

PARIS,  
JUNE 19, 2023

**CONTACTS HCÉRES**  
Maria Bonnafous-Boucher  
T. +33 (0)1 55 55 63 85  
maria.bonnafous-  
boucher@hceres.fr

Sophie Guillet  
T. +33 (0)1 55 55 62 81  
sophie.guillet@hceres.fr

**CONTACTS UKÄ**  
Maria Wikse  
maria.wikse@uka.se  
  
Nina Bandmann  
nina.bandmann@uka.se

## CLOSER COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES HCÉRES (FRANCE) AND UKÄ (SWEDEN)

The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education in France, Hcéres, and the Swedish Higher Education Authority, UKÄ, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in June 2023. The MoU is a formal agreement that illustrates the already significant collaboration between the two agencies. Among other things, the agencies have applied for and launched a working group on Quality Assurance of Research through the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, ENQA. In addition, Hcéres and UKÄ have exchanged experiences and methodological approaches of common interest in the field of quality assessment of the higher education institutions and research bodies they review. They wish to go further and have planned visits of representatives of UKÄ in France and the Hcéres in Sweden in order to observe the functioning of each agency and to exchange good practices.

*"The Hcéres is delighted to have signed an MoU with UKÄ. This will be a great asset for both agencies which will learn from each other and work hand in hand on research assessment, a topic that is key to the development of the European higher education and research areas."*

*Maria Bonnafous-Boucher, Director of the Department for European and International Affairs (Hcéres)*

In March 2023 the ENQA Board approved a proposal by Hcéres and UKÄ to co-chair a working group on this theme, with support from ENQA. The group will explore the state of the art of the assessment of research-based learning, institutions' research policy and quality assurance processes of research.

Higher education and research are part of the missions common to all higher education institutions, even though they are accomplished in different ways from one institution to another. The synergies between research and higher education are key to training enlightened students who are able to face the challenges of the 21st century. With the European student-centred approach, recognised benefits of tighter links between higher education and research may include: developing cross-disciplinary and scientific skills, acquiring critical thinking skills to counter the rise of fake news, acquiring up-to-date knowledge, understanding the changing needs of society, etc.

In addition, only a subset of quality assurance agencies perform institutional quality assurance processes for research. Hence there is limited knowledge on how reviews that target quality assurance processes for research can help to ensure and improve research quality. The proposed working group could thus make up for the knowledge gap between agencies concerning quality assurance procedures for higher education and research, respectively.

The working group will be co-chaired by Hcéres and UKÄ, two agencies which have experience in research assessment and quality assurance processes for research and

**HCÉRES**  
The High Council for evaluation of research and higher education (Hcéres) is the independent public authority in charge of evaluating all higher education and research structures in France, or validating the evaluation procedures carried out by other bodies.

have already shared good practices together. The workplan, including working methods, timeline and outputs, will be agreed by all members of the working group in the first meeting. The call for interest was recently launched by ENQA and the working group aims to have its first meeting in the Autumn of 2023.

*"We are very pleased with the already on-going collaboration with Hcéres and are looking forward to deepening it through the MoU and the ENQA working group that we will chair together. With the other ENQA agencies in the group, we hope to make great progress in how to enhance quality assurance processes of research in Europe."*

*Annika Pontén, Acting director of UKÄ*

Participating agencies will have the opportunity to share their experience, learn from other agencies and contexts, and further explore the contribution that agencies can make to the quality assurance of research and the links between research, learning and teaching. In addition, group members will produce concrete outputs that may inform, inspire and support and be a resource for the whole ENQA membership.