



European University Association

Institutional Evaluation Programme

Follow-up evaluation:
Guidelines for Universities
and
Evaluation Teams

2009

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INTRODUCTION

This document sums up the main points concerning the implementation of the follow-up process and the preparation of the follow-up visit. They cover the following:

- I Aims of the follow-up process
- II Main steps of the process:
 - Registration
 - Self-evaluation report
 - Organisation of the visit (and sample schedule)
 - Final report

AIMS OF THE FOLLOW-UP PROCESS

Institutions that have gone through the EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) have the possibility of requesting *a follow-up evaluation* two to four years after the initial evaluation. This allows these institutions – and IEP – to identify the impact that the initial evaluation has had on the institution's development, investigate the experiences gained from changes implemented after the initial evaluation and give further impetus for change.

The exact form of the follow-up evaluation depends on the specific situation in each institution. Generally, it takes account of new changes in the educational environment, the progress made by the institution in implementing the reforms while examining the challenges and obstacles faced, etc.

Implementing an evaluation operation is very costly in terms of resources and human energy. If there are few beneficial consequences, staff (at all levels) may lose confidence in quality management as a tool for institutional development and become resistant to further necessary change. Thus, the follow-up process can be a helpful opportunity for the institution to review what has happened since the initial evaluation process was concluded; to make the progress made better known within the community and the thus motivate the staff and students.

The institutional leadership should use the momentum created by the evaluation and the corresponding institutional dynamics in order to launch reforms. The challenge is then to sustain the movement towards change and to avoid going back to business as usual; in particular when resistance starts to appear at all levels. Through the follow-up process the institutional leadership may also get new impetus for change if necessary.

MAIN STEPS OF THE PROCESS

The following steps should be seen as a template for the follow-up process, to which IEP has a flexible approach. That is, the process can be adapted to the specific needs of the institution.

2.1 Registration

A **registration** for a follow-up evaluation will:

- Contain a brief statement (1-2 pages) giving reasons for the registration and stating the institution's expectations of the process
- Identify a staff person who will serve as liaison with the IEP Secretariat and the evaluation team

2.2 Self-evaluation process and report

The institution will prepare a short **report** (around 10 pages) outlining what has happened since the initial IEP evaluation report was delivered and addressing the following points:

- Recent or foreseeable developments at regional or national level (legislation, budgeting, and the institution's actual or planned strategic response to these, etc.)
- Internal and external reactions to the outcomes of the evaluation process (which implies an evaluation of the effectiveness of the whole process, including the IEP team's activity.)
- Analysis of which recommendations have been implemented and which not

- Main reforms proposed and implemented
- Ensuing problems and failures (if any), and analysis of the obstacles that were faced
- New initiatives envisaged or implemented (e.g., a strategic plan, internal quality procedures)
- How has the institution's capacity for change and adaptability developed since the first evaluation? (e.g., refinement of strategic planning process; interface mechanisms with stakeholders; environmental scanning processes, strategic personnel policies, etc.)
- The key issues i.e. **the levers for further changes** that should be discussed during the visit

The institution will ensure that the self-evaluation report is in line with its expectations as appears in the brief statement of motivation provided in the application.

Note that during the site visit **special attention will be given to the role of institutional leaders at different levels** (rectorate, faculties, departments, etc.) in the follow up of the evaluation process: how have they been involved in the design and implementation of change?

This report will help the evaluation team to focus on the real needs, e.g.: Is there need for a further impetus for more reforms? Are there new developments impinging on the implementation of reforms proposed in the initial evaluation? How difficulties arising from the proposed reforms may be overcome? etc.

The self-evaluation report will be **submitted a month before** the planned visit to the IEP Secretariat and to the evaluation team. The team may seek further information or clarification as required. If this is the case, the institution will have the opportunity to respond in brief written statements. At this stage the evaluation team may propose some elements of a programme for the visit to the institution.

Appendices will typically include the following:

- The current Institutional Strategic Plan (if one exists) or preferably, an Executive Summary (in English, if that exists)
- An organisational chart of the institution's faculties (or any other relevant units of teaching/research)
- An organisational chart of the central administration and support services (rector's office staff, libraries etc.)
- An organisational chart of the management structure (rector, council/senate, faculty deans and councils, major committees, etc.)
- Student numbers for the whole institution, with a breakdown by faculty, over the last three to five years; student/staff ratio (lowest, highest and mean ratios); time-to-graduation; drop-out rates; gender distribution by faculty; demographic trends in the wider target population
- Academic staff numbers (by academic rank and faculty) for the whole institution, over the last three to five years, with a breakdown by level, discipline, gender and age
- Funding: government funding (amount and percentage of total budget), other funding sources (type and percentage of total budget) and research funding (percentage within total budget); amount of institutional funding for teaching and research per faculty over the last three to five years
- Infrastructure in relation to the number of students and staff: number and size of buildings, facilities, laboratories, and libraries; their location (e.g., dispersed over a large geographical area or concentrated on a single campus); condition of the facilities
- Handbook for prospective international students (if one exists).

In addition to the self-evaluation report, IEP secretariat will also provide the team with the original evaluation report for background information.

2.3 Site visit

The next step is a **site visit to the institution by an evaluation team**, which consists, in principle, of **the chairperson and the team coordinator of the initial evaluation team plus two new members**, including a student, who will bring fresh insights. The evaluation team will pay special attention to the role of institutional leadership in the follow up to the institutional evaluation.

The evaluation team coordinator will agree with the institution's liaison person the arrangements for the visit, both its schedule and content. The annex offers a **sample schedule**, which can be used as a basis for the planning of the meeting. However, institutions and evaluation teams should bear in mind that it is **only a suggestion and can be modified as appropriate** taking into consideration the size and structure as well as the themes to be addressed by the evaluation.

The IEP Secretariat will contact the institution in time for the practical details to be arranged, approximately 4 weeks before the visit.

a- Main focus of the follow-up visit

The visiting team will look at:

- i) the **past**: the period that followed the institutional report, asking about the main changes introduced – deriving or *not* from the IEP evaluation process
- ii) the **forgotten issues**: those questions that the initial evaluation report raised and that have not been part of the on-going process of change
- iii) the **future**: the current transformation agenda, its links with *quality*, and the institution's expectations in terms of a renewed capacity for change.

The team will focus on the *governance* aspects, i.e., the **strategic management** of institutional quality by the leadership group. Thus, it will meet the change actors, inside or outside the institution, taking into account the institution's expected or desirable development. In other words, the follow-up process offers a *dynamic analysis* of the current understanding of strategic and quality developments in the institution.

Items i) and ii) are not considered *statically*, as simple evidence of past records, but will provide information on the **quality of IEP** evaluation procedures, as well as an **impact analysis** of the evaluation on the institution.

b- Main elements of the visit programme

In order to facilitate a growing awareness for the need for change, the follow-up visit will be organised in a slightly different way to the initial evaluation. **Three moments** will structure the follow-up process:

- A **meeting** with the current rector (who might not be the same as at the time of the initial evaluation) and with the leadership group in charge of the institution's strategic development. The aim of this meeting is get an overview of past achievements, discuss blockages and hopes for the future in terms of the institution's quality organisation and strategic planning in the context of the external changes (e.g. legal framework, economic conditions, etc) that have taken place since the initial evaluation. This discussion will identify those areas of action representing the key levers of institutional change, today or in the future, i.e., develop a possible *agenda for change*.
- A series of **interviews** with the change agents responsible for implementing action in key strategic areas, examining each domain in terms of opportunities and obstacles met – or to be met. The team will meet with staff (alone) and students (alone). This will allow for an assessment of the present *capacity for change*;
- An **oral report** for the institutional leadership group in order to take stock of the institutional growth potential and of the policies and human resources that are needed to unlock this potential of quality in the most appropriate manner. The composition of the group will be agreed with the rector: it is highly recommended that the group is as wide as possible.

The oral report can be organised as a **forum discussion**. In order to facilitate a broad discussion of the changes, needs, opportunities and threats that present a challenge to the institution's development, IEP suggests including a forum discussion, grouping all key players in the institution. This forum discussion presents an opportunity to bring together groups across the institution that normally have little occasion to meet. The discussion will be structured along three or four key strategic areas for action. Each area could be briefly mapped by one of the IEP team members, before launching into a general discussion of the potential growth and transformation of the institution.

Please make sure the schedule for the visit is finalised at least two weeks before the visit.

For the IEP team to play its catalyst role best, the visit needs to last **two and a half days**. Indeed, the team will need time not only to meet institutional leaders and change actors but also to prepare the various stages of the follow-up visit by holding private discussions. Please note that the team will meet fewer people than during the original review process and should have **much more time for private discussions** in order to *steer the follow-up visit as it proceeds*.

Finally, the team coordinator's role is also important, not only to arrange the logistics of the visit but also to prepare the follow-up process in consultation with the rector and the team members: two weeks before the actual visit, a **provisional list** of the **areas to be discussed** and of the **people to be interviewed** should be ready, on the basis of the follow-up self-evaluation report prepared by the institution. These suggestions will need to be confirmed, amended or completed on the spot as the visit proceeds. This also implies that the institution should ensure that all institutional key players are present for this visit and available in case the visit schedule needs to be amended.

c- Sequence of the visit programme

On day 0, the team will arrive in the late afternoon in order to exchange views on the situation analysed in the follow-up report and compare it with the initial IEP evaluation report. In addition, the team will decide on any changes which would need to be introduced to the draft programme and will plan and decide on the main issues, the themes to be presented in order to launch the debate, the arguments that could be drawn from the initial evaluation report (mainly the "forgotten" recommendations), the change actors to be called in, as well as the distribution of roles among the IEP team members.

At the dinner with the rector and the liaison person the aim is to check the arrangements and to discuss generally the key areas to be addressed during the visit.

On day I, the team will conduct a series of meetings with various groups, gathering representatives of the different levels of the institution, e.g., rector, self-evaluation team, deans, administrative staff, students, etc.

The evening should be kept free for the team to review the day's programme and briefing.

On day II, in the morning the team continues to meet various groups representing the university community. In the mid-afternoon the team will then retire to shape the oral report. The team will *draw the lessons* of the exercise in terms of quality and impact of:

- the initial evaluation
- the new impetus for change provided during the early part of the follow-up visit
- the future development of change processes in the institution

On that basis, the team members will be able to discuss the results of the follow-up process and identify recommendations for change.

On day III, the evaluation team presents the oral report to the members of a **forum**, which brings together the team and all those involved in the evaluation process, to learn about the recommendations selected after the initial IEP evaluation, the quality norms decided upon, the intervening constraints, the change patterns – positive and negative – and future aspirations. Departure of the team members should be planned for the afternoon.

The schedule in annex is provided as an example: IEP remains flexible in order to ensure that the process fully meets the institution's needs.

2.4 Final report

The visit will be followed by a **brief report to the institution** written by the IEP team summing up the lessons drawn from the exercise, presenting an analysis of past changes and blockages and the suggestions made by the members of the institution for their further adaptation to change. The report will be submitted to the rector in draft form, for factual corrections, before it is finalised.

Please note that, as of 2008-2009, IEP publishes final evaluation reports on its web-site (www.eua.be/IEP).

The table below summarises the key milestones and division of tasks during the report-writing stage.

Indicative timeframe and division of labour		
Task	Main responsibility	Time Frame
Write draft report	Team coordinator	6 weeks after the visit
Comment on draft	Evaluation team	Within 2 weeks
Send redraft to IEP staff	Team coordinator	Within 2 weeks
Edit	Editor	Within 1 week
Comment on new draft	Team coordinator (if necessary, in consultation with the team chair)	Within 2 weeks
Send report to institution	IEP secretariat	ASAP
Institution corrects factual errors	Rector	Within 3 weeks
Any change + sending final report to institution + publishing it on IEP website (www.eua.be/IEP)	IEP secretariat (if necessary, in consultation with the team chair and coordinator)	Within 2 weeks

ANNEX: SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR THE FOLLOW-UP VISIT

<i>Time</i>	<i>What & who?</i>	<i>Why?</i>
DAY 0		
Late afternoon	Arrival of evaluation team	
60 minutes	Briefing meeting Evaluation team alone	Division of tasks, preliminary discussion of evaluation report structure and issues
Evening	Dinner Evaluation team, with rector and liaison person	Get to know one another, discussion about recent and anticipated changes, and the key areas to be addressed during the visit; review what is expected from the evaluation team and from the rector

DAY 1		
9.00 – 10.00	Meeting with rector Evaluation team, rector	Discuss <i>privately</i> the follow-up report
10.15 – 11.15	Meeting with self-evaluation steering group Self-evaluation group	To introduce the evaluation team to the institution and discuss the key issues
11.13 – 12.30	Meeting with the deans Deans' Council or deans from several faculties	Discuss the impact of the IEP evaluation report and the present (and future) key elements of the institutional development, mainly in terms of the capacity for change
12.40 – 14.00	Lunch Evaluation team, liaison person	Reflect upon impressions of the morning and complete information as necessary
14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with central office staff members	Discuss the impact of the IEP evaluation report and the present (and future) key elements of the institutional development, mainly in terms of the capacity for change
15.10 – 16.00	Meeting with senate Senate representatives	As above
16.00 – 16.45	Meeting with student delegation Student representatives (with no staff present)	As above
17.00 – 18.00	Meeting with outside partners (Industry, society and/or local authorities)	Discuss relationships of institution with external stakeholders of private and public sector

18.00 – 19.00	Debriefing meeting Evaluation team alone	Exchange impressions, review the day
Evening	Dinner Evaluation team alone	Reflect on impressions and start preparing oral report

DAY 2		
9.00 – 10.00	Meeting with the senior leadership	Discuss the impact of the IEP evaluation report and the present (and future) key elements of the institutional development, mainly in terms of the capacity for change
10.00 – 11.00	Meeting with the QA staff QA unit staff and academics responsible for QA issues	Discuss the impact of the IEP evaluation report and the present (and future) key elements of the institutional development, mainly in terms of the capacity for change
11.15 – 12.15	Meeting with heads of departments (together)	Discuss the impact of the IEP evaluation report and the present (and future) key elements of the institutional development, mainly in terms of the capacity for change
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch Evaluation team alone	Evaluation team, alone, to exchange impressions
14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with international researchers and international graduate students	To discuss their experience of the institutions
15.30 – 20.00	Debriefing meeting Evaluation team alone	Exchange impressions, review day and begin drafting the oral report [evaluation team needs a working room in the hotel for this task]
20.00	Dinner Evaluation team alone	Continuation of debriefing meeting
21.00 – 23.00	Drafting oral report Evaluation team alone	[evaluation team needs a working room in the hotel for this task]
DAY 3		
9.00 – 10.00	Concluding meeting with the Rector	Discuss draft oral report <i>with the rector alone</i> , to ensure it reflects the findings of the team as well as the needs of the rector for the institution's further development
10.00 – 10.30	Adapting oral report Evaluation team alone	Adapt oral report according to discussion with rector
10.30 – 12.00	Presentation of oral report Evaluation team, rector and members of the institution (invitations to be decided by the rector, e.g. rectoral team, liaison person, self-evaluation group, senate etc).	
Afternoon	Lunch and departure of evaluation team	