

2026 European Quality Assurance Forum

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

Hosted by National Polytechnic University of Armenia,
Yerevan, Armenia

18-20 November 2026

Call for contributions

Deadline 21 June 2026

INTRODUCTION

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association for the Applied Sciences in Higher Education (EURASHE) will organise the 2026 European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) **from 18 to 20 November 2026 in Yerevan, Armenia, hosted by the National Polytechnic University of Armenia**. Through a mix of plenary and parallel sessions, EQAF 2026, entitled '**Quality assurance for skills, entrepreneurship and innovation: Partnering with the world of work**', will combine presentations of current developments in quality assurance with discussions on research, policy and practice that will take place in paper sessions, workshops and poster presentation sessions.

The deadline to submit contributions is **21 June 2026**. **Proposals received after this date will not be considered.**

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 ensure that higher education provision enables graduates to develop 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, quality assurance agencies, 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.

PARTICIPANTS

EQAF provides a platform for discussion, professional development and exchange of experiences among the main stakeholders in QA. Specifically, the Forum is of interest to senior university leaders (rectors/presidents/vice-chancellors and vice-rectors/vice-presidents/pro vice-chancellors responsible for QA), QA officers in higher education institutions, students, QA agency staff and researchers working on higher education or the QA field.

TOPICS

All contributions are expected to stimulate a discussion with the participants, thus enhancing peer-learning. Contributors should also bear in mind the diversity of participants at EQAF and should therefore aim to focus on the transferability of results or practices to different contexts in order to increase the relevance for the audience.

All contributions should focus on one of the following sub-topics:

- **Building research-based innovation ecosystems through QA**

Higher education institutions play a key role in fostering innovation by linking research, education and the world of work. Through collaboration with industry, public authorities and other societal actors, they contribute to the development of innovation ecosystems that support economic growth and societal progress.

Quality assurance can help strengthen these connections by ensuring that research-informed teaching, doctoral education and knowledge transfer activities are effectively embedded in institutional strategies and practices. By promoting transparent processes, stakeholder engagement and continuous improvement, QA can support institutions in building environments where research-based innovation thrives and where graduates acquire the skills needed to contribute to innovation in diverse professional contexts.

In this strand, we welcome contributions that explore how quality assurance can support the development of research and innovation ecosystems within higher education institutions and in collaboration with external partners. In addition, we invite proposals that reflect on the role of QA in strengthening links between research, education and the labour market, including in doctoral education, entrepreneurship initiatives and cooperation with industry.

- **Lifelong learning and upskilling pathways**

In the context of rapidly evolving labour markets and technological change, higher education institutions are increasingly expected to support lifelong learning by providing opportunities for upskilling and reskilling throughout individuals' careers.

This requires stronger cooperation with employers and vocational education and training providers, as well as the development of work-based learning opportunities that enable learners to acquire relevant skills and competences in professional contexts. Short learning opportunities such as micro-credentials are also gaining importance as tools to respond to emerging skills needs and support flexible learning pathways for diverse groups of learners.

Quality assurance can play a key role in ensuring that lifelong learning provision is relevant, transparent and of high quality, while maintaining trust in new forms of credentials and learning pathways. In this strand, we welcome contributions that explore how quality assurance frameworks and practices can support upskilling and reskilling initiatives, ensure the quality of work-based learning, and facilitate the development, recognition and integration of micro-credentials within higher education and across sectors.

- **Quality assuring future-proof higher education**

Higher education is rapidly evolving in response to technological developments, new labour market needs and changing societal expectations. Innovative approaches to teaching and learning—including digital learning environments, artificial intelligence applications, interdisciplinary programmes and challenge-based learning—are increasingly being adopted to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and competences required to navigate dynamic employment landscapes. These innovations also aim to foster entrepreneurial mindsets and

support research-based and practice-oriented learning experiences that connect students with the world of work.

Quality assurance plays a crucial role in ensuring that these future-oriented educational approaches maintain high standards, are aligned with labour market and societal needs, and contribute to graduates' employability and capacity for innovation. In this strand, we welcome contributions that explore how QA frameworks and processes can support institutions in developing education that is responsive to emerging skills demands, fosters entrepreneurship, and leverages digital and AI-enabled approaches to enhance learning outcomes and employability.

We especially welcome proposals that reflect on the Forum objectives and provide insights into how quality assurance can support higher education institutions in responding to evolving labour markets, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, and strengthening cooperation with employers and other stakeholders. We also welcome proposals that present different perspectives (e.g. a case study developed jointly by a university and a QA agency), and we strongly encourage cooperation with students when preparing proposals.

Please note that proposals that serve a commercial purpose will not be accepted.

SESSION TYPES

Three types of contributions are sought: paper, workshop, and poster presentation proposals.

1. Paper sessions

This type of contribution will focus on one of the following:

- a) Research – an analysis of concepts or data related to quality assurance with discussion of the implications for policy or practice
- b) Policy – a case study of a particular policy approach, taking into account the implications for practice or transferability to other contexts

Papers will be presented during **45-minute-long sessions**. The presentation of the paper should last no longer than 15 minutes and will be followed by a discussion with the audience. The author(s) should provide questions for discussion stimulating debate with the audience at the conclusion of the paper.

Formal requirements

A paper proposal should:

- Identify the author(s), and, in the case of co-authored papers, indicate who will be responsible for presenting the paper at the Forum. Please note that typically one person presents a paper, though a joint delivery with up to two people can be considered;
- Include a short biography for each author (up to 100 words);
- Include a short abstract of 300 words maximum that, in case of approval, will be published on the EQAF event page;
- Include a short outline of the structure and content of the paper, including the key findings (up to 100 words);
- Identify the target audience for the paper;
- Identify the corresponding sub-topic;
- Provide two or three discussion questions for the session.

Please note that selected paper presentation authors will have to submit their full paper (maximum 3000 words) by 5 November 2026.

Evaluation criteria

The papers will be assessed by members of the EQAF Programme Committee on the basis of the following criteria:

- The paper is relevant both to the general objectives of the Forum and to the 2026 topic.
- The paper has a clear focus on the identified sub-topic and will be of interest to the Forum participants.
- The paper looks at transferability beyond the original context.

You can find the online submission form for paper proposals [here](#).

2. Workshops

Workshops will focus on providing participants with a structured exercise to enhance understanding of a specific topic or provide hands-on practical advice on how to implement or use a specific QA tool. The workshop will be led by the facilitator(s) in a **90-minute session**. Workshops should not be dedicated to one or several paper-like presentations: the focus should be on participant activity rather than a presentation by the workshop facilitator(s).

Formal requirements

The proposal should:

- Identify the facilitator(s)
- Include the facilitators' short biographies (up to 100 words)
- Identify the corresponding sub-topic of the proposal
- Identify the target audience for the workshop
- Explain the main objectives / intended learning outcomes
- Explain the structure of the session and describe **in detail** the interactive activities to be carried out during the workshop, including the approximate timeline. Please note that proposing simply a discussion or Q&A on the topic will not be considered sufficient.
- Specify any practical requirements (audio-visual requirements, room layout, materials)
- Be accompanied by an abstract of maximum 200 words

Any supplementary documentation may be annexed. For instance, a workshop proposal on comparing different kinds of teaching evaluation questionnaires could include the questionnaires that will be discussed during the workshop.

We strongly encourage workshop facilitators to prepare and handle the timing of their activities carefully. They should also be prepared to adapt to the number of participants in the audience (e.g. adapt the number of sub-groups in case attendance is higher or lower than expected).

Evaluation criteria

The proposal will be assessed by members of the EQAF Programme Committee on the basis of the following criteria:

- The level and type of participant activity: workshops should aim to sustain a lively debate with the audience and engage with them in a hands-on activity
- The proposal should describe the topic and objectives of the workshop and their relevance to QA and the EQAF participants
- The proposal should describe how the workshop will be run (activities proposed, how realistic it is to carry them out in the given timeframe, methodology to ensure participation from the audience etc.)

- The content of the workshop should be in line with the proposed objectives/learning outcomes

Please note that proposals that do not provide a detailed description of the structure of the session and of the interactive activities planned, or that propose generic activities such as Q&A, will not be accepted.

You can find the online submission form for workshops [here](#).

3. Poster presentations

Contributions should present research, projects or practice visually on a poster board, on the basis of which authors will share their work with the Forum participants in an informal, interactive setting. Contributions should be in the form of an A1-size printed poster, with a clear visually attractive presentation of the case example.

Selected presenters will be invited to present their contributions during the thematic poster session at the **Contributions Session II on Thursday 19 November at 14.15 – 15.00**. The presentation of the poster should last no longer than 5 minutes and will be followed by a discussion with the audience. Authors will present their posters several times during the session, while participants rotate among the presentations in small groups.

Formal requirements

The proposal should:

- Identify the presenter
- Include a short biography of the presenter (up to 100 words)
- Identify the corresponding sub-topic
- Include a draft poster
- Include an abstract (150 words maximum)
- Include some examples of questions for the audience

Evaluation criteria

The proposal will be assessed by members of the EQAF Programme Committee on the basis of the following criteria:

- The proposal matches the Forum theme and one of the sub-topics;
- The proposal offers insights or perspectives that will interest participants and encourage discussion;
- For case examples, the proposal critically examines successes, challenges, and lessons learned;
- The proposal goes beyond merely presenting an institutional practice by considering transferability and inviting participant feedback;
- The poster is visually appealing and clear.

You can find the poster presentation electronic submission form [here](#).

PROCEDURE

All proposals must be submitted using the electronic forms available through the links provided in this call document by **21 June 2026**. Please do not send a hard copy or a Word/PDF file.

In order to assist contributors, frequently asked questions are included as an annex to this call for contributions.

All contributions will be reviewed separately by two members of the EQAF Programme Committee. Attention is paid to avoid potential conflict of interest when allocating contributions for review. Please pay attention when selecting the author category in the submission form.

Please see Question 10 in the FAQ for further details of the review and selection process. Authors will be informed in September 2026 if their contribution has been selected for presentation at EQAF. Selected proposals may receive comments on how the proposal should be amended before presentation. Please note that due to limited resources no comments can be provided to unsuccessful proposals.

Please note that in case of acceptance we require presenters of contributions to be available for the full duration of the event. We are unable to accommodate requests to present contributions at specific dates and times.

Selected contributions will be presented and discussed during parallel sessions, which are usually attended by 20–40 participants. Please note that participants will be free to select which session to attend based on the **abstracts**, which will be published on the Forum's event page on the EUA website. Therefore, we encourage all contributors to pay special attention to their abstracts, which must be concise, correspond to the content of their contribution and appeal to the participants.

The organisers reserve the right to amend abstracts in order to ensure that they accurately reflect the content of the session. Giving **explicit, concise titles** may also contribute to capturing the attention of a wider audience.

Unless the author indicates otherwise, all selected papers and presentations will be posted on the EUA website after the event and assigned an ISSN number.

IMPORTANT: If you have submitted a proposal for a paper presentation or a workshop, please do NOT register for the Forum until the results of the selection process have been announced. Paper presenters and workshop facilitators will benefit from one reduced fee per contribution, which will be applied through a special registration process.

All correspondence with authors will be by e-mail.

CALENDAR

21 June 2026	Proposals must be submitted through the official online forms, accessible by clicking on the links provided in this document. Proposals received after 21 June 2026 will not be considered. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.
18 September 2026	Notification of acceptance or rejection will be sent by e-mail to all authors. Accepted proposals may be accompanied by comments.
05 November 2026	Accepted full papers and presentations must be submitted.
18 - 20 November 2026	The 2026 European Quality Assurance Forum takes place in Yerevan, Armenia, hosted by the National Polytechnic University of Armenia. Full text of presented papers will be posted on the EQAF website and allocated an ISSN number.

EQAF 2026 PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

ENQA:	Eva Fernandez de Labastida and Jakub Brdulak
ESU:	Gaga Gvenetadze and Urszula Lis
EUA:	Maria Kelo and Michael Hofer
EURASHE:	Anca Priscariu and Sylvie Navarre
Academic advisor:	Daniela Craciun

Annex 1: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

1. I would like to present the QA system in place in my institution. Should I choose to submit a paper or a workshop?

Answer: Workshops are based on interactivity with the audience (e.g. on the use of specific QA tools in different national and institutional contexts), and should not consist of one or a series of paper-like presentations. If you wish to collect feedback from other institutional contexts on, for example, a tool that you would like to implement within your institution, a workshop might be a good solution. Please be aware that a workshop lasts twice as long as a paper session and you will have to propose activities and sustain a lively discussion with your audience for 90 minutes.

If you wish to present a paper, please bear in mind that, if selected, your paper presentation should provide a substantial basis for sustaining a lively discussion among the audience. The paper should therefore be self-reflective and provide a basis for broadening perspectives beyond your own institutional approach.

2. May I co-author a paper with someone from outside my institution?

Answer: Proposals submitted jointly by two or several authors are very welcome. You are free to co-author it either with someone from your institution or someone from another institution/organisation. As an example, a joint paper presenting a reform from both the point of view of a QA agency and that of an institution, or on a QA procedure from the perspective of an institution and its students, would be highly welcome and of interest to the audience of the Forum.

3. Can authors selected under the call for contributions be funded to participate in EQAF?

Answer: The EQAF organisers do not fund participation. Should a proposal be accepted, the presenter's institution often covers the Forum fee as well as travel to the event. However, one reduced fee will be granted to each selected paper and workshop at EQAF. This will be applied through a special registration process after the selection of papers and workshops is finalised.

4. I am based in an institution that is located outside Europe. May I still submit a proposal under the call for contributions?

Answer: Yes. Your proposal will be reviewed on the same basis and following the same criteria as all other proposals (see call for contributions for the list of evaluation criteria for each category of proposal). Please also consider the answer to question 3 related to funding for attending EQAF.

5. I am a student. May I also participate in this call for contributions?

Answer: You are most welcome to submit a proposal. We strongly encourage student participation in EQAF and reduced registrations fees are available for students.

6. I do not work in higher education but would like to submit a contribution on quality assurance as a transversal topic. Would that be possible?

Answer: It depends on how your proposal will address quality assurance. EQAF specifically focuses on quality assurance in higher education and all proposals selected under the call for contributions should be related, in one way or another, to this specific field. It might therefore not be the right platform if you intend to discuss a generic quality assurance management tool.

7. Will all proposals selected under this call for contributions be published automatically?

Answer: During the Forum, PowerPoint presentations from workshop, paper and poster presentation sessions will be published on the Forum event page. The full text of all papers will also be published, unless the authors request otherwise. The webpage on which they are published will be assigned an ISSN number.

8. What should I do after my proposal is selected?

Answer: In September, you will be notified by email about whether your proposal has been accepted. This email will indicate how you should then proceed.

9. Are papers that have been already published elsewhere eligible under this call for contributions?

Answer: Yes. Please however indicate on your submission form where and when it was published. Your proposal should still fulfil the evaluation criteria as stated in the call for contributions, and be of relevance for EQAF participants.

10. What is the evaluation procedure?

Answer: The evaluation procedure works as follows: each proposal is reviewed separately by two different members of the EQAF Programme Committee from different backgrounds, taking into account potential conflicts of interest and imperatives of impartiality. In practice this means that submissions from QA agencies are not reviewed by the ENQA representatives on the Programme Committee, contributions from universities are not reviewed by the EUA representatives on the Programme Committee, and so forth.

Reviewers are also asked to declare any conflict of interest when they receive their contributions to be reviewed and an alternative reviewer will be found if necessary. Each reviewer will give a score according to a standard scale for grading, and provide comments as necessary. The EQAF Programme Committee then meets to discuss and decide on the final selection based on scores given to contributions, the maximum number of proposals to be selected for each type of contribution, and the need to ensure a balanced programme.

11. Besides the evaluation criteria as announced in the call for contributions, are there other criteria that I should be aware of?

Answer: All proposals that fulfil the formal requirements as stated in the call for contributions will be reviewed according to the evaluation criteria. In addition, as is usual practice in academia, the reviewers will not evaluate any proposal that presents serious distortions to the basic principles for original contributions, i.e. papers with examples of plagiarism or copyright issues.

12. Will the organisers collect feedback from participants about my session?

Answer: The organisers do not collect feedback from participants about individual paper/workshop/poster presentation sessions. However, the presenters/facilitators are free to collect feedback from the participants of their session themselves.

For any further questions, please contact eqaf@eua.eu.