

2026 European Quality Assurance Forum

Quality assurance for skills, entrepreneurship and innovation: Partnering with the world of work

National Polytechnic University of Armenia, Yerevan
18-20 November 2026

Draft programme

This year's European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF), entitled '**Quality assurance for skills, entrepreneurship and innovation: Partnering with the world of work**', will combine sessions about European policies and trends, research, and practical case examples related to the Forum theme and more generally about current developments in quality assurance.

EQAF provides a platform for discussion, professional development and exchange of experiences among the main stakeholders in quality assurance (QA). As such, it will be of interest to rectors and vice-rectors responsible for QA, QA managers and officers in higher education institutions, students, QA agency staff, and researchers working in higher education or the QA field.

Forum objectives

Quality assurance plays a crucial role in supporting higher education institutions in responding to evolving labour markets and strengthening their contribution to innovation and societal development. In a context marked by technological transformation, demographic change and the green and digital transitions, employment patterns are shifting rapidly.

QA systems can enhance institutional adaptability, foster meaningful stakeholder engagement and act as catalysts for innovation. By shaping frameworks and processes that promote employability, entrepreneurship, lifelong learning and research-based innovation, quality assurance helps institutions to integrate these priorities into their core missions.

EQAF 2026 will explore the dynamic relationship between quality assurance, employment and innovation. It will examine how QA frameworks and processes can support graduates in developing the knowledge, skills and competences needed to navigate rapidly evolving labour markets, while also fostering innovation and entrepreneurial mindsets across higher education.

The Forum will discuss how quality assurance can strengthen cooperation between higher education institutions and employers and ensure quality in work-based, lifelong and doctoral education linked to research and innovation ecosystems. At the same time, it will reflect on how QA can remain responsive to labour market needs without compromising academic integrity and the long-term societal mission of higher education.

Wednesday 18 November

Pre-forum meetings

12.00-14.30 Meeting for student experts in quality assurance

This is a stand-alone session organised by ESU. There is a separate registration process. Further details will be made available soon.

15.30-16.30 Introduction to the European quality assurance framework

A pre-forum session providing an introduction to the quality assurance framework of the European Higher Education Area. Attendance is free for EQAF participants.

Forum

15.00-17.00

Registration

17.00-18.30

Opening plenary

- Introduction to the Forum, Eva Fernandez de Labastida Amurrio, Chair, EQAF Programme Committee
- Welcome from the host
- Speaker(s)
 - QAA
 - Student
 - TBC
- Discussion with the chair and the audience
- Chaired by TBC

18.30

Networking drinks

Thursday 19 November

09.00-17.30

Registration

09.30-10.30

Parallel sessions I: Perspectives on QA

Participants will have a choice of attending one of three parallel sessions which will present various projects or initiatives in QA.

- Introducing the ESG 2027
 - Anna Gover, Director, ENQA
 - Daciana Pop, President, ESU
 - John Edwards, Director, EURASHE
 - Maria Kelo, Director, Institutional Development, EUA
- Designing and evaluating study programmes for a changing skills landscape
 - Mick Scholtka, Steering Committee Member, ESU
 - Ana Tecilazić, Vice Rector for Quality, Algebra Bernays University, Croatia
- Assuring quality in adult and lifelong learning
 - Irma Grdzeldze, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research, Alte University, Georgia
 - Bianca Pace, Executive Committee Member, ESU

10.30-11.00

Coffee break

11.00-12.45

Papers presentations and workshops – Contributions sessions I

Participants will have a choice of attending a workshop lasting 90 minutes or two paper sessions lasting 45 minutes each, with a 15-minute break in between to allow the participants to move around.

12.45-14.15

Lunch

14.15-15.00

Papers and poster presentations – Contributions sessions II

Participants will have a choice of attending a paper session or a poster session lasting 45 minutes.

15.00-15.15 Move to the next session

15.15-16.15 Parallel sessions II: Perspectives on QA

Participants will have a choice of attending one of three parallel sessions which will present various projects or initiatives in QA.

- Bridging higher education and industry through quality assurance
 - Denise Bärnfeind, Quality Assurance and Institutional Research, UAS Technikum Wien
 - Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir, Executive Director, Icelandic Agency for Quality Assurance
- Quality assurance for transnational cooperation and innovation
 - Ronny Heintze, Deputy Director for International Development, AQAS
 - Solange Piszcz, Executive Director, Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur

16.15-16.45 Coffee break

16.45-17.45 Community of practice

Free-format, participant-led topical sessions where participants can propose and explore topics of shared interest through informal discussion and exchange via the event app

19.00 Optional Forum dinner (separate fee)

Friday 20 November

09.00-13.00 Registration

09.30-11.15 Papers presentations and workshops – Contributions sessions III

Participants will have a choice of attending a workshop lasting 90 minutes or two paper sessions lasting 45 minutes each, with a 15-minute break in between to allow the participants to move around.

11.15-11.45 Coffee break

11.45-13.00 Closing plenary: Quality assurance for tomorrow's skills

The presidents of EUA, ENQA, EURASHE and ESU will discuss how quality assurance can underpin skills development, innovation and closer engagement with the world of work.

- Josep M. Garrell, President, EUA
- Hannes Raffaseder, President, EURASHE
- Daciana Pop, President, ESU
- President, ENQA (TBC)
- Chaired by Daniela Craciun, EQAF Programme Committee

Invitation to EQAF 2027

Wrap-up and thanks by Eva Fernandez de Labastida Amurrio, Chair, EQAF Programme Committee

13.00-14.30 Lunch and departure