and initiative activities need to be continuously developed in the 2019-2024 planning period."⁶⁴

MAB regularly demonstrates the above goals through a range of activities, such as inviting the representatives of higher education to its webinars (e.g., a webinar on stakeholders in 2021, or on micro-credentials in 2022) and providing presentations on different QA topics at various higher education events. In addition, stakeholders are increasingly involved in its processes (e.g., the increasing number of stakeholders from different fields in the MAB expert committees) and there is a growing participation and contribution of international experts in MAB's accreditation procedures, due to its international cooperation and cross-border activities with other QA agencies.⁶⁵

MAB involves stakeholders – members of the Board, committees, advisory boards, evaluators, foreign experts, site-visit team members, etc. – at various levels in its governance and work.

During the BFUG staff mobility programme in 2021, the then Deputy Director of MAB learned about the ESQA project from ARACIS on the involvement of stakeholders in external QA activities and discussed the findings and conclusions with the MAB management.⁶⁶

ENQA's progress visit in January 2021 was organised by MAB in the framework of an online webinar, addressing the involvement of stakeholders in external quality assurance. In line with the recommendation of the ENQA panel and the International Advisory Board, external stakeholders with labour market experience have been invited to join the MAB disciplinary committees to provide additional support and perspective to the work of the Committees. Also, for the same reason, additional stakeholders (from the National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education, the State Audit Office of Hungary, the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture, the Hungarian Medical Chamber, the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the National Teachers' Chamber) have joined the work of MAB's Hungarian Advisory Board. For the Board members, MAB organised a half-day training on ESG and the operation of the agency.

Non-academic/employer representatives are increasingly involved in the institutional and doctoral school accreditation processes; employers are always interviewed by site-visit teams during on-site visits.

5.2 ESG Standard 3.2 Official status

Standard: Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.

MAB is authorised by the national government and was established with the country's first Higher Education Act in 1993. In 2011, a new Higher Education Act was passed, which is currently in force. Article 70 (1) defines MAB as "...an independent national expert body established for the purposes of the external evaluation of the quality of educational, academic, research and artistic activities performed in higher education and the internal quality assurance systems operated by HEIs, and the provision of expert services in the procedures related to HEIs, as provided for in this Act."⁶⁷

⁶⁴ MAB strategy 2019-2024 (in Hungarian): http://old.mab.hu/web/doc/szabalyok/MAB_Strategia_19-24.pdf p.5.

⁶⁵ For further information on the involvement of stakeholders and the list of foreign experts, please see Section 6.3.

⁶⁶ Effective involvement of stakeholders in external quality assurance activities – ESQA: <https://www.aracis.ro/en/esqa-project/>

⁶⁷ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 70 (1)

The Act also declares that MAB is a legal entity without court registration of its public benefit status; and its founding document is issued by the minister responsible for higher education.⁶⁸ “Its operations are governed by Act CLXXV of 2011 on the right of association, on public benefit status and on the operation and support of non-governmental organisations (NGO Act), as well as by other relevant Hungarian legislation.”⁶⁹ MAB was established by registration in the official register maintained by the Educational Authority within the framework of the higher education information system, is seated in Budapest, and the president of the agency is entitled to represent it. MAB prepares its organizational and operating regulations, which are approved by the minister, who may refuse to approve these regulations only if they violate any law.⁷⁰

In addition, the Act states that MAB must ensure access to its professional assessment criteria system, which is considered public data in the public interest. The content of the expert opinions and resolutions adopted by MAB must be public, and the identity of the experts involved shall be known. The MAB's system of evaluation criteria is uniform for the entire Hungarian higher education and in the case of accreditation procedures abroad and is valid regardless of the maintainer.⁷¹

According to Government Decree 19/2012, MAB “is an expert body operating in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) adopted by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.”⁷² It adopts its own set of assessment criteria.⁷³ The rules related to the operation and organization of MAB are included in its organizational and operational regulations adopted by the vote of two-thirds of the MAB Board members and approved in accordance with the law.⁷⁴ The legality of MAB's activities is overseen by the minister responsible for higher education.⁷⁵

5.3 ESG Standard 3.3 Independence

Standard: Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

Organisational independence of MAB

Pursuant to Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, MAB is an independent higher education quality assurance agency, participating as an expert in procedures related to higher education

⁶⁸ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education (in Hungarian): <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1100204.tv> Article 70 (1a)

⁶⁹ Deed of Foundation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Deed-of-foundation.pdf> III.3.2.

⁷⁰ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 70 (1a)

⁷¹ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 70 (2)

⁷² Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Expercts-of-Government-Decree-on-certain-aspects-of-quality-assessment-and-improvement-in-higher-education.pdf> Chapter 1, 1.2 (2)

⁷³ Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Expercts-of-Government-Decree-on-certain-aspects-of-quality-assessment-and-improvement-in-higher-education.pdf> Chapter 1, 1.2 (2,3)

⁷⁴ Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Expercts-of-Government-Decree-on-certain-aspects-of-quality-assessment-and-improvement-in-higher-education.pdf> Chapter 1, 2.4 (3,4)

⁷⁵ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 71/A (1)

institutions. It was established for the external evaluation of the quality of education, scientific research and artistic creation in higher education and the operation of the internal quality assurance system of higher education institutions.⁷⁶

MAB “is a public benefit organisation, a legal entity, without court registration of its public benefit status. Its operations are governed by Act CLXXV of 2011 on the right of association, on public benefit status and on the operation and support of non-governmental organisations (NGO Act), as well as by other relevant Hungarian legislation.”⁷⁷

As stated in its Deed of Foundation, MAB “may not pursue political activities, may not engage in any public activities on behalf of or in the interest of any party, and is an organisation independent from all parties and is barred from providing them or receiving from them any financial support.”⁷⁸

Due to its independent status, the MAB is not dependent on any other state organization and may not receive instructions for the performance of its tasks or financial management.⁷⁹ Based on Act I of 2012 on the Labour Code, MAB concludes direct employment contracts with employees. MAB employees are not civil servants.

Regarding the composition of MAB Board, the Higher Education Act states that members of the Higher Education Planning Board, rectors, chancellors, civil servants, government and public officials cannot be appointed as Board members.⁸⁰ Proceeding from the Act, the same rule applies to all other MAB committee members.

Pursuant to Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012, MAB “adopts its own assessment criteria”.⁸¹ The assessment criteria are approved by the MAB Board and are uniform for all higher education institutions in Hungary, regardless of the maintainer.⁸² The criteria of the various QA processes, the reports prepared on the procedures by MAB experts and the decisions taken by the MAB Board are publicly available on the MAB website.

Operational independence of MAB

MAB must prepare its organizational and operating regulations in accordance with the Hungarian legislation, but regardless of this, it enjoys freedom in the design of its organization and operations. The MAB president has control over the MAB's budget.⁸³ The agency cannot be instructed in the

⁷⁶ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 70 (1)

⁷⁷ Deed of Foundation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Deed-of-foundation.pdf> III. 3.2.

⁷⁸ Deed of Foundation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Deed-of-foundation.pdf> III. 3.8.

⁷⁹ Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Expercts-of-Government-Decree-on-certain-aspects-of-quality-assessment-and-improvement-in-higher-education.pdf> Chapter 1, 2. 4 (3)

⁸⁰ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 71 (1)

⁸¹ Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Expercts-of-Government-Decree-on-certain-aspects-of-quality-assessment-and-improvement-in-higher-education.pdf> Chapter 1, 1. 2 (3)

⁸² Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 70 (2)

⁸³ Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Expercts-of-Government-Decree-on-certain-aspects-of-quality-assessment-and-improvement-in-higher-education.pdf> Chapter 1, 2. (2)

financial management and performance of its tasks by any organization.⁸⁴ The MAB Board members decide on issues related to the operation and organization of MAB, and the organizational and operational regulations are adopted by the vote of two-thirds of the Board.⁸⁵ MAB's organizational and operating regulations are publicly available on its website.

MAB's operational independence is established by law; the minister has no right to amend the decision of the agency. It is functionally independent, develops its own rules of operation⁸⁶ (such as the management of its staff, or the recruitment, nomination and appointment of experts), criteria and processes, and decides on the procedures necessary for external quality assurance. Its regulations are drawn up by MAB, then approved by the minister only for the purpose of legal compliance.⁸⁷

The rules of MAB regulate conflicts of interest and state that procedures cannot be influenced by personal or official interest. For the sake of informal internal decision-making, MAB has a Code of Ethics, which regulates ethical behaviour and conflicts of interest and applies to MAB Board members and external experts, as well as MAB staff.⁸⁸ The Code of Ethics clearly states that members and experts, as well as employees, act in their professional capacity, without the influence of third parties. MAB Board members and external experts sign a declaration of conflict of interest upon their appointment, including that they are acting in a personal capacity and not representing their constituent organisations when working for the agency.

In October 2022, a new, more detailed, and thorough Code of Ethics was adopted⁸⁹, which includes the core values of ESG, as well as precise definitions and basic principles. The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to define standards of moral behaviour – rights and obligations – by following which the employees of the MAB Secretariat, as well as non-employed experts and reviewers, committee and college members involved in quality control and authentication, who carry out tasks based on a legal relationship, contribute to the preservation and maintenance of the professional and institutional integrity of the MAB, to strengthen relationships, to create a sense of well-being that helps high-quality professional work. The purpose of the Code of Ethics is also to show direction in matters for which there are no normative rules, but which are necessary regarding operation and are justified for the performance of tasks. The Code of Ethics and the bodies acting in individual ethical matters consider and follow the expectations set by ESG 2015, with particular regard to the requirements of accountability, independence, impartiality, and improvement.

Independence of formal outcomes

MAB pays special attention to guarantee the independence of its procedures and decisions through its by-laws and assessment criteria. Also, it must create conditions in its decision-making and preparatory processes which facilitate the development of unbiased expert opinions based on objective criteria. Therefore, as declared in MAB's Rules of Organisation and Operation, persons with a conflict of interest must not participate in decision-making processes or in supporting any decision-

⁸⁴ Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Expercts-of-Government-Decree-on-certain-aspects-of-quality-assessment-and-improvement-in-higher-education.pdf> Chapter 1, 2.(3)

⁸⁵ Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Expercts-of-Government-Decree-on-certain-aspects-of-quality-assessment-and-improvement-in-higher-education.pdf> Chapter 1, 2. (4)

⁸⁶ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 71 (3)

⁸⁷ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 70 (1b)

⁸⁸ Code of Ethics: <https://www.mab.hu/en/about-mab/> under *Policies*

⁸⁹ The document is available in Hungarian (Új Etikai Kódex) at <https://www.mab.hu/mab/> under *Szabályzatok*

making procedures.⁹⁰ Furthermore, prior to the start of an institutional or doctoral school accreditation procedure, the HEI or doctoral school undergoing accreditation is informed of the composition of the MAB site-visit team and may raise objections if it detects a conflict of interest with any of the team members.

External evaluators of MAB, participating in preparatory work, must carry out their tasks in line with the evaluation criteria applicable to the type of the case and must prepare a written opinion in their own name. Evaluators are selected from the MAB database and contracted for a fixed period, subject to signing a declaration of conflict of interest. Since 2018, on the proposal of the ENQA Board, the names of experts involved in all ESG-based accreditation procedures are public.

All preparatory bodies of MAB (except for the College for University Professor Applications) must include a member delegated from the National Union of Students in Hungary and from the National Union of Doctoral Students. Regarding student members, it must be checked whether the expert body in question has a member with whom the student has a dependent relationship or who is the student's teacher or supervisor. In such a case, the delegating student body must nominate a new member until there is no objection to the membership.⁹¹

According to MAB's Code of Ethics, in their work performed on behalf of the agency, members of the MAB must fully comply with the applicable laws and other legislation in force. They may not represent their employer if they are employed by a HEI or another organisation, i.e., they must formulate independent opinions, based on objectivity, impartiality, and strict professional criteria. They shall not be biased in favour of or against any HEI, organisation or person involved, and must strive for transparency, i.e., work in line with the MAB by-laws, professional requirements, and guidelines.⁹²

5.4 ESG Standard 3.4 Thematic analysis

Standard: Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

One of MAB's weaknesses of internal quality assurance and enhancement was the lack of thematic analyses and utilization of the significant amount of data collected during the accreditation procedures. Therefore, in 2020, in response to the findings of the ENQA review panel in 2018 regarding ESG 3.4, MAB made an open call to commission an external thematic analysis to be performed on its key accreditation activities of the last three years. Of the two proposals, PricewaterhouseCoopers in Hungary was selected, based on its higher education experience, its knowledge about higher education legislation and the activities of MAB. PwC prepared extensive questionnaires in consultation with MAB, which were sent to a wide range of stakeholders. Its report, *Thematic Review of Activities (2017-2020)*, was published in December 2020 on the MAB website,⁹³ and an article based on the report was also presented in the second issue of the Hungarian Accreditation Review.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> 32(1)

⁹¹ Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> 14(1)

⁹² Code of Ethics: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Code-of-ethic.pdf> I.1.

⁹³ Thematic Review of Activities (2017-2020): https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Thematic-review-of-HAC-activities_deliverable.pdf

⁹⁴ Hungarian Accreditation Review, 2nd issue: <https://www.mab.hu/en/publications/> under *Hungarian Accreditation Review*, pp. 14-17.

The review examined the following procedures of MAB from the perspective of HEIs and MAB experts:

- institutional accreditation
- establishing a new study programme
- launch of a new study programme

Based on the respondents' answers, the main findings of the review were as follows:

- The result of the questionnaires indicates that accreditation of new study programmes is the procedure that requires the most attention from MAB and imposes the largest workload on both HEIs (average length of documents submitted) and MAB, while providing the lowest customer satisfaction.
- The results clearly show that the renewed institutional accreditation procedure has been the most welcomed by HEIs.
- The review presented the overall level of satisfaction with MAB's procedures as reported by HEI staff (the actual clients of these services), as well as the satisfaction of MAB experts with the internal operation of MAB.

The challenges identified and recommendations made by HEIs and MAB experts, as well as their satisfaction with the procedures examined, are collected in a table in the review prepared by PwC.⁹⁵

As a result of the review, MAB has decided to revise and simplify the processes of programme launch and establishment, within the initial accreditation procedure of VET, bachelor and master programmes. In this regard, MAB is currently conducting a review within the framework of the EU-funded Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) 2.2.1. project (consortium with the Educational Authority, the Hungarian Rectors' Conference and the Digital Government Development and Project Management Ltd., led by MAB). Detailed information on the RRF project is available in Annex 5.

Another comprehensive review and thematic analysis are being carried out by the OECD, focusing on the relevance of the MAB standards and procedures in general, on recommendation for introducing a tailored, fit-for-purpose evaluation of the HEIs' digital teaching and learning, as well as on the major contextual issues including the QA landscape of the Hungarian higher education. This analysis, together with the other results of the TSI project mentioned earlier, will be published in the first quarter of 2023.

By the end of 2022, two in-depth thematic analyses will be completed by two working groups of MAB in the framework of the RRF project, one on institutional accreditation and another on programme evaluation.

From September 2022 on, all procedures of MAB have been digitised with the launch of a new Secretariat Information System (Titkársági Információs Rendszer), the TIR 2.0.⁹⁶ The system will also support the systematic collection and statistical analyses of data to enable data-driven evaluations of the outcomes to use in further thematic analyses.

⁹⁵ Thematic Review of Activities (2017-2020) https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Thematic-review-of-HAC-activities_deliverable.pdf

⁹⁶ The MAB TIR database system was in operation until Autumn 2022. Applications must be submitted using the new MAB database, TIR 2.0, from September 2022. (<https://www.mab.hu/en/home-page/>) However, the old database system is still used because of the data still available in it, and ongoing processes started before autumn 2022 will be completed through it.

MAB regularly informs the public about its activities through

- the Hungarian Accreditation Review⁹⁷

The Hungarian Accreditation Review is the online journal of MAB, issued twice a year in Hungarian and English and available on the MAB website. It provides information on various MAB events and activities, interviews with members of the QA community, discusses current QA topics related to higher education, and provides a forum for QA- and QE-related publications from Hungary and abroad.

- Annual reports⁹⁸

The reports present an overview and analysis of MAB's annual work and achievements (with figures and data) in terms of expert activities, accreditation procedures, international activities, management, and operation, and are publicly available on the MAB website. The reports are also provided to MAB's International Advisory Board (IAB) prior to its annual meeting with the MAB President, management, and staff. During and after the meeting, the IAB members reflect on the report and the presentations given at the meeting. Based on the IAB recommendations, MAB prepares an action plan for the upcoming year to further enhance its activities and procedures.

- Presentations⁹⁹

The MAB President and staff members participate in several national and international conferences (invited to or organized by), workshops, both in person and online, presenting the activities, trends, plans, and challenges faced by MAB on various topics related to QA in higher education. The public is also informed about these events on the MAB website, as well as on LinkedIn and Twitter.¹⁰⁰

5.5 ESG Standard 3.5 Resources

Standard: Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

The 12/2013 (II.12.) Ministry Decree on the fees and rates of administrative service in higher education procedures regulates that the MAB may request expert fees for the registration of the establishment of a doctoral school, regarding its contribution under the Higher Education Act, and for other procedures initiated upon request.¹⁰¹

Between 2018-2021, MAB continued to operate within a stable budget. The financial background of the tasks was partly provided by state budget support (for general operational costs of the agency) and partly by MAB's own revenues, from the procedures conducted regarding the launch of bachelor, master and VET programmes, the expert opinions prepared for appeals, the accreditation processes for HEIs and doctoral schools, and the evaluation of university professor applications.

⁹⁷ Hungarian Accreditation Review: <https://www.mab.hu/en/publications/> under *Hungarian Accreditation Review*

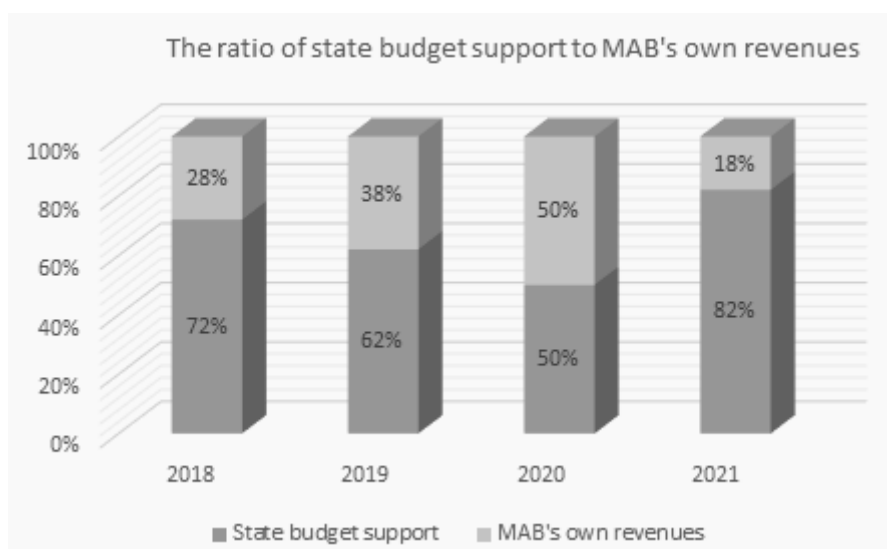
⁹⁸ MAB annual reports: <https://www.mab.hu/en/publications/> under *Reports*

⁹⁹ MAB presentations: <https://www.mab.hu/en/publications/> under *Lectures*

¹⁰⁰ MAB News: <https://www.mab.hu/en/news>

¹⁰¹ 12/2013 (II. 12.) EMMI Decree on the fees for administrative services related to the operation of the state-recognised language examination system and higher education, and on the amount of such fees (in Hungarian): <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1300012.emm> Annex 1 B)

The ratio of state budget support to MAB's own revenues was 72-28% in 2018, 62-38% in 2019, 50-50% in 2020, and 82-18% in 2021.¹⁰²



Between 2018–2020, MAB received an annual 200 million HUF state budget support for its operation. In 2020, due to the pandemic, a decrease in the number of travels, face-to-face meetings, and modified office work reduced the agency's expenditure by 4.7 million HUF. In 2021, MAB received a 279 million HUF budget support from the Ministry of Innovation and Technology for its operation, of which 260 million HUF was used to fund the general operating expenses of MAB and 19 million HUF covered the costs of the WFME recognition process.

MAB plans to gradually increase the remuneration of its experts; for example, in 2022, the fees for site-visit members participating in institutional accreditation were raised significantly.

The year 2021 ended with a negative result of 21.966 million HUF, because in 2021 the preparatory costs for the Resilience and Recovery Facility tender on “Sectoral modernisation of higher education training” (RRF Call - 2.1.1-21) were charged. MAB won the tender in 2022, and the above costs will be recovered during the project period.¹⁰³

MAB has been hiring new staff in the past years to increase its human resource capacity. The staff is faced with a heavy workload, but until now MAB considers that its current Secretariat staff of 20 persons has been able to accomplish its tasks encompassing evaluation and accreditation work as well as essential quality enhancement activities. The intention of new hiring is also to build up a younger, well-trained team with appropriate English language skills. The average age of the MAB Secretariat was 45 years in 2019 with the gender distribution leaning towards female employees. In 2022, the average age is around 40 years, and the rate of male and female employees is more balanced.¹⁰⁴ At present, the MAB Secretariat's staff has 20 members, of whom 18 work full time and 2 part time. The staff encompasses the Director of the Secretariat, the Director for Foreign Affairs, both of whom participate in evaluation activities, the Economic Director, 6 programme officers, 7 administrators, a HR coordinator, an IQA agent, as well as two IT officers. A graph on the MAB staff is shown in Annex 2.

The MAB Secretariat's Office is in the centre of Budapest and is easily accessible for its stakeholders. In addition to the office rooms, there is a plenary meeting room and facilities for smaller meetings.

¹⁰² For the figures regarding MAB's revenues between 2018-2021, see Annex 2.

¹⁰³ The annual financial reports are available in Hungarian at <https://www.mab.hu/mab/> under *Közhasznúsági Jelentések*

¹⁰⁴ For the figures regarding the MAB Secretariat staff between 2018-2021, see Annex 2.

Due to COVID-19, the Board as well as the expert committee meetings were transferred to online space in March 2020, and the plenary meeting room is currently used for staff trainings and meetings and the regular working group discussions and consultations in the RRF Project.

IT hardware and software are up-to-date and are updated regularly. A continuous and secure access to the digital platforms (Teams and Zoom), and the administrative and voting system was developed, home office facilities (devices, One drive cloud system, SharePoint system services) have been secured, hybrid work frame was introduced and regulated, evaluations and signatures (secure 'e-sign') were changed to digital.

5.6 ESG Standard 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

Standard: Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

Since it was established, MAB has had an internal code of professional conduct and integrity. When joining a MAB procedure or activity, all experts are informed of the requirements of conflict of interest, objective judgment and integrity and sign a conflict-of-interest declaration. Experts working through the MAB review platform in the TIR 2.0 database must acknowledge the same before being granted access to the various documents and applications. Staff job descriptions include a confidentiality clause.

The MAB Rules of Organisation and Operation specifies the tasks and duties of the different stakeholders of MAB, while the MAB Code of Ethics clearly sets out the values that define the expected behaviour of stakeholders in MAB's processes. The Code of Ethics states that opinions of MAB members shall be expressed neutrally and without partiality towards any higher education institution, organisation or person concerned, i.e., without discrimination or bias, either positive or negative. A renewed Code of Ethics with reference to the ESG was accepted in October 2022.¹⁰⁵

The MAB Board adopted a GDPR-compliant personal data protection manual in 2018.

The criteria and guidelines for all external quality assurance procedures, which form an essential part of MAB's quality assurance system, are publicly available on the MAB website.

MAB has a folder containing documents related to internal quality assurance, e.g., the Programme Officers' Handbook, the previous and current versions of the Code of Ethics, the Mission Statement, the Rules of Organisation and Operation, the MAB Labour Code, and the Data Protection Regulation. The majority of these documents are also publicly available on the MAB website, except for those related to duties and operational standards of the staff (operation of the Secretariat, tasks of programme officers, etc.).

At MAB there are several feedback-collecting mechanisms on the activities and processes, especially the following ones:

In the case of each institutional-level assessment, a survey is sent to all students (who are considered as prime stakeholders) to receive their anonymous feedback and opinions about their institution, to gather information whether they are aware of MAB and to collect their views on how an accreditation

¹⁰⁵ Code of Ethics: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Code-of-ethic.pdf> I.1.4., and new Code of Ethics (in Hungarian): <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Etikai-K%C3%B3dex.pdf> Article 10.

visit can benefit the operation of the HEI. The results are forwarded to the site-visit team members for further information before the actual visit to the institution.

Through the wider thematic analysis conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2020 (described in Section 5.4), 11 799 responses were collected from all levels of higher education stakeholders (HEI and partner organisation staff, HEI students and MAB experts) regarding institutional-level accreditation, the launch and establishment of programmes, and general opinions about MAB and accreditation. The data were analysed by the MAB Committee for Quality Assurance, Development and Strategy and serve as a basic principle of further improvements of institutional accreditation in the RRF 2.2.1. project.

In the case of the accreditation of doctoral schools – as a quite newly presented procedure – extensive feedback collecting system is in place (described in Section 6.2.). Another important way to gather feedback is through consultation sessions (offered to all institutions related to the relevant procedures), where institutions can ask questions and express their concerns (if any). In the case of programme evaluation procedures (except for the WFME BME-based accreditation procedure) there is no regular feedback collecting practices anymore, as the results of the previous thematic analysis, surveys and consultations have clearly showed that significant renewal in this area is required, and therefore the RRF 2.2.1. project (modernization of HE programs) focuses on program-level QA and QE (easier ex-ante registration, more autonomy to HEIs, also in form of quality-based self-accreditation and more quality-led ex-post evaluation based on study fields, with reference to the ESG 1.2. and 1.9.).

Another key area of MAB's internal QA is the regular, annual presentation of the working group leaders (employees of the MAB Secretariat) within the Secretariat, when they summarize their experiences and conclusions on the past year, supported by relevant data. Their presentations are followed by a discussion, and the results of these discussions are also presented in the open plenary session of the MAB Board, to which representatives of the relevant authorities of higher education are regularly invited. In 2022 an in-person meeting was organized, to which the MAB Board members, the leaders of the decision-preparatory bodies, the members of Hungarian Advisory Board and other stakeholders from higher education had been invited to publicly discuss the procedures, and debate the current situation, including the possibilities and challenges faced by MAB.

Feedback and recommendations of MAB's Hungarian Advisory Board and the International Advisory Board constitute a key part of the internal QA system. MAB follows up on the recommendations of the International Advisory Board and reports on the actions taken at the next annual meeting. The latest report including last year's recommendations with the related tasks and actions completed is publicly available on the MAB website.¹⁰⁶

Moreover, the performance of experts and reviewers, including the committee and Board members, are evaluated at the end of every year. The performance of the staff members is evaluated regularly and serve the personal development plan. Trainings (internal and international) are available for the staff. Results of the questionnaires performed are regularly discussed with, and in-house QA trainings and team-building events are available for the staff.

¹⁰⁶ MAB report 2022: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Report-2022.pdf>

5.7 ESG Standard 3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies

Standard: Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

Reviews serve as an important tool for further developing the working standards of MAB, and they contribute to the agency's self-reflection on strengths and weaknesses, while panel reports provide direction for future activities and planning.

MAB's membership in ENQA:

MAB has undergone three external reviews to gain and renew its ENQA membership since 2007/2008. In 2000, MAB was one of the first quality assurance agencies to apply for an external evaluation. The self-assessment and board reports are published on the MAB website.

MAB's last external review by ENQA was conducted in 2018. The comprehensive evaluation provided by the Review Panel found that MAB was, overall, in substantial compliance with the ESG. The panel concluded that MAB was fully compliant with nine standards, substantially compliant with four standards: ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis, ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct, ESG 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose, and ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals, and partially compliant with one of the ESG standards: ESG 2.4 Peer-review experts.¹⁰⁷ The strategy and action plan of MAB was based in part on these results as well as on the recommendations formulated. MAB's membership in ENQA was reconfirmed for five more years, until 13 September 2023.¹⁰⁸ In response to the panel recommendations, the MAB reflected on several of its procedures and has made changes in a number of them; examples are mentioned in Section 8.

MAB's registered status in EQAR:

MAB applied first time for inclusion on the EQAR Register in 2017 and submitted its external review report in September 2018. Of the fourteen ESG standards, MAB demonstrated full compliance with ten standards, and achieved partial compliance with the following four standards: ESG 2.4 Peer-review experts, ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals, ESG 3.3 Independence, and ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis. The decision on MAB's inclusion on the Register was taken in April 2019, after the Register Committee concluded that MAB was in substantial compliance with the ESG as a whole and approved MAB's inclusion on the Register, until September 2023.¹⁰⁹ The current renewal procedure of MAB's registered status in EQAR is coupled with the renewal of MAB's membership in ENQA.

MAB's recognition status granted by WFME:

To expand its accreditation portfolio and in response to the increasing need expressed by medical schools in Hungary, MAB applied for recognition status from the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) in 2021. As a result of the process, MAB obtained recognition status in March 2022, for a period of ten years, until March 2032, pending annual monitoring of continued compliance.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Report of the panel of the external review of the HAC, May 2018:

http://old.mab.hu/web/images/doc/hac/publications/HAC_REVIEW_REPORT_Final_7_30_2018.pdf pp. 44-45.

¹⁰⁸ ENQA letter on reconfirmation of membership of HAC in ENQA:

http://old.mab.hu/web/images/doc/hac/publications/Letter_ENQA_%20to_HAC_2018.pdf

¹⁰⁹ EQAR letter on registration of HAC on EQAR: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/EQAR.pdf>

¹¹⁰ WFME certificate of recognition status: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/WFME-Recognition-Certificate_MAB.pdf

MAB is required to submit an annual report to the WFME on its activities and procedures related to the WFME-based accreditation of medical schools.

The expansion of the accreditation portfolio ensures the competitiveness of Hungarian medical education and contributes to the support of the internationalization of higher education. The aim of the procedure is to assess the basic medical programmes of medical schools against the MAB medical standards developed based on the WFME BME 2020 standards.

The recognition procedure was conducted in 2021 by WFME, including the self-assessment report submitted by MAB and the site visit carried out by the WFME Recognition Team. When preparing the WFME self-assessment report, the MAB staff could significantly rely on its experience acquired in previous ENQA renewal procedures. Finally, of the 41 WFME criteria, two were not applicable (Criteria 2 and 15), 31 were considered compliant and seven were found partially compliant (Criteria 10.5, 11.2, 12.2, 12.3, 13.6, 14.3 and 17) by the Recognition Team. Examples of steps taken by MAB to improve compliance to the criteria are mentioned in Section 6.2.

6. Design and implementation of the agency's EQA activities (compliance with Part 2 of the ESG)

6.1 ESG Standard 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

Standard: External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

The activities of MAB are listed in Section 4. The summary of how the MAB EQA activities meet the standards of ESG Part 1 is available in Annex 1.

Evaluation of programme and learning outcome framework requirements for VET, Bachelor, and Master programmes - The MAB contributes to this procedure as an expert body, whereby it examines if the learning outcomes described in the framework are in line with the Hungarian Qualifications Framework with respect to the knowledge, competences, attitude, and autonomy and responsibility. The MAB also considers whether the education and learning outcome framework requirements are comparable to similar programmes nationally and internationally and have the capacity to lead to high-quality study programmes. The requirements are based on ESG 1.2 and on Article 4(4) of the Decree 65/2021 (29.XII.) of the Ministry of Innovation and Technology on the list of qualifications and the establishment of new qualifications in higher education.¹¹¹

Regarding the **initial accreditation of VET, Bachelor, and Master programmes**, the accreditation builds on education and learning outcome framework requirements. The application for a new programme must be approved by the institutional senate, which requires that the HEI considered the ESG Part 1. It must be part of the institutional internal QA system (1.1) and must ensure ongoing monitoring and review of the programme (1.9) and information management (1.7) in accordance with institutional-level rules. To provide information on 1.3 and parts of 1.4 (admission is administered through a national system), the application must contain a detailed curriculum for the entire programme. The application must also contain introduction of teaching staff (1.5) according to criteria.

The periodic accreditation of VET programmes has not been conducted so far; this procedure will be removed from the law. In the future, MAB plans to accredit VET programmes in ex-post clusters, according to disciplines. The new ex-post evaluation procedure is in the planning stage and is carried out by working groups under the RRF 2.2.1 project.

Establishing a new doctoral school and initial accreditation of adding a new branch of science to an existing doctoral school - The Higher Education Act and a government decree (387/2015 (XII.19.) set down basic criteria for the initial accreditation of doctoral schools. The government decree outlines the conditions for establishing a doctoral school, the academic staff requirements, the doctor's degree, and entrance conditions. The MAB accreditation criteria include those in the legislation. MAB uses the same ESG-based self-assessment template for ex-ante and ex-post procedures, highlighting the parts that are not relevant to/different for doctoral schools applying for establishment.

Accreditation of HEIs in five-year cycles is based on Article 26 (c) of the Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education,¹¹²

¹¹¹ The Decree is available in Hungarian at <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A2100065.ITM>

¹¹² Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education (in Hungarian): <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1200019.kor> Article 26(c)

and the Higher Education Act¹¹³. The criteria for institutional accreditation contain all ten standards of the ESG Part 1. The focus here is on how far the institutions' internal QA systems are embedded in their daily operations and how these lead to ongoing quality enhancement. The assessment is also extended to the scientific activities of a HEI. The MAB emphasizes in its procedures that HEIs are responsible for their own internal QA and that the role of the MAB is to support them in their ongoing improvement.

The aim of the MAB procedure is to highlight good practices and to identify weaknesses and areas to be developed. Within the five-year cycle, HEIs undergo follow-up evaluations on the implementation of recommendations and to track developments.

Accreditation of doctoral schools in five-year cycles - From 2019 autumn MAB started a new (pilot first) ESG-based accreditation procedure which follows the criteria and structure of the institutional accreditation: doctoral schools undergo a full review every five years under a normal external evaluation procedure covering all standards of ESG Part 1, including a self-evaluation process by the school, a site visit by an expert team appointed by MAB, and an evaluation report that is made public on the MAB website.

MAB accredits the **basic medical programmes of medical schools**, based on its 2020 WFME BME-based standards, and **foreign clinical training sites** in five-year cycles based on NCFMEA's standards. The MAB WFME standards correspond/overlap with ESG standards, with the addition of a medical focus, in the areas below: policy for quality assurance (MAB WFME standard 7), design and approval of programmes (standards 2.1, 2.2), student-centred learning, teaching and assessment (standards 2.3, 3.1), student admission (standard 4.1), teaching staff (standards 5.1, 5.2), learning resources and student support (standards 4.2, 6.1, 6.2), information management (standards 3.2, 4.2), public information (standards 3.1, 4.1, 4.2) monitoring and review of programmes (standards 2.2),¹¹⁴ and cyclical external quality assurance.¹¹⁵

In line with the standard, MAB seeks to support institutions' responsibility for quality assurance, also through its ESG-based procedures. Furthermore, MAB started new initiatives within the frame of the Resilience and Recovery Facility project on further supporting HEIs' quality enhancement (QE), including QE-focused recommendations in the institutional reviews. Moreover, from September 2022, all visiting panels performing in institutional accreditation must include foreign members. In addition, MAB promotes and emphasises in all its public forums and presentations (workshops, webinars, peer-learning events, conferences) that this direction is timely and is in accordance with the current policy efforts.

6.2 ESG Standard 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

Standard: External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

¹¹³ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 8 (2); Article 67 (1), (3); Article 76 (5a)

¹¹⁴ The Hungarian Accreditation Committee's Standards for Medical Education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Standards-for-Medical-Education.pdf>

¹¹⁵ The Hungarian Accreditation Committee's Rules of Procedure for the Accreditation of Medical Education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/THE-HUNGARIAN-ACCREDITATION-COMMITTEE%E2%80%99S-RULES-OF-PROCEDURE-FOR-THE-ACCREDITATION-OF-MEDICAL-EDUCATION.pdf>

In recent years, MAB has improved several of its procedures based on previous experiences, discussions, and feedback (see examples under Section 5.6) and has also introduced new types of accreditation procedures. One of the most recent occasions to discuss QA-related topics was in September 2022, when MAB held an additional in-person Board meeting, which provided the Board members and the invited guests – representatives of the Hungarian Rectors' Conference, members of the Hungarian Advisory Board and the chairs, co-chairs, and acting secretaries of all MAB disciplinary committees – with an opportunity for professional, strategic dialogue and feedback. The presentations included an introduction to the MAB's procedures, a presentation of the MAB's international mission statement and the aims and current status of the RRF consortia led by MAB. The presentations were followed by a broad stakeholder discussion and debate on the directions, including the self-accreditation and modernisation of programme accreditation, digital QA and the role of MAB in supporting quality enhancement.

Ex-post accreditation of higher education institutions in five-year cycles

A new approach has been initiated in institutional accreditation in order to combine institutional and doctoral school accreditation in a single procedure (currently for smaller institutions), with the participation of the same site-visit team, by preparing separate institutional and doctoral school reports. The procedure will make it easier for institutions to monitor the scope of institutional and doctoral school accreditation, shorten preparation and the time of the site visit (only one visit in total), and simplify operational tasks. In 2021, a pilot of parallel accreditation procedure was held at the University of Theatre and Film Arts. The institutional site-visit team had a sub-team responsible for the evaluation of the doctoral school. There were joint panels during the accreditation interviews, but the teams worked separately, in parallel. Both site-visit teams prepared a separate evaluation report.

Moreover, in July 2022, MAB initiated an open discussion on the quality requirements in artistic and performing arts highlighting the challenges and giving examples of successful QA in institutional and programme accreditation practiced by HEIs in arts.

During the pandemic, MAB quickly switched to online accreditation procedures. As a result, the agency successfully completed all initiated processes. Altogether, it conducted 17 online institutional accreditation procedures.

The rapid transition to online procedures and the results of online operation were also reported by MAB on its social media platforms and in the framework of ENQA's #QAfromhome initiative.¹¹⁶

Ex-post accreditation of doctoral schools in five-year cycles

The renewal of the accreditation process for doctoral schools was necessary due to the length of the process and workload, and these processes did not in every aspect provide feedback on the quality of the doctoral school. The invited experts carried out a formal verification of the compliance of doctoral schools (publication activity of core members etc.), but the given doctoral school did not receive feedback on the quality of its operations overall.

The accreditation process for doctoral schools, introduced in September 2019 – following the 2018 panel recommendations –, is based on the ESG and treats doctoral schools as sources of education

¹¹⁶ MAB's Twitter site: <https://mobile.twitter.com/HAC88510916/status/1272808064194957313?cxt=HHwWgsC-2ZqM9qkjAAAA>

that are dedicated to quality education. Quality assurance is the responsibility of the institution and the doctoral school, while MAB's role is to evaluate their QA activities.

During the development period of the process, HEIs and relevant stakeholders were included to comment on the document related to the procedure and were also asked to provide feedback in the framework of a MAB-conference/workshop to fine-tune the procedure. The criteria are based on Part 1 of the ESG and follow the structure of the institutional accreditation procedure. Therefore, this is a retrospective assessment covering the period between the last and the current accreditation, in which the MAB commissions a site-visit team to review the documents of the doctoral school (including a self-assessment report), conduct interviews, and finally writes a report. The aim and priority of the procedure is to identify best practices, and to assist in the improvement of doctoral schools.

MAB collects feedback from both doctoral schools and site-visit teams on the accreditation procedures through an online questionnaire. Since Autumn 2019, a total of 455 individual responses have been received (333 from HEIs and 122 from site-visit team members). The responses are discussed annually by the College for Doctoral Accreditation (DOK) and improvements are made accordingly, such as modifying the structure of the self-evaluation criteria to reflect the order of the ESG standards, preparing guidelines for training site-visit teams with clarifying questions for each ESG standard, and providing a short introductory material about the site-visit team members to doctoral schools before visits.

In 2022, DOK entrusted a working group with the task of developing an evaluation scale and refining the criteria for doctoral schools and site-visit teams. The working group consists of QA experts, two of them are members of the DOK. The completed draft will be reviewed by the MAB Secretariat in the following months.

Initial evaluation of VET, bachelor and master programmes

In July 2020, the MAB Board decided to set up a Multidisciplinary Committee tasked with addressing cases of programme launch and establishment (within the frames of initial evaluation of VET, bachelor, and master programmes) involving more than two disciplines that belong to more than one expert committee. The permanent members of the Committee are a MAB Board member (chair), an expert committee member (co-chair), and a student delegate. Further members of the Committee are appointed by the chairs of the other expert committees of MAB, based on the type of case received. For each case to be examined, two members per committee are appointed from the expert committees concerned. The Multidisciplinary Committee shall meet only when a case of programme launch or establishment as described above is brought before MAB. In such situations, the chairs of the expert committees appoint the evaluators, but the Multidisciplinary Committee discuss the cases and submits them to the Board for decision. Between July 2022 and 1 October 2022, the Multidisciplinary Committee met 18 times.

At its December 2020 meeting, the MAB Board decided to set up a College for Programme Accreditation (PAK). Based on the experiences from previous procedures, the MAB Board decided to establish a body between the decision-preparation level of an expert committee and the decision-making level of the Board, which will ensure a uniform application of the MAB criteria in the procedures for launching a programme, and coherence in the content of the evaluations.

The chair of the PAK is a member of the MAB Board, and its members were selected based on their expertise in the procedures of programme launch and establishment, taking into account their disciplinary background. The role of the members of the PAK was restructured in 2022, and they will carry out analytical tasks in the framework of the RRF project.

opinion on the programme concerned. The plans for a new programme¹¹⁹ set down in the application are assessed against detailed criteria¹²⁰. For the evaluation procedure, the relevant expert committee proposes two expert evaluators from the existing pool of MAB experts, or they will be added to the database if they meet the pre-defined criteria. The evaluations received are discussed by the expert committee and forwarded to the MAB Board for further discussion and decision making. The names of the evaluators are no longer anonymous – as recommended by the 2018 panel –, and the evaluations¹²¹ prepared by them are available on request.

Ex-post accreditation of higher education institutions in five-year cycles

As a first step in the accreditation procedure, institutions are required to prepare a comprehensive self-assessment report based on the MAB guidelines¹²², including data, information and analysis on the institution, as well as supporting documents. The accreditation process involves a site visit; the site-visit teams are officially approved by the MAB Board, consisting of a chair (and sometimes a co-chair), a higher education QA expert, an academic expert (with experience in the relevant branch of science) or a stakeholder (e.g., a research institute associate familiar with the branch of science in question), a student representative and a MAB programme officer. MAB programme officers are full and equal members of the site-visit teams and also provide administrative assistance as well as logistical support to the other team members. Site visit teams conduct face-to-face or online site visits, which may take one to three days (in extreme cases five days) for institutions, depending on the size and complexity of the HEI.

During the site visits, the teams interview the management of the HEI, i.e., the rector, deans, department, and heads of institutes, and conduct panel discussions with the persons responsible for designing and implementing QA, academic staff, staff providing educational support, and students. Based on the institution's self-assessment report and the experience gained during the site visit, and following the MAB guidelines on accreditation reports, the team members, with the assistance the MAB programme officer of the site-visit team, prepare an evaluation report. The final draft report, including the team's findings, is sent to the rector of the evaluated institution for factual comment, and finally to the relevant expert committee and then to the MAB Board for a final decision on accreditation. Each evaluation report includes recommendations for improvement and may contain conditions to be met within a specified timeframe, usually one to two years. Institutions are required to submit either an activity plan or a description on actions taken on the MAB's recommendations, and in some cases, MAB decides to conduct a site visit to monitor them. The submitted descriptions or action plans are discussed by the expert committees and the MAB Board, which decides on the approval of the action plans.

¹¹⁹ The guide and template for HEIs (in one document) are available in Hungarian on the MAB website at <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/> under *Szaklétesítés* and *Szakindítás*

¹²⁰ The evaluation criteria are available in Hungarian on the MAB website at <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/> under *Szaklétesítés* and *Szakindítás*

¹²¹ The evaluation template is available in Hungarian on the MAB website at <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/> under *Szaklétesítés* and *Szakindítás*

¹²² Önértékelési útmutató (MAB Guidelines to Institutional Accreditation, in Hungarian): <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/> under *Intézményakkreditáció*

Ex-post accreditation of doctoral schools in five-year cycles

Doctoral schools undergo an accreditation procedure every five years, including a site visit, which takes one day. The procedure and criteria are similar to the ones for institutional accreditation.¹²³ The doctoral school undergoing accreditation must prepare an extensive self-assessment report, following the ESG-based MAB guidelines. The report includes data and information on the institution and the doctoral school, as well as analytical parts.

At the site visits, the teams interview the persons involved in doctoral training: the vice-rector, the dean, the head of the doctoral school, doctoral supervisors, academic and administrative staff, the persons responsible for designing and implementing QA, and students. With the assistance of the assigned programme officer (who is also a member of the site-visit team) and following the MAB guidelines, the site-visit team prepares an evaluation report. The completed draft report is reviewed by an invited member of the College for Doctoral Accreditation for the purpose of providing advice to the site-visit team and ensuring the consistency of the report. After incorporating their comments, the report is sent to the head of the doctoral school for factual comment, and then to the College for Doctoral Accreditation. Finally, the report is forwarded to the MAB Board together with the Doctoral School's comment for a final decision on the accreditation. The MAB ensures that the quality loop is closed by means of recommendations and monitoring. The structure of the evaluation report and the conduct of the monitoring procedure is the same as in the case of institutional accreditation. For doctoral schools receiving five-year accreditation, it is sufficient to reflect on improvements in the next accreditation cycle.

A decision on the accreditation of an institution or a doctoral school may result in one of the following:

- The institution/doctoral school is accredited for a maximum of five years.
- The institution/doctoral school is accredited for a maximum of five years, but due to some partial compliance or minor non-compliance, it must submit an interim report on progress and results achieved in these problem areas by a given deadline, usually 2-2.5 years after the start of the new accreditation period.
- The institution/doctoral school is accredited for a maximum of five years and is required to produce a follow-up report on progress and achievements in the areas considered partially compliant/non-compliant by a given deadline. Also, MAB conducts a site visit to verify compliance with the interim requirements, usually 2-2.5 years after the start of the new accreditation period.
- In the case of a higher number of partial and/or non-compliance, the institution/doctoral school will be accredited for less than five years.
- In the case of severe non-compliance (e.g., there is no operating IQA system at all), the institution/doctoral school cannot be accredited.

Accreditation of basic medical programmes of medical schools, based on WFME standards

MAB conducts the accreditation of the basic medical programme of a medical school in compliance with the WFME standards. Similar to institutional accreditation, medical schools are also required to submit an in-depth self-assessment; they prepare the assessment about their medical study programme using the document "MAB Standards for Medical Education". The document includes guidance on formal and content requirements on the self-assessment report and is available in Hungarian and in English on the agency's website. A detailed Rules of Procedure has also been

¹²³ Önértékelési útmutató és Eljárásrend (MAB Guidelines to the Accreditation of Doctoral Schools and Rules of Procedure, in Hungarian): <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/> under *Doktori Iskolák Akkreditációja*

prepared for medical schools, containing the description of the procedure, details on evaluation and the validity period of accreditation, the decision on accreditation, and information on the follow-up process.¹²⁴

The MAB Standards for Medical Education follows the WFME standards with a detailed explanation of each standard and related support questions. The medical school shall interpret and prepare its self-assessment report according to its own educational and research profile and strategy, underpinning its statements with supporting evidence and documents. Not only does MAB help medical schools with the explanations and supportive questions found in the guide, but at the beginning of the accreditation procedure a consultation session is also offered to schools, in person or online, to answer their questions regarding the accreditation criteria or the procedure.

The site-visit team of a WFME standards-based accreditation is composed of six to eight members, consisting of experts with an active role in national or international theoretical and practical medical education and in domestic or international research, quality assurance experts, a student, and a MAB programme officer. The length of a site visit is between 3-5 days; in addition to interviewing the school's leadership, the persons responsible for QA, heads of institutes, lecturers, staff providing educational support, and students, the team also inspects the medical school's infrastructure.

The language of the accreditation procedure is either Hungarian or English. In the case of an English-language procedure, the language of the medical school's self-assessment report and the personal visit is English, and the MAB accreditation report on the site-visit is also prepared in English. The accreditation report provides a detailed description of the site-visit team's findings and conclusions, and also contains suggestions for further improvements and modifications. Before the MAB Board makes a decision on accreditation, the report must be approved by the Committee for Medical and Health Sciences and is also sent to the medical school for factual comment.

The accreditation decision is prepared both in English and in Hungarian and is uploaded to the MAB website together with the site-visit team's report.¹²⁵ Even those medical schools, which gain full accreditation for a maximum of eight years (i.e. is evaluated as being fully compliant with all standards) shall prepare a report in the middle of their accreditation period, reporting on its activities, any changes, modifications and developments carried out in the first half of the accreditation period. Medical schools achieving partial or non-compliance in certain standards may receive conditional or limited accreditation (depending on the number and type of partially compliant/non-compliant standards), resulting in a shorter accreditation period and a follow-up procedure conducted by MAB by a given deadline. The MAB Rules of Procedure for the Accreditation of Medical Education provides detailed information on the written reports required and the follow-up procedure.¹²⁶

6.4 ESG Standard 2.4 Peer-review experts

Standard: External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

Peer reviewers are selected in the following ways in the different MAB procedures:

¹²⁴ The Hungarian Accreditation Committee's Rules of Procedure for the Accreditation of Medical Education:

<https://www.mab.hu/en/procedures/> under *Medical Training Accreditation Procedure/WFME*

¹²⁵ <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/> under *Medical Training Accreditation Reports (WFME)*

¹²⁶ The Hungarian Accreditation Committee's Rules of Procedure for the Accreditation of Medical Education:

<https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/THE-HUNGARIAN-ACCREDITATION-COMMITTEE%E2%80%99S-RULES-OF-PROCEDURE-FOR-THE-ACCREDITATION-OF-MEDICAL-EDUCATION.pdf> pp.10-11.

1. Ex-ante evaluations of new programme and learning outcome framework requirements of vocational education and training (VET), Bachelor, and Master programmes and reviews of new VET, Bachelor and Master programmes

In the case of these ex-ante procedures, where no on-site visit is carried out, the expert committee in the discipline or field of the programme to be evaluated recommends two evaluators with expertise in that field. These evaluators are most often already included in the MAB pool of experts, otherwise they are entered into the MAB database. Such experts are selected on the basis of their recognised expertise in the field and their teaching experience in a HEI or professional experience, judged and approved by the MAB standing disciplinary committee. If the invited evaluators reach conflicting conclusions, a third expert will be invited to assess the application.

At present, there is no training or training material for ex-ante programme evaluation procedures, where experts are required to make judgements based on their professional and scientific expertise. Students are not involved in preparing evaluations, as they do not possess the expertise and knowledge required for this task. However, they are full members of the MAB standing committees which discuss the evaluations, and they will actively be involved in the currently developed ex-post procedure that will replace the existing ex-ante one.

Experts sign a contract that sets down the MAB rules for conducting the evaluation, and through TIR 2.0, they submit a no-conflict-of-interest declaration. In each case, the expert is informed of the conditions and deadlines for carrying out the work and receives the evaluation forms and evaluation criteria from a designated MAB programme officer; these documents are also available on the MAB website.¹²⁷ The programme officer explains the procedure in detail to the evaluator, including the use of the TIR database. The online evaluation format provides detailed information on what the evaluator should focus on and what information needs to be provided, including evidence to support their findings.

2. Ex-post accreditation of higher education institutions in five-year cycles

In the case of ex-post accreditation of higher education institutions, the chair of the site visit team, who should have experience in MAB evaluations, is proposed by the MAB President,¹²⁸ who takes into account the recommendations of the MAB Secretariat's working group for institutional accreditation. The chair, together with the other members of the site-visit team, must be approved by the MAB Board. The site visit teams always include a QA expert from a HEI, at least one student representative delegated by HÖOK, and a MAB programme officer. MAB seeks to invite stakeholders (i.e., a specialist, for example a researcher from a research institute with expertise in the discipline, or an expert from the industrial area), and academic experts with experience in institutional evaluation who also have leadership experience at HEIs. Members of the site-visit team must not have a conflict of interest with the institution to be evaluated¹²⁹; similar to the WFME-standards based accreditation, the names of the team members are sent to the HEI to be accredited to indicate if they have conflict of interest concerns about any of the team members, before they are officially approved by the MAB Board. A site-visit team usually comprises 7-8 members, but in the case of larger HEIs with several faculties, further expert members may be appointed to the team.

¹²⁷ The documents are available in Hungarian at <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/>

¹²⁸ Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> 28. (2)

¹²⁹ Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> 32. (3)b)

Institutional accreditation procedures are preceded by preparatory meetings and trainings for team members to explain the assessment procedure, define the tasks and responsibilities of team members and provide information on the upcoming assessment. The meetings also include discussions focusing on the MAB criteria, ESG standards, analysis of the institution's self-evaluation report, questions to be clarified, and materials to be submitted before the visit and on site. The training materials are shared with the site-visit team members. Following the site visit, further meetings are held to discuss the contents of the assessment report to be prepared and a proposal for the length of the accreditation period.

3. Ex-post accreditation of medical schools' basic medical programmes, based on WFME standards

Within three or four months prior to the site visit of the medical school concerned, the MAB Board shall set up a site-visit team to conduct the accreditation of the basic medical programme of the school. The team members are proposed by the MAB President. Before the team members are officially adopted by the MAB Board, as in all accreditation procedures, the list of members is sent to the medical school to ensure that the team members do not have a conflict of interest with the school.

The team is composed of six to eight members:

- two or three of them shall have an important and active role in the work of domestic and/or international providers of theoretical and practical medical education and are actively involved in domestic and/or international research,
- two of them shall perform quality assurance and quality assessment activities in higher education and have participated in the accreditation of a HEI or doctoral school conducted by MAB,
- one student,
- one MAB programme officer.¹³⁰

When the accreditation procedure is conducted in English, the oral and written English language skills of the team members are also considered. MAB also aims to involve at least two foreign members in the site-visit team to add international perspective and expertise to the implementation of the process.

Before the visit, MAB organises preparatory training sessions for the team members; at these meetings the team prepares the site-visit agenda, the WFME Rules of Procedure and the MAB WFME standards are presented and explained in detail. The medical school's self-evaluation report, information on the preparation of the report, the responsibilities and tasks of the members and any other issues related to the procedure are discussed. All training documents are shared with the team members. After the site visit, further meetings are held to discuss the content of the assessment report and the proposed length of the accreditation period.¹³¹

¹³⁰ The MAB Rules of Procedure for the Accreditation of Medical Education (<https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/THE-HUNGARIAN-ACCREDITATION-COMMITTEE%E2%80%99S-RULES-OF-PROCEDURE-FOR-THE-ACCREDITATION-OF-MEDICAL-EDUCATION.pdf>) and the MAB Standards for Medical Education (<https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/MAB-Standards-for-Medical-Education.pdf>) were officially adopted by the MAB Board on July 16, 2021.

¹³¹ The Hungarian Accreditation Committee's Rules of Procedure for the Accreditation of Medical Education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/THE-HUNGARIAN-ACCREDITATION-COMMITTEE%E2%80%99S-RULES-OF-PROCEDURE-FOR-THE-ACCREDITATION-OF-MEDICAL-EDUCATION.pdf> IV.

4. Accreditation of Doctoral Schools (ex-ante and ex-post)

According to the MAB Rules of Operation and Organisation and The Rules of Procedure of the College for Doctoral Accreditation, the chair and members of the site-visit team are appointed by the MAB Board upon the recommendation of the College for Doctoral Accreditation (DOK). The chair of site-visit team is an experienced teacher/researcher at a doctoral school. The site-visit teams always include another academic expert (teacher/researcher experienced in the relevant branch of science) or a stakeholder (i.e., a professional, such as a research institute associate familiar with the branch of science in question), a higher education QA expert, a PhD/DLA student and a MAB programme officer. The student member is recommended by DOSZ.¹³²

The trainings provided to the team members consumed considerable human resources, therefore, such preparatory trainings are now organized in clusters for several site-visit teams. The topics of the trainings are similar to those of the institutional accreditation preparatory procedure. Training materials are provided via e-mail and discussed in detail during the preparation.¹³³ Site visits are preceded by team briefings (at least two) to discuss the schedule of the visit and the distribution of tasks and duties. After the interview, there are also at least two working sessions, during which the committee agrees on the proposed accreditation outcome and fine-tunes any monitor conditions.

For consistent and objective assessment within the College for Doctoral Accreditation, the programme officer involved conducts preparatory trainings for all new College members on the accreditation procedure and criteria, as well as the rules of procedure of the College.

Involvement of foreign experts in the procedures

MAB has started to invite foreign experts to participate in some site-visit panels (mainly Hungarians living abroad), although their number is still low. Currently, one of the primary challenges is to improve the English language skills of MAB staff.

Foreign experts are not invited to participate in the procedures of programme launch and establishment, as they would not be able to carry out their expert work without being familiar with the programme and learning outcome requirements of the programmes concerned and the document summarising the programme and learning outcome requirements for VET, bachelor's and master's study programmes; also, the programme and learning outcome requirements are not available in foreign languages. However, it is hoped that the forthcoming legislative and procedural changes (a more efficient ex-ante programme registration and the development of a detailed ex-post evaluation) will facilitate the inclusion of foreign experts in these new procedures.

Since MAB, in line with the WFME review team's proposal, includes international experts in the site-visit teams accrediting medical schools, the WFME standards-based accreditation procedures are conducted in English.

The first doctoral school accreditation procedure with the involvement of an international expert was conducted in October 2020 at the Biology Doctoral School of Eötvös Loránd University.

MAB established a database of foreign experts recruited with the help of ENQA agencies. The foreign reviewers participate in institutional and doctoral program accreditation since September 2022. As

¹³² The Rules of Procedure of the College for Doctoral Accreditation (in Hungarian): https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/DOK_%C3%9Cgyrend_2020.02.21.pdf

¹³³ internal, non-public documents: *Training material for doctoral accreditation site-visit team* (which is an extracted version of the Accreditation Guide for Doctoral Schools, supplemented with tips and experiences); *Preparatory questions for the ESG-based quality assessment of doctoral schools*

initial programme accreditation will be simplified, MAB's evaluation focus will be on the ex-post accreditation integrated in the institutional accreditation procedure.

The list of foreign experts is constantly increasing. The list of MAB experts is available in the TIR system. A priority project for the second half of 2022 and the first half of 2023 is the transition from the TIR to the TIR 2.0 system, which will enable foreign expert documentation and management separately from that of national experts. As of September 2022, an international member (of Hungarian or non-Hungarian origin) is required to participate in the site visit teams for institutional accreditation procedures. Since 2019, English has been used by several staff members as a working language alongside Hungarian.

As a result of bilateral agreements, MAB has offered a list of experts to international agencies, and also received several expert lists from them:

- Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS), Romania
- National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (NAB), Czech Republic
- Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (SAAHE), Slovakia
- Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), Croatia
- Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), Lithuania
- Eurasian Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Health Care (ECAQA), Kazakhstan.

All experts, both national and international ones, must accept the data-protection rules and declare that they have no conflict of interest in relation to the relevant procedure. Regarding procedural conflicts of interest, the rules on involvement in the MAB Rules of Organisation and Operation apply.¹³⁴ Specific rules on participation in doctoral accreditation procedures are set out in the Rules of Procedure of the College for Doctoral Accreditation.¹³⁵ Prior to the assignment, the fulfilment of the no-conflict-of-interest criteria is checked by the MAB programme officer based on the relevant institution's website, the MAB TIR system and doktori.hu (Hungarian Doctoral Council database).¹³⁶

Prior to the official appointment of a site-visit team by the MAB Board, the relevant HEI is informed of the composition of the team, which, in case of a conflict of interest, the HEI may object to within a specified time period; in this case, the MAB shall appoint a new member or members against whom no further objections may be raised.

MAB strives to involve experienced evaluators in each procedure and/or site visit team to ensure that procedures are conducted consistently and to a high standard. If a problem arises with an expert or an expert opinion, the expert concerned should not be assigned to another procedure in the future.

Student participation in external reviews

Students are involved in the site-visit teams of both ex-ante and ex-post institutional accreditation processes (e.g., ex-ante evaluation of new doctoral schools involve site-visit teams including PhD students). Students are delegated by HÖÖK and DOSZ, but MAB has also contacted the European Students' Union (ESU) to invite international students to take part in the English-language accreditation procedures. MAB welcomes the fact that the HÖÖK and DOSZ also conduct training

¹³⁴ Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> Section 32.

¹³⁵ The document is available in Hungarian at https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/DOK_%C3%9Cgyrend_2020.02.21.pdf

¹³⁶ The Hungarian Doctoral Council's website: <https://doktori.hu/index.php?menuid=100&lang=EN>

sessions for students participating in committees and site-visit teams; members of the MAB management are regularly invited to hold presentations in these sessions. However, this does not preclude that student experts participate in expert trainings organized by MAB together with the other site-visit team members.

The involvement of students in ex-ante programme evaluation procedures has been discussed by the Quality Assurance and Development Committee, however, since the current ex-ante procedures are to be removed by MAB by the end of 2023, the development of a policy and procedure for the involvement of students is no longer necessary. MAB pays particular attention to provide students with a distinguished role in the discipline-based ex-post evaluation process that is being developed.

6.5 ESG Standard 2.5 Criteria for outcomes

Standard: Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

MAB develops its expert opinions in accordance with the ESG. The ESG standards – and the MAB standards and criteria developed in line with the ESG – are made available on the MAB website for all stakeholders, both in Hungarian and in English. According to Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012, at all levels of its preparatory and decision-making activities, MAB must guarantee the conditions for the development of an unbiased professional opinion, based on objective criteria.¹³⁷ To ensure this, no person with a conflict of interest may participate in the preparation of a decision or the decision-making of a process.¹³⁸

In the case of each MAB process, a guide to the accreditation/evaluation process is available on the MAB website for the stakeholders concerned.¹³⁹ In terms of institutional and doctoral school accreditations, the possible outcomes of a process are also described; the guides include that the possible length of the accreditation period is a maximum of five years, however, if the MAB Board finds a partial deviation from the standards or guidelines, or an organisational deviation concerning their adaptation, it may impose a monitoring procedure on the institution. The purpose of the monitoring procedure is to follow up on the correction of the identified shortcomings and to monitor process improvements. The MAB Board may decide to accredit the institution or doctoral school for a period shorter than five years, if it considers that the follow-up procedure is not sufficient to remedy the deficiencies identified.

In the case of ex-ante accreditation of new HEIs and doctoral schools, as well as of ex-ante evaluation of bachelor, master and VET programme and learning outcome framework requirements and of bachelor, master and VET programmes, the possible outcome of the processes may result in an “approved” or “not approved” decision by the MAB Board.

For all its procedures, MAB is open to provide consultation prior to the start of the procedure. The consultation sessions aim to clarify issues that help to interpret the relevant procedure and evaluation criteria. In the accreditation procedure of institutions or doctoral schools, after the site-visit, a

¹³⁷ Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 on certain aspects of quality assessment and improvement in higher education: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Expercts-of-Government-Decree-on-certain-aspects-of-quality-assessment-and-improvement-in-higher-education.pdf> Chapter II. 19. (1)

¹³⁸ Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> 32.(1)

¹³⁹ Procedures (in Hungarian): <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/>

template prepared by MAB is used by the members of the site-visit team to prepare their report. The template includes supporting questions and provides a framework to guide the content and ensure the uniformity of the document.

The evaluation and accreditation decisions of the Board, as well as the assessment reports on the accreditation on institutions, medical programmes and doctoral schools are made public on the MAB website.¹⁴⁰

Regarding programme launch or programme establishment, if the procedure was conducted at the request of the Educational Authority, the MAB Board's decision is sent to the President of the Authority. If the procedure was requested by a HEI, the official letter of the decision is sent to the rector of the HEI.

The results of university professor applications are officially sent to the rector of the HEI concerned and to the Minister responsible for higher education. Regarding foreign clinical practice sites, the rector of the medical institution and the dean of the HEI requesting the accreditation procedure are informed of the outcome of the process.

In the case of ex-post institutional accreditation and WFME standards-based medical programme accreditation procedures, the Minister responsible for higher education, the rector of the relevant higher education institution, the Educational Authority, the Secretary of State, and the Deputy Secretary of State are also officially informed about the outcome of the process. The decisions and reports related to institutional accreditation and accreditation of doctoral schools are also uploaded to DEQAR; the uploading of reports on programme assessments and WFME BME standard-based accreditations is continuous.

In the case of ex-ante accreditation of doctoral schools, or when a new branch of science is added to an existing doctoral school, the Educational Authority is notified on the MAB accreditation decision. Regarding decisions on ex-post accreditation procedures, the rector and the head of the doctoral school are informed; if the accreditation of the doctoral school is withdrawn, the Educational Authority is also notified. In addition, in each case, the administrator of the Hungarian Doctoral Council is informed by e-mail about accreditation periods and decisions in order to keep the Council's database updated.

After the completion of an accreditation procedure, if a HEI has concerns with the decision of the MAB Board, an appeal against the decision may be submitted through a request for review of the decision, by the rector of the HEI involved. Any other aspect of the procedures conducted by MAB may be the subject of a complaint by any stakeholder concerned. Detailed information on the MAB appeal and complaint processes is available in Section 6.7.

In 2022, the DOK entrusted a working group to review the evaluation criteria for doctoral schools and develop an evaluation scale regarding each ESG standard for doctoral schools and site visit teams. The members of the working group are all QA experts, including two DOK members. The completed draft will be reviewed by the MAB Secretariat in the following months.

¹⁴⁰ MAB Board decisions: <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/>

6.6 ESG Standard 2.6 Reporting

Standard: Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

MAB prepares reports for both ex-ante evaluations and ex-post accreditation procedures.

The **ex-ante evaluation reports**, prepared in a MAB template, include the evaluators' judgements on whether the applicant fulfils the different criteria of the procedure, and an explanation of their findings and conclusions. Before a decision is taken, the relevant expert committee and the MAB Board discuss the reports.

In the case of initial accreditation of VET, bachelor and master programmes, including programme and learning outcome application evaluations, the decisions are publicly available on the MAB website.¹⁴¹ The detailed reasons are sent to the applicant by the MAB Secretariat within 10 working days following the MAB Board decision,¹⁴² and are also available in MAB's TIR system.

Reports of ex-post accreditation procedures (institutional accreditation, accreditation of doctoral schools and programmes in general medicine at medical schools) are comprehensive and based on specific templates provided by MAB. These templates ensure that all criteria are responded to by the site-visit team experts. In the report, the team members highlight the good practices demonstrated by the institution and they make suggestions on how to improve the fulfilment of each standard point.

A description of the context and the individual procedure, as well as a list of the members of the site-visit team, form an integral part of the reports. The site-visit team is instructed to present evidence to support its findings and recommendations in the report. The final report includes a statement on the deadline for actions to be taken and when the follow-up evaluation will be conducted, proposed by the site-visit team and finally decided by the MAB Board. To compile the final report, the chairs of the site-visit teams are responsible for collecting the designated parts of each team member's report. Programme officers play a key role in editing evaluation reports, which includes ensuring that all criteria are adequately addressed and that the evidence supports the team's conclusions.

At the end of the report template for MAB's WFME standards-based accreditation of medical schools, a table is included to summarise the evaluation that determines the accreditation, and the length of the accreditation period.¹⁴³

In the template for accreditation of doctoral schools, separate chapters are dedicated to good practices and areas for improvement.¹⁴⁴ In 2021, the template was extended with two annexes, following the practice of ENQA: one to define the tasks (establishment, expansion with a new

¹⁴¹ Quick list (in Hungarian): <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/> under *Quick list*

¹⁴² Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> Article 31 (5).

¹⁴³ MAB site-visit team report on the medical education of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Debrecen: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/DE-%C3%81OK-WFME-jelent%C3%A9s-2022-honlap.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ Eötvös Loránd University Doctoral School of Biology - Report of the Site Visit Team: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/ELTE-D23_Biol%C3%B3gia-jelentes-angol.pdf

Debreceni Egyetem Petrányi Gyula Klinikai Immunológiai és Allergológiai Doktori Iskola – az akkreditációs eljárásban közreműködő látogató bizottság jelentése (in Hungarian): https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/DE_D198_Jelentes.pdf

discipline or accreditation process of an existing doctoral school) and the other to include a simplified schedule of accreditation interviews.

The first monitoring procedures for doctoral schools started in early 2022, for which the MAB doctoral working group had prepared a template and an evaluation sheet as an attachment. The doctoral school and the original accreditation procedure, the composition of the site visit team (with the original committee members where possible) is described in the monitoring template.¹⁴⁵

Before a final report is submitted to the MAB Board for decision, it is sent to the relevant institution to verify its factual accuracy. After the report is returned to MAB, it is corrected based on the comments of the institution. The MAB Board then decides on the acceptance of the report. The reasoning of the MAB Board provides a detailed description of the facts on which the decision is based and how they have been assessed. The Board's decision and the accreditation report is uploaded on the MAB website¹⁴⁶ and in the DEQAR database.¹⁴⁷

As a result of the DEQAR CONNECT project, MAB is continuously uploading its reports on institutional and doctoral school accreditations to DEQAR to assist EQAR in expanding DEQAR coverage to countries currently underrepresented in DEQAR. All ESG-relevant MAB reports will be uploaded to DEQAR by March 2023, back to the date of MAB's EQAR registration in 2019.

6.7 ESG Standard 2.7 Complaints and appeals

Standard: Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

General rules related to complaints and appeals are set out in the MAB Rules of Operation and Organisation. The MAB Board of Appeals and Complaints (BAC) was established in compliance with the Government Decree 19/2012 of 22 February 2012 and with the Act CCIV of 2011¹⁴⁸ to ensure that in the case of an appeal, an independent body reviews the MAB decision or procedure.¹⁴⁹

In accordance with Article 71(5) of Act CCIV in 2011, the BAC has three members and they shall be delegated for a period of six years by the Minister responsible for higher education.¹⁵⁰ Persons who have been members of the MAB within a three-year period prior to their possible appointment shall not be members of the BAC.¹⁵¹ The work of the BAC is supported by a MAB officer, and its decisions

¹⁴⁵ Országos Rabbiképző – Zsidó Egyetem Zsidó Vallástudományi Doktori Iskola – az akkreditációs monitoreljáráásban közreműködő látogató bizottság jelentése (in Hungarian): https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/OR-ZSE_D30_Monitorjelentés.pdf

Szegedi Tudományegyetem – Történelemtudományi Doktori Iskola – az akkreditációs monitoreljáráásban közreműködő látogató bizottság jelentése (in Hungarian): https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/SzTE_D105_monitorjelentés_vegleges.pdf

¹⁴⁶ MAB Board decisions: <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/>

¹⁴⁷ MAB decisions and reports in the DEQAR database: <https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/search/by-institution/?query=&agency=58&country=74>

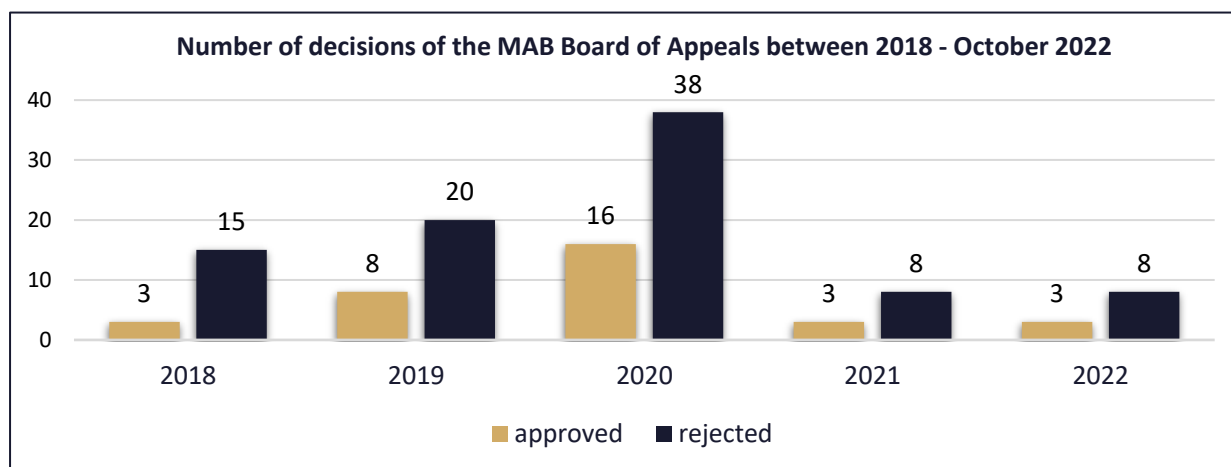
¹⁴⁸ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 71 (5)

¹⁴⁹ Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> 7. (1)

¹⁵⁰ Rules of Procedure of the MAB Board of Appeals (in Hungarian): https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FvB_%C3%BCgyrend_m%C3%B3d_v2020.04.23.pdf 3.1

¹⁵¹ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 71 (5)

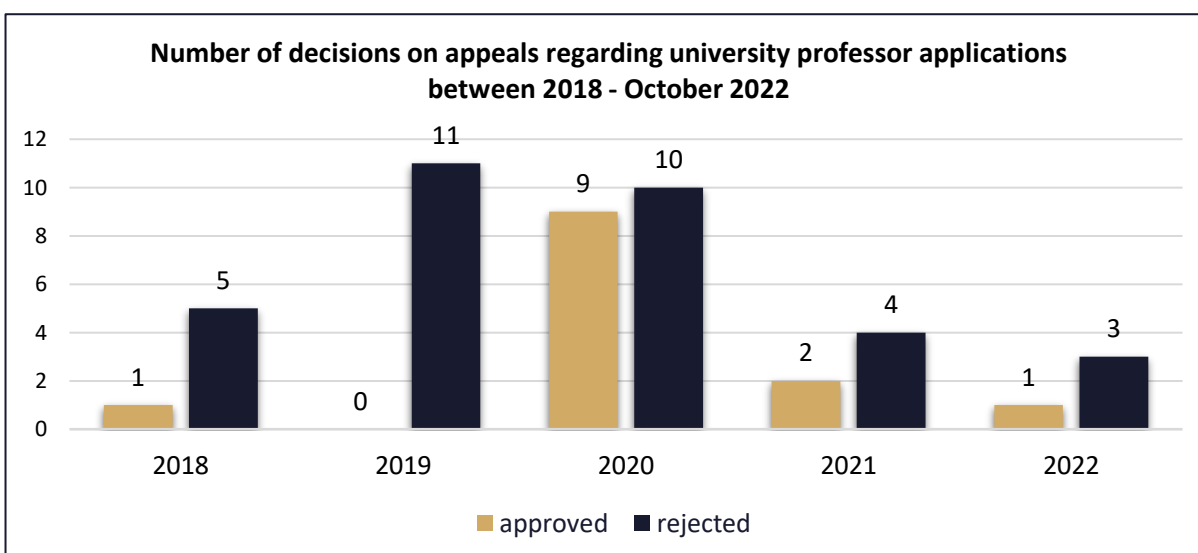
are uploaded on the MAB website in an annual breakdown.¹⁵² The BAC may take one of two decisions: either to grant the appeal and thus annul the decision of the MAB Board, or to uphold the original decision of the MAB Board.



source: <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/> under FVB decisions

As the bar chart above shows, the number of decisions taken by the BAC in 2020 is significantly higher than in the previous and subsequent years. The reason behind the high number is that the mandate of the previous BAC expired in 2019 and the appointment of the new BAC members took a few months. Therefore, several appeals were not decided in 2019, but were postponed to 2020, which raised the number of cases in that year.

The appeal cases of the past five years in English and Hungarian are available on the MAB website.¹⁵³ A large proportion of the appeals of the last five years concerns university professor applications:



source: <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/> under FVB decisions

Decisions of the MAB Board may be appealed. Concerns about any other aspect of the MAB's procedures may be addressed by means of a complaint. The request for appeal must be submitted by

¹⁵² BAC decisions: <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/> under FVB decisions

¹⁵³ BAC decisions: <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/> under FVB decisions

the rector of the institution lodging the appeal, while a complaint may be lodged by any person. Appeals concerning new programmes must be submitted to the Educational Authority. Appeals concerning university professorships must be submitted to the Ministry of Culture and Innovation.¹⁵⁴ In the latter two cases it is these authorities who request the evaluation procedure from the MAB. In other cases, appeals may be submitted directly to MAB.

The Rules of Procedure of the BAC is available on the MAB website, including its principles, the types of appeals handled by the BAC, the composition of the BAC and the detailed description of the procedure for the appeal.¹⁵⁵ The BAC may only accept an appeal in the form prescribed by law and from the person authorised to do so in the case concerned. This means the Minister responsible for higher education, the President of the Educational Authority or the rector of a HEI. Applications for review – if they meet the legal and MAB’s requirements – are filed and formally checked by the MAB Secretariat, then forwarded to the BAC.¹⁵⁶

The website also includes a public document on complaint management policy – adopted after the 2018 review panel recommendations –, aiming to increase user trust and ensure clear and effective structured internal rules to enable the communication of issues with procedures where these cannot be the basis for a formal appeal. The document provides information on the requirements of submission of a complaint and also describes in detail the rules of procedure for handling complaints. A complaint submitted in writing must be addressed to the MAB Secretariat and after it has been verified that it meets the formal requirements, it will be forwarded to the officer of the BAC, who examines the content of the complaint and prepares a report. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the report is sent to the BAC or the MAB Ethics Committee for a decision.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Rules of Organisation and Operation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Rules-of-organisation.pdf> 7.(2), (3)

¹⁵⁵ Rules of Procedure of the MAB Board of Appeals (in Hungarian): https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FvB_%C3%BCgyrend_m%C3%B3d_v2020.04.23.pdf

¹⁵⁶ Rules of Procedure of the MAB Board of Appeals (in Hungarian): https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FvB_%C3%BCgyrend_m%C3%B3d_v2020.04.23.pdf 4.1

¹⁵⁷ Complaint Management Policy of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/HAC_Complaint-management-policy_2020_EN.pdf

7. Opinions of stakeholders

Feedback on doctoral school accreditation procedures from MAB site-visit team members

Feedback collected since 2020 from the members of the site-visit teams ¹⁵⁸ shows that they are generally satisfied with the organisation and management of the accreditation processes. Most respondents were content with the preparatory sessions, with only a few indicating that more in-person/online sessions should have been organized. The time allocated for writing the report was also sufficient for most respondents. The team members were satisfied with the support provided by MAB, with several respondents highlighting the helpful assistance of the MAB programme officers.

However, they also made some suggestions to improve the quality of the preparatory and the assessment process:

- clarification of the accreditation criteria
- a more thorough discussion of the team members' responsibilities
- increasing the length of the panel discussions and the duration of the on-site visits
- further development of guidelines.

Feedback on doctoral school accreditation procedures collected since 2020 from representatives of the visited HEIs¹⁵⁹

Many of the respondents either found the procedures sufficient or did not suggest any modifications.

Those who suggested changes, mentioned the following:

- more specific questions should be asked during the panel discussions
- more time should be devoted to the panel interviews
- the number of interviewees in a panel should be considered
- there are too many criteria regarding the self-assessment report
- still expect to evaluate academic quality and the compliance to legislation and by-laws.

Concerning the preparation of the self-assessment report, some representatives of HEIs (those who took part in the preparation of the document) made the following comments:

- they found the criteria questions useful
- the maximum length of the self-assessment report made preparation more difficult
- the language used in the criteria is too complex
- it would be helpful to see a model self-assessment report.

In relation to the on-site visit, respondents to the MAB questionnaire found the following useful:

- the site-visit team asks specific, relevant, and supportive questions
- good atmosphere during the panel interviews during the site visit
- the team members were interested in the students' opinions
- a carefully planned and followed agenda
- questions related to the day-to-day operation of the doctoral school
- staff and students from all levels were invited to participate in the discussion panels.

Some of the respondents found the following to be problematic:

¹⁵⁸ The Hungarian feedback form prepared for doctoral school site-visit team members is available on request.

¹⁵⁹ The questions of the bilingual feedback form prepared for doctoral schools are available in Annex 3.

- the time frame for the panel discussions was too tight
- though online visits are convenient, the site-visit team cannot directly experience the school's atmosphere
- technical problems may occur during online visits.

The majority of the respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with the support they received from MAB, and the composition, preparedness and attitude of the MAB site-visit team.

Information on how MAB processes and uses the collected feedback is mentioned in Section 6.2.

Feedback on institutional accreditation and programme launch and establishment procedures

In 2020, MAB commissioned PwC to carry out a comprehensive survey of stakeholders' views on the institutional accreditation process and the procedures of programme launch and establishment.¹⁶⁰

The PwC questionnaires were sent out to different groups of MAB stakeholders – HEIs, partner institutions, MAB experts, students, institutional accreditation experts, peer reviewers – and included general questions related to MAB, as well as group-specific questions.

The general questions covered the management of MAB, respondents' knowledge of the agency, quality of service, effectiveness of MAB activities and stakeholders. The specific questions focused on the group concerned, for example, HEIs were asked questions related to institutional accreditation, and specific questions were asked of site-visit team chairs, members of expert committees, institutional accreditation experts and evaluators. The questionnaire for students included specific questions for bachelor and masters, as well as doctoral students.

In total, 11 799 questionnaires were returned to PwC. The responses showed that, of the three procedures examined, the launch of a new study programme required the most workload and was the one that respondents were the least satisfied with. The results also showed that the new ESG 2015-based institutional accreditation procedure is the most favoured by HEIs.

Based on the findings of the survey, MAB, in cooperation with the Educational Authority and the Hungarian Rectors' Conference, has started to revise and simplify programme launch and establishment processes in the frame of the RRF project. Further information on the PwC survey is provided in Section 5.4.

¹⁶⁰ Thematic review of activities (2017-2020): https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Thematic-review-of-HAC-activities_deliverable.pdf

8. Recommendations and main findings from previous review(s) and agency's resulting follow-up

ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE (partially compliant by EQAR)

Standard: Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

EQAR Register Committee recommendations:

It is important to ensure not just a balanced representation in the nominated delegates to the Board but also of formal mechanisms and regulations to safeguard its organisational independence.

Pursuant to the National Higher Education Act CCIV of 2011, "The HAC is an independent national expert body established for the purposes of the external evaluation of the quality of educational, academic, research and artistic activities performed in higher education and the internal quality assurance systems operated by higher education institutions, and the provision of expert services in the procedures related to higher education institutions, as provided for in this Act."¹⁶¹

The National Higher Education Act stipulates that members of the Higher Education Planning Board, rectors, chancellors, civil servants, government public officials cannot be appointed as members of the Board. Based on the law, the same rule applies to all other committee members of MAB.¹⁶²

According to MAB's Deed of Foundation:

"The HAC is a national independent expert Board established to perform external evaluation of the quality of education, scientific research and artistic activities in higher education, as well as of the internal quality assurance systems of higher education institutions."

"Its operations are governed by Act CLXXV of 2011 on the right of association, on public benefit status and on the operation and support of non-governmental organisations (NGO Act), as well as by other relevant Hungarian legislation."¹⁶³

"The HAC

- a. may not pursue political activities,
- b. may not engage in any public activities on behalf of or in the interest of any party,
- c. is an organisation independent from all parties and is barred from providing them or receiving from them any financial support."¹⁶⁴

As mentioned above, the operation of MAB is governed by Hungarian laws and the agency must act in accordance with the legal environment. The legislation has not changed since the last review of MAB. However, in recent years there have been ongoing discussions between MAB and the Ministry responsible for higher education about strengthening the role of accreditation and ensuring that valid accreditation is a condition for the granting of a licence to operate. Hopefully these aims will be realised in the framework of the ongoing project (RRF).

¹⁶¹ Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 70 (1)

¹⁶² Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education: https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf Article 71 (1)

¹⁶³ Deed of Foundation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Deed-of-foundation.pdf> III.3.1., 2.

¹⁶⁴ Deed of Foundation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee: <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Deed-of-foundation.pdf> III.3.8.

ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS (substantially compliant by ENQA, partially compliant by EQAR)

Standard: Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

ENQA Review Panel recommendations:

The panel recommends that the HAC ensures publication of the thematic work under way, disseminates it widely and follows up on the promise to publish reports and conduct more system-wide analyses. These are a key resource in supporting QA and establishing a quality culture.

EQAR Register Committee Recommendations:

The regular publication of thematic work and making use of such analysis more widely should be ensured.

An external thematic analysis on the MAB activities carried out between September 2017 and summer 2020 has been conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). The aim of the report was to provide the MAB leadership with a mid-term analysis of its key accreditation activities (institutional accreditation, the establishment of a new study programme, and the launch of a new study programme) and to deliver an objective and in-depth analysis of stakeholders' perceptions on MAB's procedures. The PwC report, completed in December 2020, was uploaded on the MAB website¹⁶⁵, and the article written on the results and conclusions was made public in MAB's online journal, the Hungarian Accreditation Review, as well¹⁶⁶. Also, the analysis and its results has been a topic of several online sessions and Board meetings.

At present, two reviews are being conducted; one by the OECD, with a focus on the relevance of the MAB standards and procedures for digital higher education, and the other in cooperation with the Educational Authority and the Hungarian Rectors' Conference, focusing on the revision and simplification of MAB's processes for programme launch and establishment, with the goal of developing a cyclical programme review procedure.

Furthermore, two thematic analyses will be completed by the end of 2022 in the frame of the RRF project, one on institutional accreditation and another on programme evaluation.

MAB's platform to disseminate its articles, reports and analyses on its website is the Hungarian Accreditation Review, which has been available online on the agency's website since November 2020.

ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT (substantially compliant by ENQA).

Standard: Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

ENQA Review Panel recommendations:

The panel recommends that the agency ensures methodical follow-up on and feedback from all procedures and all types of stakeholders, conducts systematic analysis of data regularly, informs users

¹⁶⁵ Thematic review of activities (2017-2020): <https://www.mab.hu/en/publications/> under *Thematic analysis/Thematic review of MAB activities*

¹⁶⁶ The second issue of the Hungarian Accreditation Review (pp. 14-17): <https://www.mab.hu/en/publications/> under *Hungarian Accreditation Review*

of improvements and developments from feedback and prepares the aggregated system-wide analysis on the impact of its own activity suggested by the former review panel in 2013.

MAB collects feedback in various ways from its stakeholders, e.g., through questionnaires, thematic analyses, and consultation sessions. Based on the results of the collected feedback, the various processes are adjusted accordingly. Stakeholders are informed about the changes on the MAB website, as well as through presentations and meetings (e.g., at the open plenary sessions of the MAB Board, where representatives of the relevant higher education authorities are present). Further information on feedback mechanisms is provided in Sections 5.6 and 7.

ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE (substantially compliant)

Standard: External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

ENQA Review Panel recommendations:

The panel recommends that the practice of evaluating doctoral schools every six months be discontinued. It is unnecessary, time consuming, and resource consuming. If this practice remains, the panel is of the opinion, with which the HAC agrees, that it should be the mission of the National Doctoral Council and not the HAC to assess the qualifications of the faculty in doctoral schools. In order to ensure effectiveness, the panel also recommends that the HAC considers including the evaluation of doctoral schools with the institutional evaluation procedure. On another level, the panel recommends that non-academic stakeholders, e.g., representatives of civil society, labour unions, entrepreneurs and regional/local authorities, together with international experts be consulted and involved in the design and improvement of the QA procedures of the HAC.

Following the Panel's recommendations, MAB has stopped the biannual evaluation of doctoral schools, and introduced ESG-based evaluation procedure with clear criteria and addressing the same values documented as standards and procedures in institutional accreditation.¹⁶⁷ To improve efficiency, questionnaires were prepared for doctoral schools and for site-visit team members to provide them with an opportunity to reflect on the process that had just been carried out. Students, stakeholders (experts from non-academic field) and international experts – recently only Hungarian speaking ones – are invited to participate in the procedures. The embedding of the accreditation of doctoral programmes in the institutional accreditation processes is ongoing. However, due to logistical reasons this has only been performed once, for the University of Theatre and Film Arts Budapest in 2022¹⁶⁸. The second pilot will be performed during the combined accreditation at the University of Veterinary Medicine (UVM) as mentioned in the MAB-UVM contract. Moreover, the RRF project aims at evaluating the institutional frame of the doctoral studies and compare with the general practice in the EHEA with a special focus on the European Universities Initiative.

Involvement of employer representatives in the MAB discipline-specific expert committees and in the expert panels evaluating institutions and doctoral schools started in 2019 (see in detail in Section 5.1.).

¹⁶⁷ Önértékelési útmutató és Eljárásrend (MAB Guidelines to the Accreditation of Doctoral Schools and Rules of Procedure, in Hungarian): <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/> under *Doktori Iskolák Akkreditációja*

¹⁶⁸ The accreditation report and decision on the University of Theatre and Film Arts Budapest is available at: <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/> under *Institutional Accreditation reports/Reports and decisions accepted in accreditation procedures in 2022*

International experts are increasingly involved in the MAB review panels, although most of them are Hungarian, or of Hungarian origin, working or living abroad (described in Section 6.4).

ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS (partially compliant by ENQA and EQAR)

Standard: External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

ENQA Review Panel recommendations:

Giving up anonymity and invisibility of its experts for ex-ante procedures in order to protect the accountability and transparency of the system. It is essential that reports include the names of the experts involved. This will increase the trust of the public in the agency. That foreign experts are included not only in the evaluation of religious programmes, foreign-language universities and doctoral schools but in all visiting panels and disciplinary committees. It is important to rely on outside QA experience for comparative analysis and exchange of good practices.

That students are included in all ex-ante evaluations and are actively involved in all processes and decisions.

That the HAC increases the volume of training of experts and standardises the method of training according to the purpose and type of the evaluation activity.

EQAR Register Committee recommendations:

Students should be appropriately involved in all peer expert groups, including the ex-ante evaluation stage as per the requirement of the standard. Review experts of ex-ante evaluations should not remain anonymous and should undergo a training.

The anonymity of the ex-ante experts of MAB has been discontinued; the names of the members delegated to the MAB standing expert committees are available on the agency's website¹⁶⁹. International experts are gradually included in certain site-visit teams (WFME standards-based and institutional accreditation procedures), however, due to the nature of procedures, most of the MAB procedures are conducted in Hungarian. MAB has to develop a fit-for-purpose procedure for bilingual conduct to engage participants using Hungarian and English as working language, to provide support to the HEIs and use the unique opportunity provided by the partner agencies to engage and exchange experts in the different accreditation and evaluation procedures.

At present, student members (delegated by HÖÖK and DOSZ, but more recently also by the European Students' Union) are always invited to site-visit teams and participate in decision-making at all levels, including the MAB Board. While a few standing discipline-specific expert committees were still missing a student member during the 2018 ENQA review, shortly thereafter all expert committees filled the student positions.¹⁷⁰

Experts are trained before the site visits; the trainings take place online, focusing on the characteristics and objectives of the specific site visit, and providing detailed guidelines for the members.

Non-academic stakeholder members have also been invited to participate in and contribute to the work of the MAB standing committees, advisory boards and site-visit teams. To enhance their skills and expertise, MAB staff members are increasingly taking part in and organising online sessions and

¹⁶⁹ Standing expert committees of MAB: <https://www.mab.hu/en/about-mab/> under Organisation

¹⁷⁰ Standing expert committees of MAB: <https://www.mab.hu/en/about-mab/> under Organisation

webinars on core QA topics. Further details on the involvement of non-academic stakeholders and the MAB webinars are mentioned in Section 5.1 and Section 4, respectively.

ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS (substantially compliant by ENQA, partially compliant by EQAR)

Standard: Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

ENQA Review Panel recommendations:

The panel recommends that the HAC develops a policy of complaints and communicates to the public how they will be handled.

EQAR Register Committee recommendations:

The agency should have a clearly defined, formal complaints policy.

According to Decision 2020/8/VIII/2 adopted by the MAB Board, the agency now has a specific complaint management policy, publicly available on its website¹⁷¹ (see in detail in Section 6.7.).

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

In relation to ESG 3.1, 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6, the ENQA Review Panel suggests the following:

ESG 3.1: *that the HAC (1) includes more students on its advisory Boards and at least one student on each of its eight standing committees; (2) finds ways to involve more non-academic experts in accreditation/evaluation and QA activities; and (3) pursues the strategic plan of engaging more foreign experts in its QA activities.*

Please see Standard 2.4 above in this Section.

ESG 2.3: *that the HAC lengthens the site visits in institutional evaluations to allow sufficient time for meetings and in-depth discussions with different groups of interviewees.*

When preparing the length of a site visit, MAB pays attention to the size and complexity of the HEI undergoing accreditation. MAB takes these factors into account when setting up the agenda for a site visit to a HEI; for example, one of the largest HEIs in Hungary, Eötvös Loránd University, with eight faculties and more than 24 000 students, had a site visit of five days in 2020. In 2022, MAB conducted a three-day site visit at the University of Debrecen (with 14 faculties) with a 16-member site-visit team; the interviews ran in parallel, focusing on certain ESG standards in each panel.

ESG 2.5: *that the HAC (1) adopts and adapts the procedures of the present European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, and (2) issues a guidebook that compiles all the relevant information concerning laws, decrees, standards and guidelines.*

¹⁷¹ Complaint Management Policy: <https://www.mab.hu/en/procedures/> under *Appeals and Complaints*

1. Pursuant to the paragraph (4a) of Article 67 and paragraphs (6) and (7) of Article 78 of the National Higher Education Act¹⁷² (which have been proposed by MAB),

(4a) “MAB shall formulate its expert opinion in the procedures regulated in paragraph (3) (a), (c) and (e) and in paragraph (2) of Article 8, taking into account the European Standards and Guidelines in the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter referred to as ESG). The decision of the Educational Authority shall describe the MAB's expert opinion in compliance with the ESG.”

(6) “In the case of a joint programme, in addition to the organisations specified in paragraphs (4) and (4b) of Article 67, an organisation which is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education may be invited to provide an expert opinion, and an expert opinion obtained previously from such an organisation shall also be accepted.”

(7) “In the case of a joint programme, the body acting in accordance with paragraph (6) shall give its expert opinion taking into account the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in addition to paragraph (4a) of Article 67.”

2. All the relevant information concerning laws, decrees, standards and guidelines is available on the MAB website; the standards and guidelines are organised according to the type of the accreditation or evaluation procedure, accessible to the public¹⁷³. The MAB WFME-based medical standards and the related documents are uploaded in English, as well¹⁷⁴.

ESG 2.6: *that the HAC prepares an executive summary of each visit easily accessible to the public in terms of language and outcomes.*

Following each visit, after an accreditation procedure has been officially closed by the MAB Board, the complete accreditation report on the process as well as the official decision on the accreditation period, together with the reasons and background of the decision, are uploaded on the MAB website¹⁷⁵ and DEQAR.

¹⁷² National Higher Education Act CCIV of 2011 (in Hungarian): <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1100204.tv>

¹⁷³ MAB procedures: <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/>

¹⁷⁴ WFME procedure-related documents: <https://www.mab.hu/en/procedures/> under *Medical Training Accreditation Procedure/WFME*

¹⁷⁵ MAB Board decisions: <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/>

9. SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis gives feedback on the achievement of the MAB's strategic objectives and also provides input information for the strategic review of goals and objectives.

The survey was conducted between June and October 2022, including MAB employees, Board members, members of standing and ad hoc decision-making colleges and committees, including non-member experts involved in certain procedures. The compiled SWOT analysis is available at the end of this Section.

Based on the SWOT analysis, the main development directions of MAB can be identified, which aim at strengthening the professionalism and social engagement of the agency. These include feedback on evaluation and quality assurance activities, feedback on the establishment of an advisory and development role, and the increased involvement in international activities and events, as well as findings on further strengthening this role. The opinions focusing on organisational development, operational efficiency and capacity building are crucial in terms of strategic orientations.

Strengths

MAB is a transparent organisation with a unique role in quality assessment and quality assurance in higher education, with a team of highly qualified professionals and objective, independent and balanced processes. It tries to address this role with sufficient profession-based objectivity, as some of its strengths are also listed here under "Weaknesses" and "Threats". These contradictions are treated as an opportunity for improvement (e.g., international engagement, human resources preparedness, communication flow problems, etc.)

Weaknesses

As a result of the changes taking place in the higher education environment in Hungary, there is uncertainty about the tasks, responsibilities, and competences of higher education organisations. The embeddedness of MAB in the higher education system is still determined by its role as it was perceived before 2017, prior to the introduction of ESG 2015-based accreditation procedures. The two effects (current processes, and previously established external expectations towards MAB) result in "Strengths" being reflected in "Weaknesses". This feedback points to directions for improvement that will allow MAB to have greater flexibility, both in terms of procedures and operations.

Opportunities

A significant part of the responses received as potential for MAB's improvement relates to the agency's weaknesses. There is a clear focus on policy changes, which points to the importance of MAB's representation of its interests. Its international engagement is also linked to this, taking the range of its activities to an international level. Furthermore, the expansion and development of services and operating conditions, as well as the improvement of technological capacity are opportunities that appear within the competence of the agency. In this context, feedback on further enhancement of training and advisory activities is particularly relevant.

Threats

The problems identified here can also be seen under other headings in the SWOT analysis, for example, the interpretation of technological and professional development as an opportunity. The changes in the operational environment of MAB (economic, social, political) and the feedback received under the category "Threats" on these changes, on the one hand, indicate the directions for

development and, on the other hand, provide strong feedback on partner uncertainties that need to be addressed in the short term.

SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role in quality assurance and quality certification (E, P) ▪ Advisory role in support of continuous improvement (E, P) ▪ Ensuring harmonisation, uniform interpretation, and comparability (P) ▪ International visibility and embeddedness (P) ▪ Excellent staff composition (E, P) ▪ Professional experience (E, P) ▪ Ensuring transparency and publicity (E, P) ▪ Independence and balance (E, P) ▪ Flexibility, openness to learning and development (E, P) ▪ Established procedures (P) ▪ Objectivity (E) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shortage of human resources with professional knowledge of higher education (E) ▪ Long administration time (E, P) increasing workload in relation to the number of procedures (P) ▪ Information flow (E: internal, P: external) ▪ Untapped potentials for learning, organisational development (P) ▪ Procedures need to be improved (P) ▪ Internationalization needs to be further enhanced (E, P) ▪ IT support needs to be improved (E)
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes in policy (E, P) ▪ Increasing involvement in international activities (E, P) ▪ Developing the knowledge of employees, experts (E, P) ▪ Operational improvements (P), IT improvements (E) ▪ Expansion of services (P) ▪ Strengthening advisory and training functions (E) ▪ Expansion of contacts and cooperations (E) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal and political environment (E, P) ▪ Unclear powers and reduction of competences (P) ▪ Damage to independence and objectivity (P) ▪ Lack of human resources with professional knowledge of higher education, heavy workload in relation to the number of procedures (E, P) ▪ Potential of new technologies is not exploited (E, P) ▪ Unclear tasks, responsibilities, roles between higher education institutions (E, P) ▪ International competition and global crises (P) ▪ Bureaucratic administrative procedures do not support professional processes (E, P)

E=employees, P=partners

10. Key challenges and areas for future development

1. Based on results of the survey conducted by PwC in 2020,¹⁷⁶ one of the main challenges for MAB is to develop an ex-post evaluation tool based on study fields. Study programmes currently available in Hungarian higher education had undergone an ex-ante accreditation procedure before they were launched and many of them have not been evaluated since.

MAB plans to discontinue the current ex-ante procedure (and replace it with a shorter ex-ante programme registration process) and to develop an ex-post evaluation process based on study fields, in the framework of the sectoral modernisation project (RRF), in which the agency is already taking part. As part of this process, the relevant legislation will also be reviewed. MAB will develop, where necessary, proposals for deregulation, the general structure and credit structures of degree subjects, and principals for the development of a system of qualifications based on learning outcomes will also be agreed. MAB's College for Programme Accreditation will play a significant role in the development and implementation of the new accreditation procedure.

2. MAB must also face dynamic changes in international higher education (e.g., the European Universities Initiative, micro-credentials, etc.), which have an impact on Hungarian higher education. Consequently, quality assurance and quality certification procedures are becoming increasingly important and MAB needs to be able to keep pace with international changes to provide Hungarian HEIs with up-to-date support in quality assurance.

3. A further challenge for MAB is the embedding of micro-credentials into the current assessment systems and procedures, and it is essential that the agency continues to actively engage with its international partners and support higher education institutions in this regard.

4. An additional area MAB will have to address is the implementation of accreditation procedures that include not only ESG compliance but also other excellence criteria – such as third mission activities and assessment of scientific activities of higher education institutions – in a way which does not increase the administrative burden on institutions. The main challenge will be the breaking down and managing these major strategic tasks into operational levels, while eliminating anomalies.

¹⁷⁶ Thematic review of activities (2017-2020): https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Thematic-review-of-HAC-activities_deliverable.pdf p.56.

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<https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1100204.tv>

19/2012. (II. 22.) Kormányrendelet a felsőoktatási minőségértékelés és -fejlesztés egyes kérdéseiről (Government Decree 19/2012 (II. 22.) on certain issues of quality assessment and development in higher education) <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1200019.kor>

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Accreditation decisions of the MAB Board <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/>

Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education (as it stood on 2nd September 2016)
https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Nftv_angol_2Sept2016_EMMI-forditas.pdf

A Doktori Akkreditációs Kollégium Ügyrendje (The Rules of Procedure of the College for Doctoral Accreditation) https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/DOK_%C3%9Cgyrend_2020.02.21.pdf

A MAB Felülvizsgálati Bizottságának Ügyrendje (Rules of Procedure of the MAB Board of Appeals)
https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FvB_%C3%BCgyrend_m%C3%B3d_v2020.04.23.pdf

A Magyar Felsőoktatási Bizottság (MAB) Stratégiája 2019-2024 (Strategy of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee 2019-2024) http://old.mab.hu/web/doc/szabalyok/MAB_Strategia_19-24.pdf

Annual reports of MAB <https://www.mab.hu/en/publications/> under *Reports*

CEENQA: Hungarian Accreditation Committee <https://www.ceenqa.org/members/full-members/hungary/>

Code of Ethics <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Code-of-ethic.pdf>

Complaint Management Policy of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee
<https://www.mab.hu/en/procedures/> under *Appeals and Complaints*

Decisions of programme launch accreditations (in Hungarian) <https://www.mab.hu/en/decisions/> under *Quick list*

Deed of Foundation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee <https://www.mab.hu/wp-content/uploads/Deed-of-foundation.pdf>

DOSZ (Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates)
<https://www.dosz.hu/bemutakozas>

Duális Képzési Tanács Küldetésnyilatkozata (Dual Training Council Mission Statement)
https://www.oktatas.hu/pub_bin/dload/felsooktatas/dualis_kepzes/Dualis_Kepzesi_Tanacs_kuldetesnyilatkozata.pdf

Effective involvement of stakeholders in external quality assurance activities – ESQA
<https://www.aracis.ro/en/esqa-project/>

Egyetemi tanári pályázat dokumentumai (documents for university professor applications)
<https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/> under *Egyetemi tanári pályázat*

EHEA: Full members http://www.ehea.info/page-full_members

EHEA: Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance (TPG C on QA) <http://www.ehea.info/page-peer-group-C-QA>

ENQA: MAB – Hungarian Accreditation Committee <https://www.enqa.eu/membership-database/hac-hungarian-accreditation-committee/>

EQAR: MAB – Hungarian Accreditation Committee
<https://www.eqar.eu/register/agencies/agency/?id=58>

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Evaluation sheets and guidelines for university professor applications
<https://www.mab.hu/en/procedures/> under *University professor applications*

Felsőoktatási Tervezési Testület (Higher Education Planning Board)
https://www.oktatas.hu/felsooktatas/felsooktatasi_tervezesi_testulet

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Guides to accreditation and evaluation processes (in Hungarian) <https://www.mab.hu/eljarasok/>

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<https://www.mab.hu/en/home-page/>

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WFME: Countries served by agencies with Recognition Status (map)

<https://wfme.org/accreditation/accrediting-agencies-status/>

Annexes

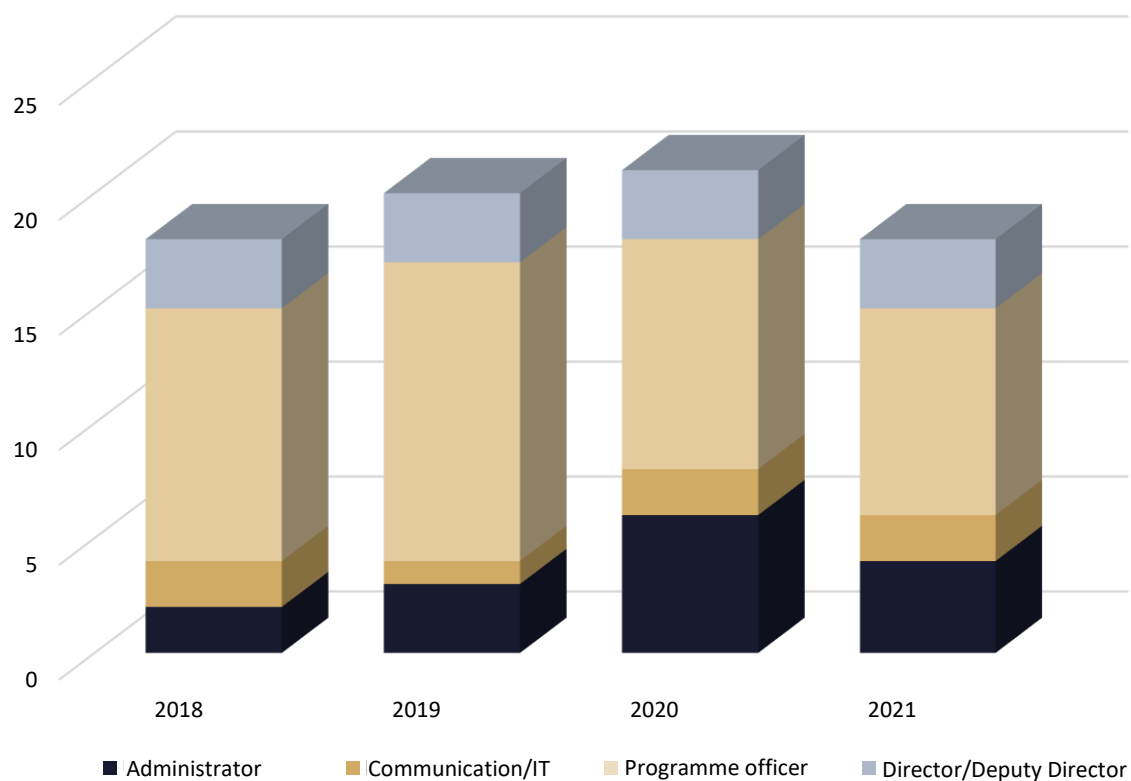
Annex 1

Comparison of MAB's EQA activities to Part 1 of ESG

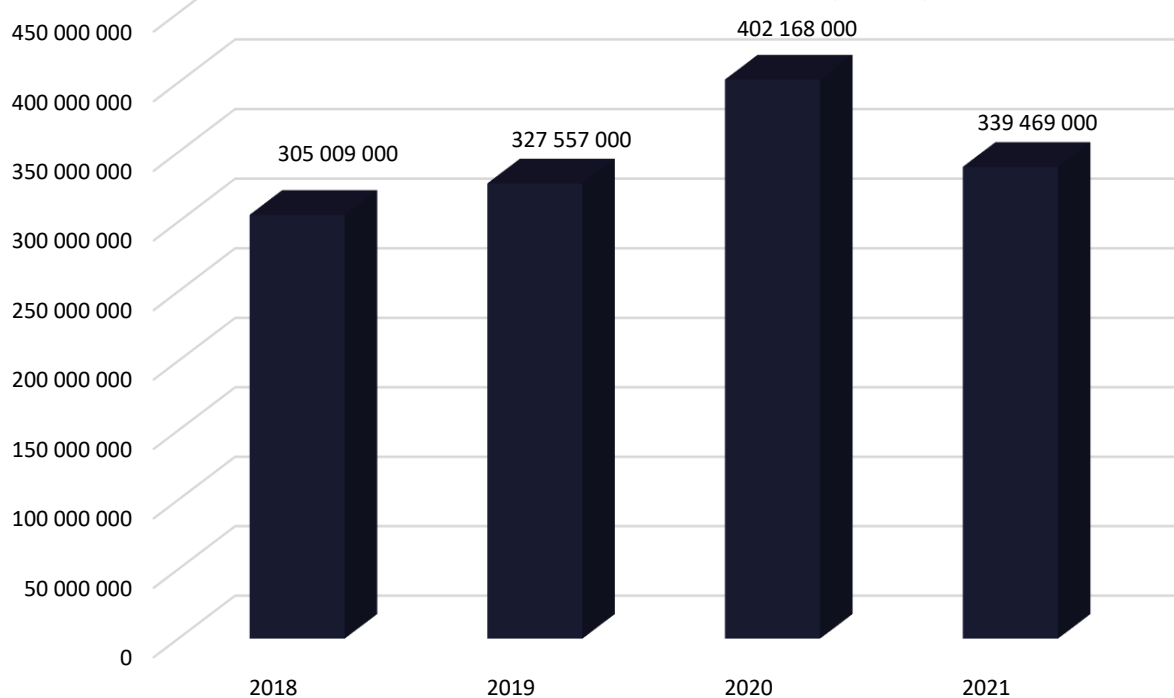
EQA activity of MAB	Type	ESG I.1	ESG I.2	ESG I.3	ESG I.4	ESG I.5	ESG I.6	ESG I.7	ESG I.8	ESG I.9	ESG I.10	MAB guideline/criteria	regulatory environment
initial evaluation of education and learning outcome framework requirements for VET, Bachelor and Master programmes	ex-ante	X	X					X				application form and guidelines (Institution submits labour-market assessment for such a programme only as information but MAB does not evaluate it)	National Qualification Framework
initial accreditation of VET, Bachelor and Master programmes	ex-ante	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	application form and guideline	National Qualification Framework
initial accreditation of institutions	ex-ante	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<i>Self-assessment Guide for Institutional Accreditation</i> , including self-assessment report form	Regulations set down in the HE Act
initial accreditation of new doctoral schools at universities	ex-ante	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	self-assessment report form	HE Act and Government Decree (387/2012) on doctoral schools, doctoral procedures and habilitation
initial accreditation of adding a new branch of science to an existing doctoral school	ex-ante	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	self-assessment report form	HE Act and Government Decree (387/2012) on doctoral schools, doctoral procedures and habilitation
accreditation of doctoral schools in five-year cycles	ex-post	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	self-assessment report form	HE Act and Government Decree (387/2012) on doctoral schools, doctoral procedures and habilitation
institutional accreditation in five-year cycles	ex-post	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<i>Self-assessment Guide for Institutional Accreditation</i> , including self-assessment report form	Regulations set down in the HE Act
accreditation of basic medical programs of medical schools based on WFME standards	ex-post	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<i>MAB Standards for Medical Education, MAB Rules of Procedure for the Accreditation of Medical Education</i>	Global Standards of the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)
accreditation of foreign clinical training sites in five-year cycles	ex-post		X	X	X	X						questionnaire and requirements	U.S. National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA)

Annex 2

Staff figures of the MAB Secretariat 2018-2021



Revenues of MAB 2018-2021 (in HUF)



Annex 3

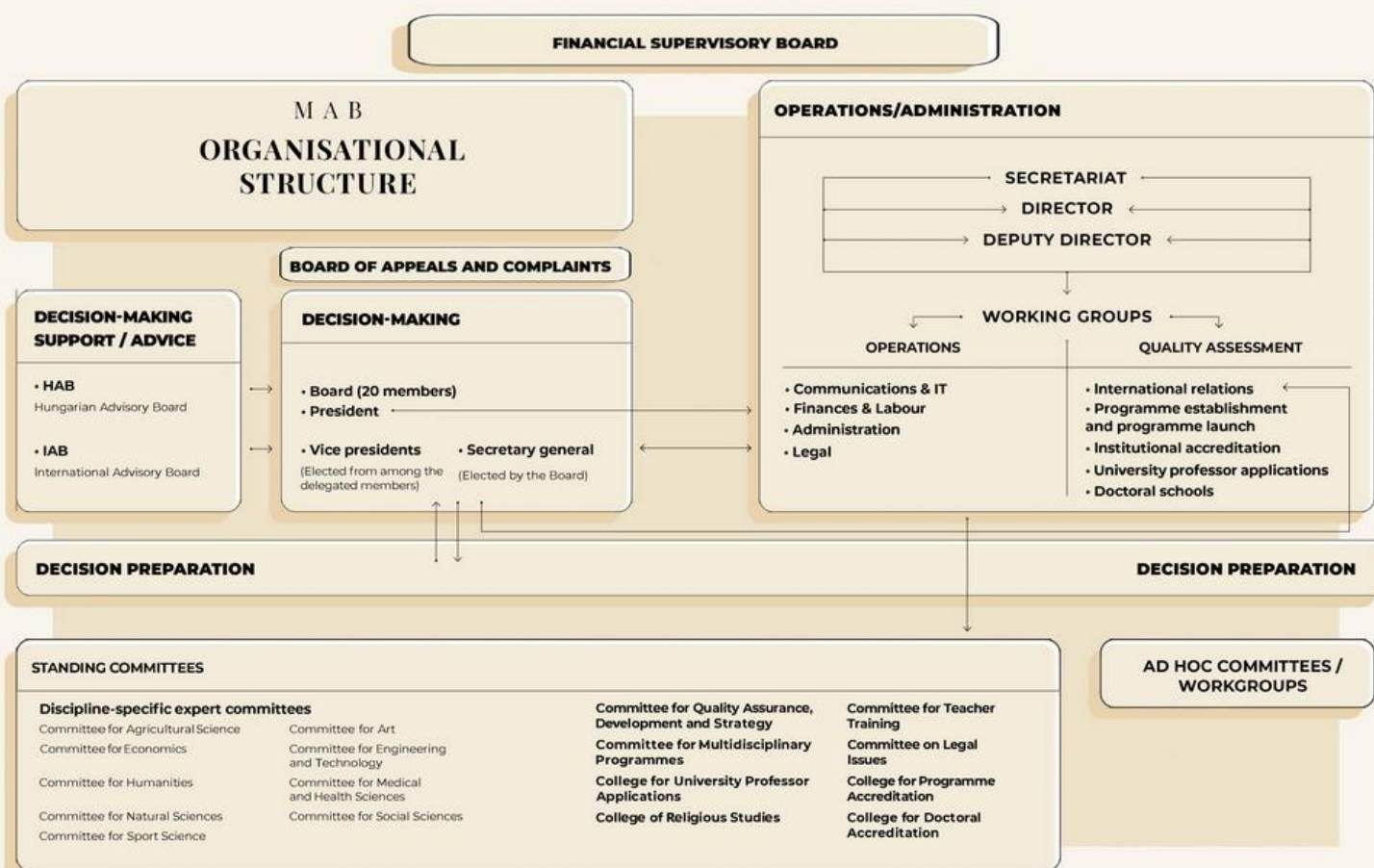
Feedback questions sent to doctoral schools after the on-site (or online) visit

Milyen szerepben vett részt a MAB-eljárás során?
<i>In what role did you participate in the audit process?</i>
Végiggondolva az akkreditációs eljárás teljes folyamatát, az eljárás megindításától a MAB Testület döntéshozataláig, hol és mit módosítana rajta annak érdekében, hogy jobban szolgálja a doktori képzés színvonalának javítását?
<i>When thinking back to the entire audit process, from initiating the process until the publication of the audit report, what do you think should be modified so that the audit process contributes in a more efficient way to the enhancement of PhD-education?</i>
Amennyiben részt vett az önértékelés összeállításában, melyek voltak az Eljárásrend és az Önértékelési szempontrendszer Ön által érzékelt ... erősségei?
<i>If you have participated in preparing the self-evaluation report, which parts, features of the self-evaluation guidelines (Eljárásrend; Önértékelési szempontrendszer) do you think were most useful?</i>
... kevésbé kidolgozott pontjai, hiányosságai?
<i>... and less useful or confusing?</i>
Az önértékelés folyamata hozzájárult-e a doktori iskola erősségeinek, gyengeségeinek, lehetőségeinek azonosításához, minőségi javítások tervezéséhez?
<i>Has the preparation of the self-evaluation report contributed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities of the doctoral school, or to recognize new possibilities for improvement?</i>
Mennyire volt elégedett a MAB-tól kapott támogatással (látogatás előkészítése, az eljárásról való tájékoztatás, a szakreferensek támogatása)?
<i>How satisfied were you with the support you received MAB (preparation of the site visit, information about the audit process, support from the MAB-officers)?</i>
Mennyire volt elégedett a látogató bizottság összetételével, létszámával?
<i>How satisfied were you with the make-up of the visiting team?</i>
Mennyire volt elégedett a látogató bizottság felkészültségével az önértékelésnek és a doktori iskola többi dokumentumainak ismeretét illetően?
<i>How satisfied were you with the level of preparedness of the visiting team regarding their knowledge of self-evaluation report and the other documents of the doctoral school?</i>
Mennyire volt elégedett a látogató bizottság hozzáállásával (figyelem, kérdés módszertana) a látogatás alatt?
<i>How satisfied were you with the visiting teams' attitude (attention, methodology of the interviews)?</i>
Amennyiben részt vett a helyszíni látogatáson, mi volt az, amit hasznosnak talált?
<i>If you took part in the site visit, what did you find useful?</i>

<p>Amennyiben részt vett a helyszíni látogatáson, mi volt az, amit problémának érzett, vagy hiányolt?</p> <p><i>If you took part in the site visit, is there anything you found missing or problematic?</i></p> <p>Mennyire elégedett a látogató bizottság jelentésével, annak objektivitásával, alaposágával, részletességével?</p> <p><i>How satisfied are you with the final report of the visiting team, its objectivity, solid reasoning, level of detail?</i></p> <p>Mennyire tartja kivitelezhetőnek, hasznosnak a látogató bizottság jelentésében megfogalmazott fejlesztési javaslatokat?</p> <p><i>To what extent are the recommendations formulated in the report feasible and useful?</i></p> <p>Amennyiben nem ítéli hasznosnak a jelentést, vagy az abban leírt fejlesztési javaslatokat, kérjük indokolja!</p> <p><i>If you don't find the report or the recommendations in it useful, please explain why.</i></p> <p>Nagyra értékeljük, hogy visszajelzésével segíti a MAB eljárásainak továbbfejlesztését. Kérjük, ha bármilyen egyéb észrevétele, javaslata van, ossza meg velünk!</p> <p><i>We appreciate your feedback that helps us to improve our evaluation processes. If you have any further recommendations or comments, please share them with us.</i></p>
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Annex 4

Organisational Structure



Annex 5

Recovery and resilience plan for Hungary
Component B – Renewing Universities
Sectoral modernization of higher education (RRF-2.1.1-21)

Beneficiary name: Hungarian Accreditation Committee

Consortium partner: Hungarian Rectors' Conference, Educational Authority, Digital Government Development and Project Management Ltd.

Contracted amount of aid: 1 762 553 496 HUF

Project planned completion date: 31/12/2023

Project ID No: RRF-2.1.1-21-2022-00001

Aims and participants

The aim of the project "Sectoral modernisation of higher education" is to review the legislative environment of higher education (drafting proposals for amendments), to implement interventions aimed at the renewal of higher education, and to implement and disseminate all these activities.

MAB, as the leader of the consortium, aims to further improve existing quality assessment procedures, develop new procedures and enhance support services in a way that enables fully digital processes to ensure the effectiveness of the restructuring of HEIs into a sustainable and competitive, yet resilient institutional system.

Section 4 of the self-assessment report introduces MAB's ex-ante and ex-post evaluation and accreditation processes. Apart from the WFME standards-based accreditation procedure, ex-post programme accreditation is not involved in MAB's activities, representing one of the main challenges to be solved, namely that the presented accreditation and evaluation procedures do not provide overall and direct feedback on the quality of HEIs' programmes and on their compliance of quantitative/qualitative indicators with ESG standards.

According to the ministerial decree that summarises the programme and learning outcome framework requirements of higher education programmes, HEIs currently offer more than 430 programmes, and trends over the past two years show that this range of programmes is continuing to expand. In the 5-year cycle of institutional and doctoral school accreditation, the different processes are examined, but no direct examination of the programmes is conducted. There is a need to develop a new evaluation procedure – a new quality assurance procedure –, which can ensure the ex-post assessment of higher education degree programmes.

Regarding student and academic staff mobility within the EHEA, it is also necessary for national and international institutions to be able to issue a certificate not only of the accreditation(s) obtained by the institution but also of the accreditation obtained by individual programmes of the institution, as such a document can certify to third parties (foreign lecturers, students, employers) that the programme concerned meets the ESG 2015 standards and the criteria of the national accreditation agency.

In the framework of the RRF project, MAB aims not only to develop an ex-post assessment procedure for degree programmes, but also to modify the existing accreditation and evaluation procedures to be in line with the new procedure, so that they meet the needs reflected in the public policy document

of the higher education sector, such as the involvement of labour market representatives, supporting the implementation of practice-oriented education, and the national and international mobility of higher education. The project aims to respond to these aspects through the enhancement of quality validation and assessment processes and guidelines for institutional accreditation, accreditation of doctoral schools, and degree certification.

The administrative processes of MAB are managed in the Secretariat Information System (TIR); to meet the current digital requirements, the project aims to modernise TIR so that it can manage all stages of the MAB procedures, make non-sensitive information on procedures publicly available, and provide information on the quality assessment or other evaluation status of HEIs, doctoral schools and programmes in a transparent manner.

The **Hungarian Rectors' Conference** aims to support mobility between national and international programmes and labour market, and to further develop a national framework (regulation) and methodologies for credit recognition and validation.

The renewal of the programme and learning outcome framework requirements will therefore contribute to improving the competitiveness of HEIs in Hungary and to increasing the up-to-date knowledge of students, thus enhancing the quality of those entering the labour market.

To maintain and increase the benefits of the renewed programme and learning outcome framework requirements, the credit validation system also needs to be renewed. Higher education needs to ensure that graduates have the competences required by the labour market at undergraduate level, they have the skills required at postgraduate, doctoral and adult education levels, as well as their knowledge is continuously updated. To achieve this, it is necessary to enhance the credit recognition system, in particular to increase mobility at national and international level. The mobility between different levels and types of education (secondary education, vocational training, tertiary vocational programmes, bachelor, master programmes, postgraduate specialization programmes, adult education, micro-credentials) is poorly addressed. Higher education also has to cope with the integration of micro-credentials in short-term programmes. On this basis, a general methodology to support credit recognition processes needs to be developed along the already identified shortcomings of the credit recognition systems used by HEIs.

Higher education in Hungary needs to respond to this call of the EHEA, which can be supported by the development of credit recognition methods and recommendations envisaged in the project.

The objectives of the project include the further development of the IT application supporting the decision-making processes of the **Educational Authority** and transparent higher education administration. To strengthen digitalisation and environmental awareness, the development of the application will make the initiation and continuation of certain official procedures of higher education institutions towards the Authority faster, more efficient, and paperless. The project aims to deregulate higher education legislation to support both innovative higher education and the labour market.

The **Digital Government Development and Project Management Ltd.** (Digitális Kormányzat Fejlesztés és Projektmenedzsment Kft., DFK) is involved in the project as a consortium partner on the basis of Government Decree 684/2020 (XII.28.) on the designation of the Digital Government Development and Project Management Ltd. It participates as a consortium leader or consortium member in projects supporting digitisation, such as in the Digital Europe Programme or in the Multiannual Financial Framework. It also takes part in other development programmes supported by the European Union (e.g., the Recovery and Resilience Instrument, development programmes in the fields of eGovernment, IT and public administration infocommunication infrastructure development) for the use of EU funds in the programming period 2021-2027.

Intended results of the project:

- Proposals to transform the legislative environment for the modernisation of higher education;
- A set of legislative proposals to integrate new shorter programmes into the existing training structure;
- Proposals for the regulation of distance learning;
- Benchmarking analysis to support the development of modernisation processes and instruments for the practice-oriented transformation of higher education;
- Structural changes of programme and learning outcome framework requirements;
- Developing a national credit recognition and validation system to increase mobility, including a proposal for the recognition of micro-credentials;
- Restructuring the quality assessment system with an ex post programme evaluation focus, simplifying and harmonising quality assessment processes;
- Development and enhancement of specialised management systems and digital administration platforms supporting higher education;
- Activities to support the communication of the higher education admission process, renewal of the main page of the website (www.felvi.hu) and the development of an application and administration interface optimised for mobile devices;
- Organizing implementation and dissemination events on the results of the project for different target groups.

Milestones of the project:

30 June 2022: Milestone I, development of proposals, submission to National Authority.

30 November 2022: Milestone II, submission of the system description of the renewed evaluation procedures to the National Authority.

30 June 2023: Milestone III, the online submission management system and evaluation platform to support the efficiency of the evaluation process is completed and operational.

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