

European University Association

Institutional Evaluation Programme Guidelines

Self-Evaluation and Site Visits

PORTUGAL

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INTRODUCTION AND SCHEDULE

1. Introduction

The EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme is designed to ensure that the higher education institutions that choose to participate in the programme and their stakeholders gain maximum benefit from a comprehensive evaluation conducted by a team of experienced higher education leaders and that the procedures and processes in place in these institutions can be reviewed against best practice internationally. The intention is that these evaluations will support the institutions in the continuing development of their quality assurance procedures to meet best standards and practices.

2. Evaluation Process

The EUA aims to strengthen institutional autonomy and support institutional change in higher education institutions. In keeping with this approach, the evaluations have a formative orientation (i.e., contributing to the development and improvement of the institutions' strategic and quality management) rather than a summative one (i.e., passing judgements for accountability purposes). Its aim is to reinforce institutional development by disseminating examples of good practice in the areas of internal quality management and strategic change.

The EUA offers a number of services to its member institutions, such as management and leadership seminars, a variety of workshops and conferences, a range of relevant publications, and the opportunity to participate in special projects such as the "Quality Culture Project" which aims to develop internal quality cultures in higher education institutions.

The EUA will evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the participating institutions' quality assurance procedures and the implementation of findings arising out of the application of those procedures, in the context of their overall institutional decision making and strategic planning. Thus, the EUA evaluation will examine the following areas:

- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic planning
- Relevance of internal quality processes and degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic planning as well as perceived gaps in the internal mechanisms processes.

These key elements will be placed within an institutional analysis that will examine decision-making processes and will allow the evaluation team to comment on institutional obstacles and success factors for an effective internal quality management.

In addition, institutions have the possibility to select a specific focus for a more in-depth investigation and recommendations. This focus will be evaluated within the institutional context and constitute a separate heading in the evaluation report.

3. Terms of reference

3.1 Introduction

A system wide extensive, independent, voluntary and objective review of Portuguese higher education institutions (universities and polytechnics, public and private, and their units) will be conducted following international criteria and paying special attention to governance mechanisms, access rules, institutional autonomy, funding, internationalisation and other relevant higher education policies.

This review exercise complements the responsibilities awarded to the higher education institutions and to the quality assurance agencies under the national evaluation law (Law

38/94, 21 November; Article 9, n. 3). The goal is to facilitate the establishment of institutional evaluation routines following the best European practice.

The EUA is the leading European agency for institutional evaluation and has conducted a very large number of evaluations not only in Europe but also in other continents (North America, Latin America and Africa). Some of the Portuguese universities¹ were already evaluated by the EUA and of them a few went through the follow-up process.

The MCTES will facilitate an institutional evaluation programme for Portuguese institutions (up to about ten per year, as determined in a voluntary basis) that wish to gain institutional evaluation experience and to have an international supportive institutional evaluation by EUA aiming at improving management practices and quality assurance procedures. This exercise is designed to ensure that the higher education system and its stakeholders gain maximum benefit from comprehensive evaluations by teams of experienced international experts and that the procedures and processes in place in the Portuguese higher education system can be benchmarked against best practice internationally.

The review is taking place in the wider context of:

- the Government's strategic objective to guarantee a system of higher education fully integrated at European level, namely in terms of quality, levels of participation and employability of graduates;
- the Government's commitment to support efforts to protect and improve the quality of academic teaching and learning, in a way that will foster participation in international networks of higher education and the full recognition of Portuguese higher education institutions and degrees;
- the Government's acknowledgement that the challenges of maintaining quality, responsiveness and competitiveness in higher education are a major priority against the background of unprecedented levels of expansion, change and diversification in the sector in Portugal;
- the Government's strategy of promoting a diversified system of higher education, coping with heterogeneous publics and able to enlarge the overall number of students in Portugal, in a way that will foster quality at the various types of institutions (i.e., both polytechnics² and universities);
- the Government's commitment to acknowledge the increasing importance of research, development and innovation for the knowledge society, to further support research and development in the higher education sector to achieve the highest international standards and to promote the transfer of outcomes of this research aiming at better supporting social, cultural and economic progress and maintaining the integral connection between research and teaching and their balanced development in higher education institutions.
- the Government's commitment to develop quality assurance procedures and processes, in line with best international practice and to facilitate the conduct of reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance agencies, their procedures and their outcomes;
- the Government's commitment to increase the access of new publics to higher education and to increase the provision of lifelong education.

¹ Universidade de Aveiro; Universidade do Minho; Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Universidade de Lisboa; Universidade Nova de Lisboa; Universidade Técnica de Lisboa; Universidade do Porto and Universidade do Algarve.

² In Portugal the term Polytechnics is used to characterise what is generally known as non-university higher education institutions.

3.2 Legislative Background

The Government, through the MCTES, establishes and implements procedures for quality assurance, and arranges for a review of the effectiveness of these procedures, under the evaluation law (Law n. 38/94, 21 November, followed by Decree-Law n. 205/98, of 11 July and Decree-Law n. 88/2001, of 23 March) and/or other legislative instruments in force at the time of the review.

The *National Council for the Evaluation of Higher Education*, CNAVES, has a statutory function (Decree-Law n. 205/98, 11 July) to assist and assure the credibility of the process of higher education evaluation, and to review and report on the quality assurance procedures.

The evaluation law (Law n. 38/94, 21 November) determines that the evaluation of higher education includes procedures of self- and external-evaluation, with the latter attributed to "Representative Institutions, which include:

- The *Foundation of Portuguese Universities* (FUP)
- The *Portuguese Association of Polytechnic Institutes* (ADISPOR)
- The *Portuguese Association of Private Higher Education* (APESP)

In addition, these procedures should be complemented by an overall evaluation of the system of higher education (Law n. 38/94, 21 November; Article 9, n. 3), which has never been made.

The accreditation of the higher education system has been attributed (through Law 1/2003, of 6 January; article 36, n.3) to the Institutions also in charge of the evaluation process, but its practice has not been regulated and, therefore could not be implemented. As a result, the accreditation of the higher education system needs to be designed, regulated and implemented following current trends at European and international levels.

3.3 Objectives

The maintenance of a high quality internationally benchmarked higher education sector is an essential pre-requisite to achieve the Government's stated objective of placing Portugal's higher education among the top European performers.

The assessment exercise will be open to all the Portuguese higher education institutions, both public and private, university and polytechnic institutions. The exercise will place special focus on the following topics:

- the main positive and negative characteristics of the Portuguese higher education institutions in a European context, as well as their efficiency and development status;
- the level of institutional autonomy and the governance and management mechanisms with suggestions for improvement;
- the institutional capacity for adaptation and change with emphasis on strategies for answering to the increasing challenges to higher education institutions;
- the access to higher education, including the way students are recruited, the mechanisms of admission and the extent to which it has complied with emerging challenges for life-long learning and the need to increase the knowledge-base of the Portuguese population as well as the opening of higher education to new publics;
- the exit mechanisms from the higher education system, including the type and relevance of the available diplomas.
- the methodologies and procedures used for resource allocation and the level of funding;

- recommendations to foster the institutions' rationalisation and diversification.

3.4 Terms of the Agreement

Institutional evaluations will be required directly to *European University Association* (EUA) by the Portuguese higher education institutions (universities and polytechnics, public and private) and will be conducted by the EUA with the assistance of the *European Association of Institutions of Higher Education* (EURASHE), and experts from the US and/or Canada and/or Australia.

The main objective of this task is providing both the national quality assurance agencies and the higher education institutions with institutional evaluation experience following the best European practice. This process will assist the Portuguese higher education institutions in improving their governance and management mechanisms and in developing their quality assurance procedures to meet the best standards and practices, as well as help developing a national system for higher education accreditation following best worldwide practices.

The MCTES will lay down the rules of an annual tender to provide financial support to the Portuguese higher education institutions in order to facilitate the institutional evaluations.

The review of individual institutions will follow the EUA's standard practice for institutional review. However the individual reviews need to pay special attention to those topics allowing the EUA to produce a final national report addressing the following topics:

- the main positive and negative characteristics of the Portuguese higher education institutions in a European context, as well as their efficiency and development status;
- the level of institutional autonomy and the governance and management mechanisms with suggestions for improvement;
- the institutional capacity for adaptation and change with emphasis on the strategies for answering to the increasing challenges to higher education institutions, namely to employ new teaching staff and researchers;
- the access to higher education, including the way students are recruited, the mechanisms of admission and the extent to which it has complied with emerging challenges for life-long learning and the need to increase the knowledge-base of the Portuguese population and to help opening higher education to new publics;
- the exit mechanisms from the higher education system, including the type and relevance of the available diplomas;
- the methodologies and procedures used for resource allocation and the level of funding;
- recommendations to foster the institutions' rationalisation and diversification;
- the network capacity, namely links with other higher education institutions and with social and industrial actors;
- the capacity to facilitate employment opportunities;
- the balance between research and teaching.

3.5 Review approach

Institutional evaluations are required directly and in a voluntary basis to EUA by the Portuguese higher education institutions. It is intended that about ten institutions will be evaluated over the first year, taking into consideration the diversity of the Portuguese Higher Education system. This will require considering public and private, university and polytechnic institutions and combining "first-time" evaluations with "follow-up" evaluation processes (in cases where the "first-time" evaluation was performed within the past four years). The exercise shall progress over the next years.

3.6 Guidelines

The review will follow the EUA's guidelines for institutional reviews unless EUA decides to introduce the necessary changes to increase the focus of the review on the topics referred to in these terms of reference. The visits should include contacts with students, teachers, and non-teaching staff, as well as external institutions (e.g., trade unions, enterprises, governmental organizations).

3.7 Outcomes

Institutional draft reports

The EUA will provide each individual institution with a draft report based on the visit to the institution. The institution may respond following the EUA's standard practice.

Institutional final reports

The EUA will provide each individual institution with a final report following the EUA's standard practice. All final reports will be made publicly available.

4. Evaluation Process and Indicative Timeframe

Stage 1: March – April 2006

- The EUA establishes an evaluation team of quality assurance experts comprising eminent institutional leaders. This particular combination will provide the adequate mix of skills, knowledge, objectivity and international perspective.
- The EUA secretariat briefs the expert panel members and introduces them to the specific issues and challenges facing higher education.
- The EUA provides the participating institutions with a set of guidelines: Commencement of institutional preparation for evaluation.
- The participating institutions have the option of attending a seminar organised by EUA to present and discuss the proposed objectives of the evaluation and to plan the process

Stage 2: April 2006 - November 2006

- The participating institutions provide the EUA with a self-evaluation report following the EUA guidelines. This is a crucial phase in the evaluation in which careful consideration is given to maximise the engagement of the university/institutional community. A self-evaluation process that is carried out thoughtfully optimises the benefits of all subsequent stages in the evaluation.
- The evaluation teams make a site visit to each institution and requests any additional information as appropriate

Stage 3: November - December 2006

- Each institution submits any follow-up reports or data as requested by the evaluation teams

Stage 4: December 2006 – March 2007

- The evaluation teams make a second site visit to each institution

Stage 5: March 2007 – May 2007

- The EUA presents the written report to each institution for comments on factual errors
- The EUA sends the finalised report to each institution, which is encouraged to publish it.

The EUA secretariat is ready to work with each institution to adapt this timeframe to specific circumstances.

Time frame and division of labour for the evaluation report-writing stage		
Task	Responsibility	Time Frame
Write draft report	Team secretary and chair	6 weeks after main visit
Comment on draft	Evaluation team	within 2 weeks
Send redraft to EUA	Secretary	within 2 weeks
Edit	EUA Editor	within 1 week
Team comment on editing	Secretary (if necessary, in consultation with the team chair)	within 2 weeks
Send report to institution	EUA	ASAP
Institution reacts to EUA	Rector	within two weeks
Any change + sending final report to institution	EUA (if necessary, in consultation with the team chair and secretary)	within two weeks

SELF-EVALUATION: PROCESS AND REPORT

The first step in the evaluation is to produce a self-evaluation report. In this context, it is important to distinguish the *process* of self-evaluation from the self-evaluation *report*:

- The self-evaluation *process* is a collective institutional reflection and an opportunity for quality enhancement of any aspect that is part of the self-evaluation process.
- The self-evaluation *report* provides information to the evaluation team, with emphasis on the institution's strategic and quality management activities.

The goals of both the *process* and the *report* are to enhance the institutional capacity for improvement and change through self-reflection.

1. The self-evaluation steering committee

To ensure the success of the self-evaluation, the institution sets up a steering committee that represents a broad view of the institution rather than a partial view of its management. The steering committee should have the following characteristics:

- its members are in a good position to judge strengths and weaknesses
- the group is small (no more than 10) to ensure that it is efficient
- it represents the major constituencies in the institution (academic staff, students, and administrative staff) to maximise involvement of all major stakeholders
- it selects a secretary to write the report under the chairperson's responsibility (cf. below)

The steering committee will be led by a chairperson whose responsibilities include:

- Planning and co-ordinating the work of the self-evaluation group: e.g., tailoring the checklist (cf. 3) to the national context and the particular institution, gathering and analysing the data; co-ordinating the work of any sub-committee
- Providing opportunities for a broad discussion of the self-evaluation within the institution to promote a broad identification with the report
- Acting as a contact person with the evaluation team and the EUA Secretariat

The leadership of the institution will:

- Clarify the responsibility of the steering committee towards staff members who are not on the team, i.e., the steering committee should not work in isolation but seek, through institution-wide discussions, to present as broad a view as possible of the institution.
- Support and encourage the process along by explaining its worth and allaying fears.

The self-evaluation will result in a report submitted to the evaluation team under the responsibility of the institutional leadership. This does not mean that the institutional

leadership, or all actors in the institution, agree with all statements in the self-evaluation report.

It is essential to the success of the self-evaluation process that information is circulated widely in the institution about the procedure, goals and benefits of the exercise.

2. Purpose and handling of the checklist

Since the checklist (cf. 3) will be used both for the self-evaluation and the external evaluation, it is important that all points on the list be addressed. If some questions are not relevant or if specific pieces of information are impossible to provide, this should be noted in relation to the questions. As a general rule, an answer or comment should be given to every question.

It is expected that each question will be interpreted and assessed keeping in mind the characteristics of the national system and the institution involved. Therefore, it might be helpful for the self-evaluation steering committee to tailor the checklist to the specific objectives of the institution before starting its work.

Every item of the self-evaluation will consist of both a description and analysis including comments on how the institution plans to remedy problems identified. The evaluation team will validate facts and evaluations at a later stage.

The general context for the analysis, both at the self-evaluation and at the external evaluation stage, will be the extent to which the institution's mission and goals have been met. Specifically, the self-evaluation is intended to address four strategic questions:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does the institution know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

These are the questions that should be constantly kept in mind during both the self-evaluation and the external evaluation phases.

3. The checklist

Because the evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of institutional arrangements, including internal quality processes, it must start with the general institutional context before proceeding to examine more specific aspects. Thus, the checklist is structured into three (or four) major parts:

- Its starting points are the institutional norms and values, the activities designed to meet the institutional mission and the decision-making processes.
- Once this context is in place, the self-evaluation report considers the quality processes.
- The last section of the checklist considers the capacity for change, with the goal of engaging the institution into a discussion of gaps in quality processes, in the context of its future strategic goals.
- A fourth - optional - section considers a specific aspect, selected by the institution, for more in-depth consideration.

3.1 Institutional norms and values

A *What is the institution trying to do?*

A.1 *Mission*

This section focuses on the institution's mission and goals. At this stage, the analytical focus is placed on the norms and goals that the institution has set for itself.

The evaluation team will be particularly interested in the strategic choices the institution makes, with regards to the scope and profile of the institution, more specifically:

- What balance is the institution aiming to achieve in terms of its local, regional, national, and international positioning?
- What should be the institution's policy regarding international relations at European and international levels?
- What balance is the institution aiming to achieve among its teaching, research, and other services?
- What are the institution's academic priorities, i.e., which teaching programmes and areas of research are emphasised?
- What are the institution's preferred didactic approaches (e.g., case-study, problem-based learning, seminars)?
- What is the degree of centralisation and decentralisation that the institution aims for?
- What should be the institution's relationship to its funding agencies (state and others such as research contractors)?
- What should be the institution's relationship to society (external partners, local and regional government) and its involvement in public debate?

A.2 *Constraints and opportunities*

This section focuses on the constraints and opportunities faced by the institution in trying to meet its aims and goals. The approach here should be *evaluative and synthetic* and explain how constraints and opportunities, both internal and external to the institution, affect the institution's mission and goals. Possible issues to be addressed include:

- *Evaluation* of institutional autonomy (given the legal context) with respect to:
 - selection, appointment, promotion and dismissal of academic (teaching and research) and administrative staff
 - selection of students (including adult learners)
 - teaching and learning (creating and closing down faculties, levels of degrees, study programmes, specialities within a study programme, course units, didactic approaches)
 - research (creating and closing down research laboratories, individual and team projects)
 - development of entrepreneurial activities (spin-off companies, science parks, incubators)
 - finance (degree of autonomy in the institutional allocation of government funds, ability to raise its own funds, asset management)
- *Evaluation* of the current regional and national labour-market situation

- *Evaluation* of the 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); age and condition of the facilities
- *Evaluation* of the student/staff ratio (lowest, highest and mean ratios)
- *Evaluation* of other constraints

B *How is the institution trying to do it?*

In practice, the institution carries out its activities (teaching, research, and other services) and management in order to embody its mission and goals (section A.1), while taking into account the specific constraints it faces (section A.2). The inevitable discrepancy between what ought to be (norms and values) and what actually is (specific organisation and activities) indicates the institution's strengths and weaknesses. It is the analysis of strengths and weaknesses that constitutes the next phase of the self-evaluation:

- Academic activities:
 - Analysis of research and educational approaches. This can be brief (with reference, as needed, to appropriate appendices) unless some programmes or approaches, teaching or research units deserve specific mention because they reflect the institution's academic profile (e.g., case-method teaching, problem-based learning, a unique and very large research institute, e-learning, etc.)
 - Analysis of educational programme design and organisation of research activities
 - *Evaluation* of how these programmes and organisational units reflect the mission and goals
- Academically related activities:
 - Analysis of research and technology transfer, continuing education, regional and community service, etc. This can be brief (with reference, as needed, to appropriate appendices) unless some programmes deserve specific mention.
 - Analysis of student support services
 - *Evaluation* of how these programmes and organisational units reflect the mission and goals
- Finance:
 - What is the total budget of the institution, including salaries, contracts, etc.?
 - What percentage is allotted by the State, by student fees, by private sources (research contracts, foundations, etc..)?
 - Is the State allocation a lump sum, or, if not, what percentage of this allocation is ear-marked?
 - What are the amounts allotted to faculties and departments, and by what criteria? Are these amounts defined by the institution?
 - What part of the budget is controlled centrally?
 - What are the proportions that could be used to implement new initiatives?
 - What are the allocation procedures within the institution? Who decides what, and how?
 - Is the institution able to calculate the full costs of research and teaching activities?
 - *Analysis* of strengths and weaknesses and proposed action plan on how to remedy weaknesses and enhance strengths

- Management activities:
 - Description of the management practice: what are the respective roles of central-level administrators, offices and faculties/institutes? Does co-ordination among faculties/institutes take place, and if so how? What does the institutional leadership control and decide? What do the deans of faculty control and decide with respect to:
 - the selection and promotion of academic and administrative staff
 - the selection of students
 - finance
 - academic activities (teaching and learning, research)
 - development of entrepreneurial activities
 - research policies
 - How does the institution involve students in the governance?
 - *Evaluation* of how management practice reflects the institution's mission and goals
 - *Evaluation* of how adequate are the institution's human resources, human resource policy and practice to current and future needs (e.g., age profile, recruitment, promotion, redeployment and staff development)
 - *Analysis* of how the institution involves students in institutional governance
 - *Analysis* of strengths and weaknesses and a proposed action plan on how to remedy weaknesses and enhance strengths

3.2 Quality monitoring and quality management

The question "How does the institution know it works?" refers to the quality monitoring and quality management practices available, and operative, in the institution.

A *Quality monitoring*

Quality monitoring does not refer to rigid "managerial" processes but to any external and internal evaluation process, from individual course evaluation by students to national quality evaluation of research, teaching, international programmes. This includes data gathering and an evaluative judgement concerning the institution's activities.

- How responsibilities for quality monitoring are shared across the institution (e.g., specific structures, specific staff in charge of this area, reporting lines)?
- Is quality monitoring based on explicit quality standards? Are these quality standards widely known and accepted in the institution? Is there a shared culture of quality?
- How adequate are the resources available to support internal quality processes (e.g., financial resources, staff development frameworks)?
- What are the available quality monitoring processes with respect to:
 - Teaching activities
 - Research activities
 - Student performance, including analysis of drop-out rate and time-to-graduation
 - Administrative processes
 - Entrepreneurial activities
 - External relations (local, regional, national and international)
- How regularly are activities monitored?
- How extensive are the collected data?

- To what extent are their outcomes used in decision-making and strategic planning?

B Quality management

How does the institution integrate quality monitoring into institutional policy? For instance, if student course evaluations are carried out, how does the unit concerned (programme, department, etc.) handle the results from these evaluations if they fall outside norms set by the unit? Is there staff development for teachers? If a research institute is assessed regularly by an external body, to what extent does the institute's leadership act on the *proposed recommendations*?

Note that the EUA evaluation teams are not as interested in the existence of extensive policy documents regarding this issue as it is in the actual practice of bringing about change as a result of the evaluation. In other words, focus is placed more on the activity and practice of quality improvement, their effectiveness and relevance, as well as the identification of gaps, and less on elaborate quality handbooks and quality mechanisms.

3.3 Strategic management and capacity for change

How does the institution change in order to improve? So far, the self-evaluation has focused on the detailed description and analysis of quality management at all institutional levels. In this section, the analysis shifts to the role of quality management as a lever for change. Questions to be addressed include:

- How responsive is the institution to the demands, threats and opportunities present in its external environment?
- How are representatives from the external environment involved in the institution's strategic management?
- Which changes can be expected to be made to the institution's aims?
- How can a better match be attained between the current and future missions and aims, and the activities (study programmes, research, etc.)?
- What role do quality monitoring and quality management play in these developments?

3.4 Special units and special focus

To investigate the reality of central level policies with respect to quality and strategic change, the evaluation team will look at how policies are implemented in a few units in the institution (e.g. faculties, research centres, administrative units). Visits to these units are not used to find faults in the units, but to understand through specific examples how central level and basic units are connected. These units will not be acknowledged by name in the evaluation report.

Institutions have also the option of selecting a "special focus" for the evaluation. These can be on such topics as research strategy, teaching and learning, implementing Bologna, etc. As opposed to the visit of specific units which are used as illustration of institutional arrangements, the "special focus" will be investigated on its own ground. In other words, whilst the examination of specific units will not be acknowledged as such in the evaluation report, the "special focus" will be examined within the institutional context and will receive a more in-depth treatment in the evaluation report, including specific recommendations. Annex 3 presents background information on such special foci.

4 The self-evaluation report

The self-evaluation results in a report, one of the key documents, along with the external evaluation report, of the entire process. The self-evaluation report is the main vehicle for the institution to convey information about itself. Equally, and perhaps more importantly, it is the starting point for critical reflection by the institution about the way it is managed and handles quality as a central value in its strategic decision-making.

Therefore, the self-evaluation report should not be simply descriptive, but *evaluative and synthetic* as well. It should evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the context of constraints, threats, and opportunities as well as showing the interconnectedness of the various elements of strategic planning and quality management. In addition, the analysis should take into account changes that have taken place in the recent past as well as ones anticipated in the future.

Given the purpose of the evaluation process, a total assessment of all activities of the institution is not necessary. In addition, if the results of other evaluation procedures of the institution's activities are available, these can also be used.

Thus, as the first step in the evaluation exercise, the self-evaluation report has three major purposes:

- to present a succinct and comprehensive statement of the institution's view of quality management and strategic planning
- to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the institution and to propose a specific action plan
- to provide a framework against which the institution will be assessed by the evaluation team

4.1 Introduction

Brief analysis of the self-evaluation process: Who are the self-evaluation team members? With whom did they collaborate? To what extent was the report discussed across the institution? What were the positive aspects, as well as the difficulties, encountered in the self-evaluation process?

4.2 Institutional context

- Brief presentation of the institution:
 - brief historical overview
 - geographical position of the institution (e.g., in a capital city, major regional centre, concentrated on one campus, dispersed across a city)
 - number of faculties, research institutes/laboratories
 - number and distribution of students across levels (undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate), across faculties, and trends over five years
 - finance: government funding (amount and percentage of total budget), other funding sources (type and percentage of total budget), and research funding (percentage within total budget)

4.3 Body of the report

- The body of the self-evaluation report follows the checklist headings 3.1 through 3.4 and strives to strike a balance between description and analysis. The starting point of the analysis is the institution's mission and goals: it is against these that the institution is assessed. The description is used to substantiate the analysis, and in turn, the analysis illuminates the strengths and weaknesses for each heading.
- The conclusion analyses the strengths and weaknesses and offers a specific action plan to remedy weaknesses and to develop strengths further.

A useful conclusion has the following characteristics:

- Since the goal of the evaluation is to promote ongoing quality improvement, it is advantageous to be as open and as self-reflective as possible. Therefore, strengths and weaknesses need to be stated explicitly; specifically, it is best to avoid de-emphasising or hiding weaknesses.
- Strengths and weaknesses that are not discussed in the body of the report should not suddenly appear in the conclusion as they would be unsubstantiated and could transform the conclusion into a lobbying effort on the part of institution.
- Strengths and weaknesses that are discussed in the main part of the report are addressed again in the conclusion.
- Plans to remedy weaknesses are offered in the conclusion in the form of a specific action plan.

4.4 Appendices

Because the evaluation team is international, institutions are asked to include the following:

- An organisation chart of the institution's faculties (or any other relevant units of teaching/research)
- An organisation chart of the central administration and support services (Rector's office staff, campus maintenance, libraries, etc.)
- An organisation 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; time-to-graduation; drop-out rates
- Academic staff numbers (by academic rank and faculty) for the whole institution, over the last three to five years, with a breakdown by level and discipline
- Indicators of institutional spending on teaching and research per faculty over the last three to five years

Beyond this, the institution is free to add any other information, but is asked to limit the number and length of appendices to what is strictly necessary to understand the statements and argumentation in the self-evaluation report. These data are significant only if they are interpreted in the national and institutional context.

4.5 Practical aspects

- The maximum length of the self-evaluation report is 20 - 25 pages excluding the data appendices and other possible appendices. The reason for this relatively short report is to maintain a focus on institutional strategic quality management without probing too deeply into the specifics of all faculties and all activities. Institutions are encouraged to make use of any existing data and documents.
- The self-evaluation report is written partly for an internal audience (the institution's staff members and students) and partly for the evaluation team. The evaluation team is knowledgeable about higher education in general but, as internationals, they may lack in-depth knowledge of specific national situations. The institution should keep this fact in mind when writing its report.
- EUA and the evaluation team will consider the self-evaluation report as confidential, and will not provide any information regarding this report to third parties. The institution is therefore encouraged to take as open and self-critical approach as possible in the self-evaluation process, in order to make maximum use of the evaluation process.
- The self-evaluation report should be read and signed by the rector before sending it to the evaluation team. This ensures that the institutional leadership is consulted.
- The self-evaluation report should be made available to all institutional members who are to meet the evaluation team.
- The report should be sent to the EUA Secretariat for distribution to the evaluation team at least three weeks prior to the first site visit.

It is of the utmost importance to the running of the project and especially the site visits that deadlines are respected. To ensure this, the self-evaluation team is well advised to plan to meet weekly (e.g., lunch time) for a couple of hours to ensure progress. The self-evaluation report is an ambitious task and requires a substantial time investment.

SITE VISITS

1. Preparing for the site visits

We have stressed that the EUA process is intended to act as a support to develop further the institutions' capacity for change. The evaluators are experienced higher education leaders and administrators and have wide international experience in evaluating higher education institutions. Please view the visits as occasions to use the team's expertise for the institution's benefit. The guidelines and sample programmes for visits should therefore be seen as suggestions that should be adapted to the institution's special needs and circumstances. Please discuss the proposed programme for the visits with the secretary of the evaluation team well in advance. Each institution will be visited twice, as detailed below.

2. Preliminary visit: Agenda and suggested schedules

For the participating institution, the preliminary visit serves the following purposes:

- to get a better understanding of the purpose and procedure of the evaluation process: to enhance the institution's strategic development and management for change through an examination of its internal quality arrangements
- to identify the topics for the main site visit and to set the appropriate tone. An open and self-critical approach is much more helpful for all concerned, most of all the participating institution, than a "public-relation" approach
- to draw the attention of the institution's members to the evaluation. This may lead to better mobilisation and co-operation for the follow-up process throughout the institution

From the point of view of the evaluators, the preliminary visit has the following aims:

- to obtain a broad understanding of the national higher education context
- to develop an understanding of institutional operations in terms of students, staff, finance, facilities and location
- to develop an understanding of the structures and processes of strategic decision-making within the institution (planning, teaching and research, financial flows and personnel policy)
- to develop an understanding of the institution's existing procedures for quality assurance
- to develop a sense of important local issues with respect to strategic management
- to ask for supplemental information to the self-evaluation report
- to develop a programme for the main site visit

Please note that the evaluators will not produce a preliminary report to the institution at this stage.

In addition, the practical arrangements of the main site visit should not be forgotten:

- decide upon dates for the main review visit and overall visit schedule
- decide which faculties and other institutes to visit, which persons to meet, etc.

- visit the working room(s) that the review team will use during the second visit

Note that, contrary to the second (or main) site visit, the preliminary visit is not intended to lead to evaluations or judgements. The evaluation team will not produce an evaluation report at this point. The preliminary visit contributes to the evaluators' understanding of the specific characteristics of the institution. Thus, the preliminary visit should result in a validation of the presentation of the institution's situation, i.e., of the self-evaluation and analysis, and the evaluators should get a broad impression of how the institution operates (decentralisation, co-ordination, etc.).

Therefore, the choice of persons the evaluation team meets is highly important. For the benefit of both the institution and the evaluation team, a representative and diversified sample of the institution's community should take part in the preliminary visit. This includes academic and non-academic staff, as well as different types of students and representatives of external "stakeholders". The evaluation team wishes to meet "average" students and "average" academic staff (i.e., not all should be members of senates or councils).

An indicative list of persons and bodies that the evaluation team should meet includes:

- the rector as well as other members of the rector's team
- the self-evaluation steering group including any sub-group
- representatives of the central staff, mainly from the quality office, international relations office, financial services, staff office, planning unit, co-ordinating unit of research activities, public relations office, etc.
- representatives of external stakeholders and partners (authorities, economy, other actors from society, media, etc.)
- delegation of senate / council
- deans / dean council
- students (undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate)
- one or two faculties, one or two special centres (if any).

To ensure open and frank discussions, it is best to keep the number of participants in each meeting small with no more than three or four persons from the institution, except for students who seem to prefer larger groups, up to ten persons. For the same reason, the institutional liaison person is asked not to be present during all meetings (see sample schedule below). The evaluation team will not report on an individual person's statements.

The preliminary visit lasts two days and involves the three evaluators and the team secretary. A sample schedule for the preliminary visit is presented below but other options are also possible in consultation with the evaluation team secretary.

The sample schedule includes parallel visits to four faculties. Please note that:

- Faculty is used here in a generic sense to mean a "structural unit", i.e., some institutions have only faculties while others have a mixture of faculties, research institutes and other structures. The evaluation team (split in pairs) will be interested in visiting a mixture of these units.
- The number and types of units to be visited should be adjusted based on the institutional shape and size: some institutions have small numbers of large units; others have large number of small units.

For the preliminary visit, please adapt the schedule to the characteristics of your institution and keep in mind that the team will have the opportunity to visit other units during the second visit.

Sample schedule for the preliminary visit

Day	Time	What & who?	Why?
	Late afternoon	Arrival of evaluation team	
DAY 0	90 minutes	Briefing meeting Evaluation team alone	Division of tasks; discussion of self-evaluation; inventory of issues for preliminary visit
	Evening	Dinner Evaluation team, with rector and liaison person	Welcome, make acquaintance; go over preliminary programme; discuss key issues for evaluation of the institution (arising from self-evaluation and/or from Rector's experience)
DAY 1 morning	9.00 - 9.30	Meeting with rector Evaluation team, rector	Discuss <i>privately</i> issues that need to be stressed in evaluation team's visit and report
	9.40 – 11.00	Introduction meeting Evaluation team, liaison person	Introduction to the institution: structures, quality management and strategic management; national higher education and research policies; students issues (e.g. tuition fees, governmental grants and aid)
	11.10 – 12.30	Meeting with self-evaluation steering group Self-evaluation steering group, evaluation team, liaison person, task forces	Understand self-evaluation process and extent of institutional involvement; how useful was self-evaluation for the institution (emerging issues, function in strategic planning processes)? Are self-evaluation data still up to date? Will they be updated for main site visit?
	12.30 – 14.00	Lunch Evaluation team, liaison person	Reflect upon impressions of first meetings and complete information as necessary
DAY 1 afternoon	14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with outside partners (Economy, society and/or local authorities)	Discuss relationships of the institution with external stakeholders of private and public sector
	15.15 – 16.15 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs to visit two faculties	Visit to faculties A & B Dean and academic staff representatives	Discuss relationships of faculties with the institution's central level; input in self-evaluation; role of quality control activities in faculty
	16.15 – 17.15 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs to visit two faculties	Visit to faculties A & B Students	Students' views on their experience (e.g., teaching and learning, student input in quality control and (strategic) decision making)
	17.15 – 18.15	Tour of campus / main institutional locations Evaluation team, liaison person	

	18.30 - 19.30	Debriefing meeting Evaluation team alone	Reflect on impressions; prepare second day of visit
	Evening	Dinner Evaluation team alone	Reflect on impressions gained thus far
DAY 2 morning	9.00 – 10.00 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs to visit two faculties	Visit to faculties C & D Dean and academic staff	Discuss relationships of faculties with institutional central level; input in self-evaluation; role of quality control activities in faculty
	10.00 – 11.00 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs to visit two faculties	Visit to faculties C & D Students	Students' views on their experience (e.g., teaching and learning, student input in quality control and (strategic) decision making
	11.15 – 12.00	Meeting with central institutional policy-making staff Institutional staff, evaluation team	Discuss processes and practices of quality management and strategic management; decision making within institution
	12.00 – 12.30	Debriefing meeting Evaluation team alone	Reflect on impressions; list issues for additions to self-evaluation report and main visit
	12.30 – 13.00	Evaluation team, liaison person	Plan main visit schedule (select faculties or units, special or additional persons to speak); logistical support for or during visit; visit team's meeting and working rooms (where team can work on its oral report)
	13.00 – Lunch	Evaluation team, rector and liaison person	Concluding session to agree topics of additional documentation
	Afternoon	Departure of evaluation team	

About ten minutes leeway are left open between each meeting to allow for groups to go in and out, give the evaluation team a few minutes to reflect together on previous meetings and/or to make changes to plans for the next meeting. Such brief breaks, in addition to coffee breaks, can also be useful to catch up on time if some meetings take longer than expected. If the evaluation team needs to move from one location to another (e.g., to another faculty), please leave ample time for doing so.

Enough time should be left for team debriefing sessions in order to reflect on impressions, to prepare the following meetings, and to discuss feedback to the institution.

The institutional liaison person will make the necessary arrangements for the preliminary visit, including arranging transportation for the evaluation team to and from the airport, hotel reservations, and scheduling meetings.

The institutional liaison person provides nameplates for the meetings, distributes the evaluation team's short biographies, and informs institutional participants about the general objectives of the preliminary visit and of the particular meeting in which they are involved.

3 From the preliminary to the main visit: Additional documents

As an outcome of the preliminary visit, the evaluation team will indicate a number of subjects to be treated in brief additional notes to the self-evaluation report (approximately 5 pages

each). The team may also ask for additional documents on specific subjects (e.g., budgetary process), interesting aspects of the institution, or weaknesses uncovered during the preliminary visit. Clarity on these points must be reached before the end of the preliminary visit.

These additional documents, as well as any other information that has been requested, should be sent to all members of the team and to the EUA secretariat at least three weeks before the date of the main site visit.

4. Main site visit

During the main visit, the evaluation team's task is to reach a well-founded view of the strategic management of quality in the institution as a whole. This judgement is an external, but well informed, view of the institution, as the evaluators will have received structured information through the self-evaluation and the preliminary visit.

The focus during the main visit is no longer on gaining an understanding of what is specific about the institution but on finding out whether, how, and with what results, the institution's strategic and internal quality policies and procedures are implemented throughout the institution.

Observations made about the responsibilities for organising the preliminary visit apply to the main visit, although for the main visit the evaluation team will take a more pro-active role in establishing the schedule than for the first visit. An example of a schedule for the main visit is given below. The schedule of the visit must be discussed between the institutional liaison person and the team secretary in advance. As shown below, the schedule of the visit may include parallel sessions in order to cover more ground and collect more evidence. The team will advise the institution in good time of its wishes in this respect.

Sample schedule of the main site visit

Day	Time	What & who?	Why?
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	Welcome, renew acquaintance; go over site visit programme
DAY 1 morning	9.00 – 10.00	Meeting with rector Evaluation team, rector	Discuss <i>privately</i> issues that need to be stressed in team's visit and report;
	10.10 – 11.00	Meeting with self-evaluation steering group Self-evaluation steering group, evaluation team, liaison person, task forces	Discuss any changes in context or internal situation since preliminary visit, analyse impact of main visit, review additional information sent to the team, clarify any open questions
	11.10– 12.30	Meeting with the deans Dean Council or deans from several faculties, evaluation team	Discuss relationship of faculties with institutional central level with respect to quality management; input in self-evaluation; special issues arising from self-evaluation parts one and two and/or from talk with rector

	12.40 – 14.00	Lunch Evaluation team, liaison person	Reflect upon impressions of first meetings and complete information as necessary
	14.00 - 15.30	Meeting with outside partners (Economy, society and/or local authorities)	Discuss relationships of institution with external stakeholders of private and public sector
	15.40 – 17.00 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs	Meeting with senate Senate representatives,	Discuss relationship of senate/democratic representation body with rectoral team regarding strategic and quality management
DAY 1 afternoon	15.40 – 17.00 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs	Meeting with central student delegation Students representatives,	Students' views on the institution, on relations with rectoral office, on student input in quality control and in (strategic) decision making
	17.10 – 18.00 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs	Meeting with central office staff members	Discuss role of e.g. institutional strategic documents (development plans, etc.) in development of institution; special issues arising from self-evaluation parts one and two and/or from talk with rector
	17.10 – 18.00 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs	Meeting with other central office staff members	e.g., international relations office and/or transfer office
	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
	9.00 – 10.00 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs	Visit to faculties C and D Dean and teaching staff representatives	Discuss relationships between faculty and institution's central level with respect to quality management; input in self-evaluation; role of quality control activities in faculty's teaching; special issues arising from self- evaluation parts one and two and/or from talk with rector
	10.00 – 11.00 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs	Visit to faculties C and D Students	Students' views on their experience (e.g., teaching and learning, student input in quality control and (strategic) decision making

DAY 2 morning	11.15 – 12.15 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs	Visit to faculties C and D (parallel) Researchers and/or PhD students,	Balance of research and teaching in faculty; role of quality control activities in faculty's research; special issues arising from self-evaluation part one and two and/or from talk with rector
	12.30– 14.00	Lunch Evaluation team alone	Evaluation team alone to exchange impressions
DAY 2 afternoon	14.00 – 17.15 parallel Evaluation team splits in pairs	Faculties E and F or other (decentralised) units	as in faculties C and D (adapt as appropriate)
	17.30	Debriefing meeting Evaluation team alone	Exchange impressions, review day
	20.00	Dinner Evaluation team alone	Continuation of debriefing meeting
	20.30 – 22.00	Drafting oral report Evaluation team alone	[evaluation team needs working room in the hotel for this task]
DAY 3	9.00 – 10.00	Concluding meeting Rectoral team, Evaluation team	Discuss draft oral report <i>privately</i> , to ensure it reflects the findings of the team as well as the needs of the rectoral team, for 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, rectoral team, liaison person, self-evaluation steering group, others?	
	Afternoon	Lunch and departure of evaluation team	

5. After the main site visit

The evaluation team will draft a written report based on the oral report presented at the end of its visit. The draft report will be communicated to the rector's office within a month after the visit. The rector must react to this report from the point of view of: factual errors and most importantly, the usefulness of the report for the institution's follow-up process

The institution's reaction must be sent to the EUA secretariat who will forward it to the team chairperson. Together with the evaluation team, the chairperson finalises the document. This final report will be sent officially to the rector within three months after the main visit, thus formally concluding the main evaluation process. The EUA can assist in the follow-up process at the request of the rector.

Annex 1:

THE EUA INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAMME

This brief appendix may be a useful handout for all participants in the self-evaluation process or in the site visits.

The long-term aim of the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme is to strengthen institutional autonomy and support institutional change in higher education institutions. The evaluation team includes three rectors or vice-rectors (active or former) and an academic secretary. Team members come from across Europe to provide an international and European perspective.

The institutional evaluation is undertaken from an institutional perspective to ensure understanding of the institutional context and make recommendations to increase the effectiveness of internal quality arrangements. In this way, the evaluation is responsive to the institution's needs, mission, culture and situation, and is future-oriented since it emphasises the development of the institution.

The institutional evaluation aims to assess the quality monitoring mechanisms and their use in the strategic development of the institution. It does not judge the quality of teaching and learning or that of research, nor does it rank or compare one institution against others. Moreover, it has a formative orientation (i.e., to help develop and improve the university's strategic and quality management) rather than a summative one (i.e., passing judgements for accountability reasons).

During the preliminary visit, the evaluation team becomes acquainted with the university and its environment. In the main visit, three months later, the focus is on finding out whether, how, and how effectively the university's strategic policies and quality procedures are being implemented throughout the institution. It should be emphasised that the main preoccupation of the team is to be helpful and constructive rather than threatening or punitive. Team members will come prepared to lead discussions with carefully prepared questions. Sessions are intended to be interactive rather than formal presentations by either university members or the evaluation team.

The evaluation team's conclusions and recommendations are laid down in a report to be presented to the institution.

Since 1994, over 150 higher education institutions in 37 countries (mostly in Europe but also in Latin America and South Africa) have been evaluated by the EUA. The main purpose of this activity is to contribute to developing the institutions' capacity to change, in order to adapt to their evolving environment.

Annex 2:

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR COMMISSIONED WORK

This memorandum outlines the conditions under which EUA may accept commissioned work, i.e. evaluations that are not paid for by the corresponding institution, but are externally funded.

➤ **General principles:**

- EUA will secure the agreement of the institution (or their collective representative) to the Terms of Reference before accepting the contract
- EUA will agree only to adjustments that are:
 - In the long-term strategic goals of EUA members as a collective body and congruent with EUA's philosophy as a membership association
 - In the long-term strategic goals and philosophy of the QA Programme
 - In the long-term interest of the individual member involved

➤ In terms of **teams:**

- The funding agency will not select the experts. EUA will adjust the team composition to fit the particular characteristics of the exercise. Specifically, only one expert with a different profile would be integrated in any given team.
- The strength of the programme (peers to peers) should be preserved. In all cases, university leaders will be selected, unless EUA is asked to evaluate a non-university institution for which one non-university leader could be selected.
- The EUA offers an annual seminar to the pool in order to ensure appropriate levels of skills and knowledge of recent higher education trends.
- The EUA will appoint a lead chair to represent the Programme and coordinate the system-wide evaluation projects. All team members, including the team chairs will work cooperatively with the lead chair.

➤ In terms of the **Evaluation Guidelines:**

- The strength of EUA's approach and its unique characteristics is that it evaluates the quality of an institution and its strategic capacity for change. This approach must be preserved.
- The philosophy of the evaluation (fitness for purpose and improvement-orientated approach) must be preserved. Particularly the EUA evaluations are not examining conformity to norms but the capacity for change.

Annex 3: GOVERNANCE AND CAPACITY FOR CHANGE³

Globalisation and the information technology revolution are changing the world at an increasingly rapid speed. Firms have to adapt to survive and governments are also making great efforts to adapt. Higher education institutions are challenged in a way they have never before experienced in their long history. They are challenged in all aspects of their activities: the nature of their students, the way they deliver knowledge and do research, the way they interact with the civil society, business, the state, and other higher education institutions, and the manner in which they manage their main asset, their human resources.

Most higher education institutions are changing slowly. Indeed, teachers and researchers adapt themselves to the new needs and possibilities but the set of services of the whole institution, as well as the way they are produced, are changing much more slowly. It seems that institutions do not realise that they are losing their regional monopoly: students are more mobile, good education can be offered thanks to new media, and the supply of education, as well as the production of new knowledge by private-for-profit organisations, is increasing.

Moreover, in many countries, higher education institutions are hard pressed to deliver more at a lower cost: their financial sponsors – the state or the private sponsors – want them not only to be accountable, but also to serve more directly their immediate needs. In other words, higher education institutions are expected to be more *responsive* to short-term needs of the private economy, the state and their main stakeholder, the students. This influence is partly positive because higher education institutions should no longer pretend that they are the only institutions that possess knowledge nor should they supply only what they like to do; obviously, they have to pay more careful attention to the aspirations and needs of the students and the country. Universities have to assume a crucial *responsibility* towards society. They are one of the rare human institutions able to preserve and transmit the cultural heritage of a society and having the professional competences and appropriate status to analyse societal problems independently and scientifically. Business leaders and politicians should be brought to understand that a *responsible* institution is also *responsive* in the long run.

In order to maintain and improve the leading position higher education institutions have occupied in the development and dissemination of knowledge, as well as to secure their role as main guarantor of cultural heritage and of societal values, higher education institutions – as institutions – have to adapt more rapidly to their changing environment. In other words, it has become imperative that higher education institutions improve their capacity for change at the level of the whole institution. This implies that change has to occur on at least three points: relationship with the state, internal governance and management tools.

Relationship with the state. The degree of freedom of higher education institutions to take their future in their own hands depends first on their degree of administrative and academic autonomy towards the public body that is supporting them. In many countries, the rules imposed by the state, as well as its permanent temptation to politically micro-manage the institution, are putting a serious brake to the willingness and capacity to change. As this constraint lies outside the decision sphere of the institution, there is not much the institution can do in the short run. However, emphasis should be placed on convincing the state that the lack of real autonomy is counter productive in the long run.

Internal governance. The traditional organisational structure and system of institutional governance restrain them from adapting rapidly enough. The great majority of higher education institutions have always been governed according to what is referred to as a system of *shared governance*. This means that decisions are made collectively, mainly between faculty, directors, deans and president.

Shared governance appears at first to be an ideal decision-making system. However, the system has important shortcomings:

It is heavy and slow, as each decision has to pass through multiple bodies or committees and can easily be stopped at nearly all level.

It has a strong bias in favour of the conservation of the past and makes the realisation of new innovative projects difficult or too slow.

³ This section was written by Professor Luc Weber (former Rector, University of Geneva, and team chair in the Institutional Evaluation Programme).

Consequently, even if shared governance has apparently served universities and other higher education institutions well for centuries, this decision system appears to be less and less adequate for the new environment, which requires decisions which are future orientated, sometimes introducing an element of discontinuity requiring acts of authority.

The ideal system of institutional governance is particularly difficult to conceive because the main asset of a higher education institution – its human capital (faculty, researchers and students) – is found at the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid, not at the top. Therefore, the centralisation of most of the decision power on the presidency, that is the President (Rector), its team and committees, would not allow either for an optimal use of the human capital, because it would miss most of the knowledge and capacity for initiative of the faculty, researchers, and students.

In order to conceive the adequate organisational structure and distribution of competences between the different bodies, one can draw on the economic theory of federalism, as well as on public and private management theories. The basic principle is that decisions should be made at the lowest level possible (subsidiarity principle). However, the search for the optimal organisation should take into account three additional considerations:

- Decisions made at a low level often have also consequences (positive and negative) at a higher level; it is therefore sub-optimal to make these decisions exclusively at the low level, as the chance is high that in so doing, the external consequences will be neglected.
- Decision making at a high level allows, in an increasing manner, to exploit economies of scale, which becomes a necessity in a time of increasingly scarce resources (e.g., the creation of digital libraries),
- The more a community is in favour of a treatment of equals, the more rules have to be set up at a high level, which implies more bureaucracy and rigidity.

These principles allow us to clarify the role that should be assigned to each potential decision maker. If we restrict ourselves here to the key players of institutional governance, the faculties and the presidency, we can infer that the faculties should keep a very large autonomy with regard to their teaching and research responsibilities, be invited to make reports about the development of their disciplines, and to propose new projects. However, they should not have final decision power concerning the definition of long-term strategic priorities or the scientific profile of a new professor. As collective behaviour often leads to simply maintaining the present structures or programs, it is a necessary condition to allow the institution to adapt to its changing environment. The institutional leadership should make the strategic decisions in collaboration with the deans and the initiators of new projects. In other words, the decision process should be more centralised, but take into account the professional input of the base.

In addition, it is important to simplify the decision procedures. Too often they look like a “*machine à Tinguely*”⁴ in which numerous bodies have their say without making clear which one takes the decision and which one controls it. To make the decision process as efficient as possible, it is important to state clearly which body or person is making the decision and is responsible for it, which body(ies) must be consulted before the decision is made and which body is validating the decision. This question of check and balances is very important and justifies setting up a board above the presidency to force the later to always be accountable for its decisions to another body, preferably not the state.

3) Management tools. In an institution where the presidency has more decision power than in a traditional system of shared governance, the main difficulty for the former is to enforce its decisions. Faculties tend to be independent, self centred and, worse, refractory to change. It is therefore very difficult to get their acceptance, or their collaboration, by imposing a solution on them. Such an approach often provokes a reaction of opposition, which encourages their resistance, decreases their motivation for their institutional activity, and/or pushes them to work on outside projects.

One of the main challenges of governance is to find the right means or tools to secure the effective participation of the people concerned by a policy change and to encourage them to spontaneously take initiatives in line with the general policy. The main tools are strategic plans, budgeting and financial management, development of a quality culture, and improved communication.

⁴ Tinguely produced monumental moving sculptures that are characterised by their absurd complexity.

Strategic planning should play a key role in a governed higher education institution. Strategic planning is a tool that contributes to look into the future and to get a better grip on it. It is useful to distinguish between the elaboration of a *four-five year plan*, which is essentially a means to extend the time frame of the annual budget and to extrapolate past tendencies, and the elaboration of a *strategic plan over a eight-ten year period*, which is a powerful means to look into and to prepare for the future.

The elaboration of a strategic plan should promote the following:

- Make the whole community aware of the changing environment as well as of their responsibilities while exploring possible future scenarios.
- Encourage a serious analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution and its subdivisions as well as making an inventory of the proposed projects and solutions to improve its standards.
- Help make strategic decisions, particularly about departments and/or creating or closing programs, set up broad priorities and “posteriorities”, and improve the management of human resources.

The elaboration of a strategic plan should be a collective process, both top down and bottom up, while being iterative in order to optimise the solutions implemented. The presidency should lead the whole process with the support of ad hoc committees representing the different stakeholders and disciplines. However, the final arbitrage should be the responsibility of the sole president and his or her team. If the higher education institution has an external board, it should be called upon to approve the plan in order to greatly support its enforcement by the presidency.

- **Budgeting and financial management.** Since the market is recognised to be the most efficient, although not perfect, means of allocating resources, some financial management tools create “market-like functions” that are able to reduce the resistance to change. The objective in particular on the expenditure side of the budget is to promote more flexibility in using financial incentives and disincentives. As we can think of many different sorts of measures, higher education institution managers have to be imaginative and find those best adapted for their institution.
- **Development of a quality culture.** Another important tool to improve the capacity for change is the development of a quality culture within the whole institution. This can be done under the own initiative of the institution or by participating in a program organised more broadly on a voluntary basis or imposed to the institution. The focus of the evaluation can be precisely the governance and capacity for change, the quality of teaching and research units (departments and institutes) or of teachers. Students or peers are the most favourite “evaluators” depending on the type of evaluation chosen (cf. Sursock 2003 for further details).
- **Improved communication.** Finally, a much greater emphasis should be given to the communication within the institution as well as towards the public outside. The leadership at different levels, in particular the presidential, dean, and department or institute levels, should explain what they are doing and why in order to improve the adhesion and mobilisation of the community, inside as well as outside.

Annex 4: SPECIAL FOCI

As mentioned in the Guidelines, institutions have the option of choosing a special focus in addition to the evaluation of their strategic capacity for change (supra, 3.4). The following sections are a combination of reflection pieces and checklists to assist institutions in dealing with their chosen focus in their self-evaluation report. The special focus should not exceed 6 pages in the self-evaluation report.

I. Internationalisation⁵

Two major trends affect higher education institutions and especially their international offices:

- *Globalisation* for higher education signifies, on the one hand, the growth in borderless and transnational education and the further inclusion of higher education in the GATS. On the other hand, globalisation means that the rise of the knowledge society in an increasingly competitive world offers great opportunities for institutions to play an important role if they are able to position themselves on the world stage and strengthen the link between education and research and research and society.
- *The Bologna process* has inspired higher education reforms across Europe and has led to quicker results than expected. It has been observed all over the world and shows no signs of slowing down.

Along with the Bologna process and its goal of creating a European higher education area, Europe is also determined to create a European Research Area which will imply more policy coordination and a better integration of research efforts as well a target for R&D spending that should reach 3 per cent of GDP in each of the Member States by 2010.

These processes have an impact on the different levels at which higher education policy is developed and on the future role of international offices. Until recently, there were two dominant policy levels: the national and the institutional, with the national being the most dominant. The nation states defined the institution (e.g., via charters), provided funds and employed large percentages of graduates.

Since the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, however, we are witnessing the emergence of new policy levels (regional, e.g. Europe) and shifts in the importance of the various levels such as the increased stress on institutional autonomy and accountability.

At the national level, there is an increase in the number of higher education institutions, increased involvement of external stakeholders, e.g., through changes in governance structures, State withdrawal through reduced or stagnating funding levels and change in its role from a directive or controlling role to an increasingly steering and supervising function. The steering then is done through introduction of external quality assurance procedures and a shift in focus from control of inputs to monitoring previously agreed outputs and outcomes.

To conceptualise the interaction of the different policy levels, it is helpful to distinguish the role of each as follows:

Institutional level: strengthening the institution to cope with the different challenges it faces. In a number of countries, external stakeholders have been given an extended role at this level, e.g. by having 'lay' members on governance boards.

National level: still playing a major role and expressed in a great diversity in Europe and around the world, which needs to be accepted. Moreover, at this level external stakeholders often play an increasing role.

European level: convergence of structures is a goal, while some degree of harmonisation of educational outcomes or contents is being discussed too.

International level: a natural environment for the higher education, especially in research. Globalisation is leading to rapid developments that require a new policy framework.

⁵ Based largely on the results from the EUA's Quality Culture Project 2002 – 2003 (Sursock 2003)

Thus, higher education institutions have to deal with two sets of pressures, some of which are conflicting.

- *Europeanisation and internationalisation*: Europeanisation requires developing European partnerships in research and teaching while globalisation requires institutional “branding” and competition in the global higher education market place
- *Tensions and renewed balance among the institution’s three core missions* - research, teaching and social dimension

To cope with these pressures, higher education institutions will need to:

- Consolidate their autonomy while understanding that autonomy is not independence but that it implies accountability
- Improve stakeholders’ understanding of the challenges they face
- Promote appropriate external quality assessment and an internal quality culture
- Reinforce their capacity for strategic management and networking

It could be said that internationalisation policies are a point of convergence of all these tensions and pressures; internationalisation, which used to be - with some overstatement - a marginal area, is now becoming of central importance to the higher education institution. ‘Mainstreaming’ internationalisation is a major policy shift for higher education institutions. Therefore, the international offices can be a major driver for change and play a significant role in showcasing their institution but they must:

- Think strategically and articulate their strategy with the overall institutional plans, i.e., work within the institution to develop an overall action plan and discuss the place of internationalisation in it, including in research and teaching
- Reassess the current international activities in terms of the institutional plan, its mission and objectives, and key partnerships
- Involve academic staff in developing new action lines, in setting priorities and implementing them (e.g., through an academic board for the international office)
- Receive support from the central leadership in order to develop staff competence and a robust expertise in international activities.

In terms of the evaluation of this area, the following aspects should be considered:

- Positioning of the higher education institution (local, regional, national, international priorities)
- Relationship with local stakeholders
- Policy and practice in the area of academic staff exchange
- Internationalisation of the curriculum (including an international dimension in course work, developing policies regarding language studies and international book holding)
- International publication of research results
- ICT technology
- Student exchange programmes, including using students’ international experience in the classroom
- Research and educational international networks

II. Implementing Bologna

The following section is divided into two broad sub-sections. The first is a reflection piece that would be useful to institutions that are at the beginning stage of implementing Bologna reforms. The second is a checklist of main items that can be used to structure that portion of the self-evaluation report (and site visits) for institutions which have chosen Bologna as a special focus for their evaluation.

A. Reflection⁶

The network that focused on the Bologna process in the EUA Quality Culture Project has produced a blueprint for implementing major reforms when these are framed by external actors. It identifies a sequence that requires developing a schedule and milestones, and communicating with internal and external stakeholders constantly to ensure their adhesion. The implementation process must balance a top-down with a bottom-up approach:

- *Awareness Phase*: create acceptance for the need for reforms, generate commitment and find appropriate internal and external partners
- *Concept Phase*: based on a SWOT analysis, develop the strategic institutional mission, which includes identifying the institution's position, niche, public perceptions, and priorities.
- *Implementation Phase*: allocate responsibilities across the institution and co-ordinate activities at central level
- *Evaluation*: All the while, the central level must monitor the implementation process in compliance with the overarching guidelines and the institutional mission. The report stresses the need for "constant iterative feedback... (to) add a dynamic element to the Bologna Process... assure coherence and detect errors as early as possible in the process in order to correct them immediately." (p.25)

Furthermore, the model identifies the key actors – academic and administrative staff, students, external stakeholders – and stresses their important contributions to the process and underlines the need to provide funding for this process.

Finally, the Network recommends working with the established institutional committees to design the overall strategy and to create a Bologna steering committee to co-ordinate the implementation across faculties and ensure its coherent application (p.30). A more detailed analysis is provided below.

1.1 Implementation Strategies

The method developed by the network was to intersect the Bologna process as a frame of reference with the individual SWOT analyses in order to identify the action lines that are required in each institution.

1.1.1. Concept

The following set of success factors relate to the Bologna concept itself and shows how the main conceptual tools help with implementing the reform package.

a) Mission

The functions of a mission statement are:

- To offer orientation for defining the primary goals of the study programme and give guidance for future development. These must be coherent with the general mission of the institution.
- To crystallise the organizational culture and, more specifically, the quality culture. Since the mission represents the common denominator between sometimes very different faculties, it is important to find a common theme with which the whole community can identify.
- To communicate with the external world and describe the study programme concisely for use as a marketing tool to promote the values and the self-conception of the programme.

b) General Criteria for Programme Development

The core idea of the mission statement is translated into practice by formulating general and concrete criteria for programme development which can be used for the internal evaluation of programmes. A useful set of criteria are (1) the general principles of the Bologna declaration; (2) the specific objectives of the institution; (3) the educational concept of the institution; (4) the general principles of curriculum development; and (5) a set of specific principles with respect to the bachelor and the master level programmes.

⁶ Based on the EUA Quality Culture Project and the work of Network 4, co-ordinated by Professor Jürgen Kohler.

1.1.2 People and Institutions

This set of strategies is connected with the institutional and human resource structure of the reform process.

a) Committee Structure

A committee structure can be a useful approach in developing and implementing Bologna tools, reforming study programmes and ensuring the representation of all stakeholders. The committee structure might include the following committees: (1) central steering committee that develops central guidelines and concepts, (2) programme committees that develop and implement single study programmes, and (3) an accreditation committee that evaluates new programmes internally according to defined guidelines.

b) Human Resources: sharing functions

It is crucial to allocate responsibilities and coordinate among the actors at different levels effectively:

- Senior management must signal the will to change, propose the strategic direction, set major milestones, disseminate the key ideas, and coordinate the reform process.
- At the faculty level, a steering committee brings together stakeholders and professionals to assure the necessary breadth of the reform process, coordinates the reform efforts within the faculties and serves as a liaison between senior management and the next two levels.
- At the programme level, new study programmes are conceptualized. The programme level combines competence and proximity to implementation problems in order to carry out this task in the most effective way.
- Last but not least, a strong working level is essential. Here, the actual concepts are prepared and implemented to translate the strategic targets of senior management and of the steering level into concrete actions.

c) Human Resources: Capacity and Competence

Who should be responsible for implementing the reform? There are two options:

- Academic staff: although academic staff is eminently suited for this task it may constitute an extra workload.
- Specially appointed administrative staff as support to the academic staff.

Individual competences and responsibilities must be clearly defined to foster greater commitment and sense of ownership and ensure effective and timely co-ordination.

d) Information and mobilisation of the academic community

Information plays a crucial role in a reform process to reduce resistance to change and draw attention to the higher education institution by establishing its profile as a modern organisation. In addition, the reform process needs to evoke enthusiasm among the institution's members. That is why it is important to be successful and, crucially, to demonstrate this success to the institution's members. This will produce a success culture which enables the institution to promote reforms more easily.

1.1.3 Process

Strategies related to the process of implementation give information about how the reform is taking place, i.e., which mechanisms and tools are used to implement new study programmes.

a) Implementation Approach

There are several possible approaches to implement a reform programme.

- *The Unitary Approach* is a comprehensive implementation concept that seeks to carry out the reform programme in the whole institution at once and covers all aspects of the reform package and all faculties. There are advantages to this approach which ensures coherence, efficiency and commitment.

- *The Segmented Approach* carries out the reform programme in several steps (e.g., a few faculties start to implement Bologna study programmes or some parts of the Bologna tool-kit (i.e., ECTS) are implemented). This strategy allows the institution to capitalise on “reform champions” and learn from a smaller set of experiences. The main disadvantage of this approach is in the risk of deadlock; if the reforms are not progressing as planned the reluctant parts of the organisation could be discouraged with a possible risk of rollback.
- *A mixture of the two strategies*, i.e. only one tool can be implemented within the entire institution. This might have two advantages. First, fewer resources are needed to implement only one feature of the Bologna reforms at a time, which can lower the overall resistance against reform. Second, if one tool is implemented successfully, the ideas of the reform are better conceived by all institutional members and may reduce resistance against other reform features. The drawback of this strategy is that synergy effects that arise from the combination of all reform features cannot be used.
- *Pilot projects* are a good way to experiment, within a controlled environment, with a view for a more comprehensive implementation to follow. This approach allows an institution to test different processes thoroughly before it chooses its standards for implementation and improves information on the entire reform project.

b) Guidelines

Guidelines, with concrete instructions, are useful and even necessary to support programme development and implementation in a complex process like the Bologna reforms. The guidelines are both an implementation support tool and a quality assurance tool, therefore leading to more coherence and firmness in implementation.

c) Phases

A reform process in two phases is useful. The first phase includes the proposal and drafting of a general outline of contents and structure of study programmes, following strict guidelines. The proposed programmes are reviewed and given the green light to develop a detailed curriculum. This increases the efficiency of the process as quality assurance steps at an early stage contribute to correct programmes that might conflict with the guidelines.

d) Schedule

A strict schedule is very important for the implementation process to discipline participants and minimise procrastination.

e) Evaluation parallel to the Process

Setting up evaluation in parallel to the implementation process can help in detecting problems and deviations from the guidelines and concepts at an early stage and in taking counter measures. A process-accompanying evaluation is more efficient than mere end-of-line evaluation.

1.1.4 Environmental Factors

Environmental factors that influence implementation are external factors and as such are not under the institution’s control.

a) National Legislation

Some European countries have adopted national legislation requiring the implementation of the Bologna Declaration. This approach has both positive and negative aspects.

On the positive side, it allows for better synergy and momentum as all actions are directed toward the same objectives and all players share the same problems and can benchmark their progress. Any opposition to the reform must be aired which results in clarification and constructive debate, thus avoiding the risk of mere passive resistance or non-participation.

On the negative side, centrally steered Bologna reforms imply a curtailment of institutional autonomy in planning and design and a “top-down” approach. Gradualism is lacking, not so much in a sense of time, but from a qualitative point of view: there is no opportunity to begin by involving the more convinced and committed people and then move on step by step towards wider involvement.

Moreover, and somewhat paradoxically, the fact that European reforms are mediated by a national Ministry of Education is misleading in that institutions may lose track of the “European” dimension of the new features.

However, a state imposed implementation need not necessarily be a top-down approach. There is still room for bottom-up features and dialogue between ministry and higher education institutions. This can be done by working groups on the national level that consist of representatives from universities and the ministry with a clear mandate to design and shape new legislation. This approach maintains the autonomy of higher education institutions and at the same time imposes some pressure on them to work in a constructive way for new standards in higher education.

b) Funding

Reform efforts always require additional human resources that can be a drain on core funding. If extra public funding is not available it is useful to turn to third party funding (e.g., foundations will support reform projects).

B. Evaluation checklist⁷

2.1 Attitude and general assessment of Bologna reforms

Objective: gain overall impression of awareness of/support for Bologna Reforms

- How would you describe the current level of awareness of the Bologna Reforms?
- How is your institution responding? (How is the Bologna Reform process organised in your institution and who are the primary actors?)
- Have the Bologna reforms brought any added value? (e.g., quality of the curricula, teaching, international relations, mobility, institutional management, quality culture)
- How does the Bologna Reform process fit into the institution's strategic plan?
- How are Bologna Reforms being funded? Are additional internal funds being allocated? Are outside funds being provided? Have financial incentives been put in place by the state?
- How "autonomous" do you feel your institution is with respect to implementation of the Bologna Reforms (decision making, financing mechanisms, timing)?

2.2 Curricular Reforms/Introduction of the two-cycle structure

Objective: ascertain the scope of the implementation of two cycles (Bachelor/Master) and their impact

Impact of new legislation:

- If there have been legislative/administrative changes linked to Bologna Reforms? What impact has this had on the institution (e.g., engenders additional costs, hinders recognition)?

New structures:

- What are the expected learning outcomes of the bachelor level?
- What do students do upon completion of the bachelor (continue their studies, enter specific professions, etc.)? Do graduates with bachelor's degrees experience any specific difficulties in entering the labour market?
- Masters courses: what types of “master” courses are offered in your institution? (Who do you target?)
- Are there differences among the disciplines in terms of implementation of the two-cycle structure?
- What percentage of students is enrolled in two-cycle study programmes?
- Do you foresee an impact on the doctoral level of your two-cycle reforms?
- Have structural changes had an impact on student mobility patterns?

Teaching/learning and assessment

- What does the concept of learning outcomes mean to you?
- Are you considering defining learning outcomes for each course/study/degree programme? If yes, have processes been developed to assess these learning outcomes?

⁷ This is mostly based on the questionnaire developed for the TRENDS IV report that EUA produced for the Bergen meeting of ministers (May 2005)

- Has there been a restructuring of units for education? Are (ECTS) credits used for transfer/accumulation? Are courses modularised?
- What difficulties have you experienced in the restructuring of curricula?

2.3 Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study

Objective: ascertain the transfer and recognition procedures and define challenges involved.

- Are ECTS/other credits used for transfer purposes? Are there difficulties that differ among disciplines?
- How do you recognise non-academic/ non-formal qualifications? (inclusion of adult learning) What limits have been set to the number of non-academic credits permitted?
- Are there any difficulties in the recognition of students' exchange/mobility periods?
- Is a Diploma Supplement issued to all graduates? Are there issues of cost/language involved which pose a problem?
- What are the institution's procedures for recognising foreign diplomas?

III. Joint Masters ⁸

Introduction

The following draws upon the EUA Joint Masters Project. It outlines the success and obstacle factors in the following three main areas:

- Quality Assurance and Recognition
- Curriculum Integration and Sustainability
- Student Experience and Mobility

This EUA project has demonstrated that excellent conditions for joint study programmes have to be created through careful planning, and continually nurtured and supported by all actors, including governments and institutions. Through such positive collaboration, the learning process expands horizons not only for students, but also for academics and institutions: all stand to gain in today's competitive global landscape through European collaboration and mutual learning. Europe can also benefit enormously through the development of high quality joint master programmes, which have the potential to meet a wide range of European needs, and also to place European higher education as a reference for quality on the global map.

1. Quality Assurance and Recognition

Obstacles to students, academics and institutions arise primarily from shortcomings in the existing arrangements for co-operation between European higher education systems. *The Recognition of joint degrees* is a fundamental issue, linked also to issues of *quality assurance* and *funding*. The recognition problem has been extensively discussed, and action is being taken to ensure that the Lisbon Recognition Convention is amended to include provision for fair recognition of joint degrees. This issue is also on national agendas for legislative reform following the pledge made by European Ministers of Education in the Berlin Communiqué to resolve the problem (September 2003). However, it is not only legal texts but attitudes that need to change - not merely to permit joint programmes to exist, but to encourage them to develop and flourish.

A range of issues also need to be addressed and solved by institutions - and indeed it is at the *level of institutional policy* where genuine commitment is required. Clear *internal quality assurance procedures* which are implemented across networks are needed, and *institutional responsibility* for students studying at several institutions needs to be defined. Unless institutions address these questions as part of their strategy to reform, develop and internationalise, the undoubted benefits which these programmes provide to students and academics will be clouded by a range of concerns.

⁸ Joint Master Programmes, David Crosier and Kate Keddie, EUA report (2004)

2. Curriculum Integration and Sustainability

It is clear from the project that there is *no one "ideal" model* of partnership: many patterns exist and are equally successful. However, the *funding of joint masters programmes* is critical to their success. Bearing in mind the considerable variety in network structures, and recognising the diverse roles that partners may play in a consortium, the best means of ensuring sustainability would be to fund the costs for joint programmes at the level of networks. However, funding systems do not encourage this approach.

Currently networks receive funding from a variety of sources (local, national and European) and funds are generally allocated for specific activities. Some of the unavoidable costs of successful network operation (international travel, administration, short-term accommodation etc) - which make joint programmes more expensive to develop and maintain than traditional programmes - have to be found from other institutional budgets. It is therefore vitally important that institutions are committed and aware of the benefits which these programmes offer.

3. Student Experience and Mobility

Students face considerable costs in undertaking joint programmes, most of which must be self-financed due to the low levels of support generally available. This means that only students with sufficient personal financial means are able to participate in these courses. There is a risk that, unless targeted support for financially disadvantaged students is provided, such programmes will develop as the privilege of an elite class of students, and will fail to make much impact upon European higher education and society as a whole.

The *inequity in fee structures* across Europe further aggravates these trends and needs to be tackled. These fundamental issues of inclusiveness and equity have as yet scarcely been addressed at policy level, and particular challenges arise in relation to new member and future accession states.

Even if absolute numbers of students studying in joint master programmes remain small, the impact upon society can be significant if solutions are found to enable fair access to all on the basis of merit and potential. A pioneering spirit has been used in all networks to address problems in the interests of students.

4. Ten Golden Rules

Europe has now reached the stage where the results of this pioneering activity should be built upon to ensure that joint programmes are developed in a sustainable manner, and *opportunities are expanded for all* in Europe. The following Golden Rules can be used by institutions in setting up joint programmes and by evaluation teams as discussion points during the site visits.

Know why you are setting up the programme

New programmes should think very carefully of their motivation. Is there a gap at national or European level which needs to be filled? Is a joint programme the most appropriate mechanism? What is the anticipated academic value-added?

Choose your partners carefully

There can be many different ways of finding institutional partners, and the choice may have extremely important effects, extending beyond the initial reasons for establishing a programme. Strong communication and trust is essential to develop common learning objectives and standards. Communication is also important in ensuring that all study periods at partner institutions are fully recognised. Consider issues such as how many institutional partners would make sense for the programme, and how similar or diverse the institutions should be.

Develop well-defined programme goals and student-learning outcomes with your network partners

For a network to be balanced, it is important that all partners are involved in developing and defining the programme goals. As well as being part of a common learning process, it is much easier to identify with a programme in which all intellectual contributions are valued - rather than simply taking part in the implementation of a ready-made concept/product. This implies the establishment of an effective joint curriculum, tailor-made for its purpose. It is important to ensure,

through curriculum arrangements, that all students have the opportunity to study in at least two different countries.

Make sure that all the institutions (and not just academic colleagues) fully support the goals and objectives of the programme

Institutional support of all partners is essential from the outset if a programme is to have a long-term future. At an absolute minimum this should require a letter of support from the Rector outlining the tangible contributions which will be made by the institution, such as commitment to staff and students in the programme and financial support. Such a letter of commitment should be renewed periodically.

Ensure that sufficient academic and administrative staff resources are involved in the programme

The burden of work should not fall entirely upon the shoulders of a minority of dedicated staff. Involvement of a wider group of staff within an institution will help to maintain institutional commitment. Since teaching staff mobility is also fundamental to these programmes, consider the effects of staff absences upon normal curricula. Consider the consequences if a key player within the institution were to change post. Would the institutional commitment remain? If not, the staff base for sustainable development is certainly not sufficiently broad.

Ensure that a sustainable funding strategy for the programme is in place

Such a strategy should think about resource management issues not at the level of individual institutions but across the network as a whole. Are resources within the network sufficient? Are they equitably distributed? Is it possible to do more to support partners facing particular difficulties?

Take care that information about the programme is easily accessible to students

Comparable information should be provided to students from all participating institutions. In addition to course information and admission criteria and procedures, requirements in terms of mobility should be specified, including how issues such as accommodation should be addressed, and clear information should be provided about the qualification/degree that will be awarded. Consideration should be given to accessibility for economically disadvantaged and physically disabled students.

Organise and plan sufficient meetings in advance

Developing a joint programme takes time. Sufficient meetings should be foreseen for network partners to develop ideas together and to assess collaboratively the coherence of the study programme. Make sure that there is agreement on learning outcomes, use of ECTS (including a common value of a credit), and use of the Diploma Supplement. Where there are doubts about how to use these instruments, make sure that learning processes are in place and information is available.

Develop language policy and encourage local language learning

The programme will need to make decisions about the language(s) of instruction, as well as about how to best exploit opportunities for students to learn languages during their programme. Questions about language should not be an afterthought of curriculum planning, but a central consideration. Linguistic preparation of mobility periods is an effective way of involving colleagues and departments within institutions, and a variety of language-learning techniques and approaches are possible.

Decide who is responsible for what

A clear division of tasks and responsibilities will help networks to function effectively. Not all institutions need to have the same level of involvement in programmes, and diversity of contributions can allow the network partners to focus upon particular strengths. A clear division of labour will help to ensure that there is minimum duplication of tasks as cost and time efficiency will be important to achieve. Often this may be achieved by the establishment of a centralised agency to administer the programme, operating under the generalised control of the network partners.

IV. QUALITY CULTURE

The following section, based on the first round of the Quality Culture Project (2002 – 2003), focuses on the three major aspects required to embed an internal quality culture, namely processes, actors and structures⁹. It is important to note the crosscutting finding that emerged across the three aspects: in all cases, engaging the community and developing ownership at the grass root are more important than managerial aspects and technocratic instruments.

1. Processes

The networks agreed that the success of the first steps towards introducing a quality culture is the precondition for an effective development and progression along that path.

In addition, it is important to consider that higher education institutions are characterised by a diffused and devolved power structure, complex and somewhat ambiguous goals, and outcomes that are difficult to measure or quantify. The challenge then is two-fold:

- To systematise standards and operations across an institution while taking into account the professional concentration of expertise at the grass roots. In this sense, despite their hierarchy, higher education institutions are relatively flat structures: a Nobel Prize in a department can have greater authority than his or her rector.
- To develop a set of standards in line with the institutional mission. These standards must translate into criteria and measures that would capture success and failures in a constructive and transparent manner without stifling the vitality of individual initiatives or the vibrancy derived from departmental diversity.

To meet these two challenges, it is essential to:

- Engage the whole community – including students and administrative staff who are often forgotten – in a process of reflection about missions and goals
- Develop a communication strategy that combines top-down and bottom up communication channels, written documents and formal and informal meetings
- Identify and empower “quality culture champions” to contribute to the development and implementation of a quality culture strategy
- Create teams across the institution in order to ensure cross-fertilisation
- Address the issue of fears by developing a coherent staff development scheme
- Support the development of an effective quality culture with appropriate human and financial resources

Needless to say, all these considerations point to the important role that a thoughtful rectoral team can play and its ability to motivate individuals and engage the community.

2. Actors

These considerations also suggest that to embed a quality culture, careful thought must be given to all actors within and outside the institution, each of whom plays a specific role:

- The rectoral team will agree an overarching quality framework, structures and procedures as well as the process by which results of the internal quality monitoring will be integrated into the strategic planning in order to ensure their long-term effect. It will ensure wide engagement of the community and its commitment to the quality framework.
- For institutions that are beginning the process of developing an internal quality culture, it may be important to appoint respected figures to serve as “quality champions” who will report directly (or be part of) the senior rectoral team and will explain to academic staff that academic freedom can only be supported by a vigorous and responsible institutional autonomy.
- Financial officers at central and faculty levels will be involved in this process, which needs to be resourced adequately. Similarly, human resource officers will be involved in the change

⁹ For more details, the project report is available on the EUA website:
http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/QC_report_final.1076424814595.pdf

process to ensure that they develop overarching and cohesive staff development schemes that will equip academic and administrative staff members to cope with new institutional requirements.

- Students will play a key role in embedding quality, not only through their regular evaluation of teaching but also through their involvement both in student support services (e.g., as tutors and peer advisors) and appropriate decision-making bodies. They will require training in order to fulfil this role effectively.
- External stakeholders will contribute a different and useful perspective on the institution, serve as a “reality check” and enrich the debate. The challenging task of identifying appropriate stakeholders and their role in the change process will be carefully considered by the rectoral team which will also need to ensure that the rest of the academic community understands the needs and benefits for establishing such relationships.

Structures

All six networks recommended the creation of new structures to deal more effectively with internal quality issues. It is interesting to note that all these are located centrally – thus reflecting a trend away from decentralised institutions – and report to the rectoral level. Five types of structures were identified:

- Quality unit for teaching and learning. These units work best when (i) their staff expertise is solid and credible, (ii) their approach is advisory rather than required and (iii) orientated toward improvement rather than control.
- Office of institutional research and information. This office serves in a supporting role for institutional planning. It collects and analyses data points that enable the institution to monitor actively areas of strengths and weaknesses.
- Research management office. This office is responsible for setting research priorities, allocating resources, developing partnerships and strategic alliances, providing legal support (e.g. for intellectual property issues), managing research staff careers and monitoring quality.
- Integrated and comprehensive students support services that view students holistically and take into account their academic needs as well as their mental and physical well-being.
- An international office that is positioned strategically to bring together the different missions of higher education institutions – research, teaching and service to society – works closely with the rectoral team and involves the academic community.

4. Conditions for success

All the outcomes listed above point to community building as a key success factor. Whether it is in terms of establishing the processes and the structures required, the rectoral team must pay attention to all the actors, motivate them and incite them to adopt the new quality agenda. In line with these findings, the Quality Culture Project identified several conditions for the successful introduction and development of a quality culture:

- The importance of institutional governance and community building (vs. management) for an effective quality culture
- The importance of strategic thinking, based on an appropriate institutional analysis (SWOT or similar analytical instruments)
- The integral causal link between strong institutional autonomy and the effective development of a quality culture
- The interlink between quality development and appropriate financial and human resources, including staff development schemes

These conditions cannot be met by distant political and administrative power centres but by autonomous higher education institutions, committed to building strong academic communities and – as the Quality Culture Project has shown – engaged in learning through inter-institutional co-operation and peer-to-peer exchange.

V. Research leadership and management

Research leadership and management are becoming increasingly important in Europe. If this topic will be a focus of the evaluation, the self-evaluation reports and the evaluation teams might want to examine the main aspects that are presented in the following checklist.

1. Research strategy

- Has the institution set its main institutional research strategies and priorities?
- How are international and regional partnerships decided?
- Does the institution have a transparent framework for resource allocation?
- Does the institution have a shared set of quality standards for research?
- Does the institution have an ethical code of research conduct?
- Does it have mechanisms for encouraging individual initiatives through research incentives?

2. Quality assurance

- Has the institution developed internal QA procedures to monitor quality and quantity of research output and the assessment of human and financial resources, infrastructure?
- Is research evaluation based on performance indicators?
- What uses are made of QA results?

3. Services to researchers

- Does the institution monitor available research grants and inform researchers?
- Does the institution support researchers in obtaining external/internal funding?
- Does the institution support researchers in start-ups/spin-offs activities?
- Does the institution provide support in finding appropriate research partners?
- Does the institution provide support in intellectual property issues?
- Does the institution provide administrative and accounting services for research teams?
- Does the institution provide legal counselling and contractual issues?
- Does the institution provide mobility support for researchers?

4. Technology transfer

- HEI – industry research relationship
- HEI – public sector relationships
- Information and management of intellectual property rights of researchers and institutions
- Utilisation of research results
- Attracting contract research

5. Funding and costing research

- What is the process of seeking new funding?
- How does the institution ensure sustainable funding of research?
- Does the institution fully cost its research?

6 Managing the career of doctoral students

Educating, attracting and retaining young researchers are major concerns for higher education institutions and for the promotion of a European knowledge society. The following checklist (largely based on the guidelines for the EUA Doctoral project 2004-2005) covers the main aspects of doctoral education:

a) Organisation and structure of doctoral programmes

- National and institutional regulations (laws) on doctoral studies

- Structure of doctoral studies and in particular the balance between the individual research project and the need for more structured course work and training for subject appropriate generic skills? Does the institution ensure that apart from a thorough training in research and teaching and developed specialised knowledge, doctoral students develop other skills through special courses to master:
 - research grant applications
 - research group management
 - technology transfer and entrepreneurial skills
 - networking and public speaking through participation in and presentation of papers at conferences
- Internal management of doctoral studies (Ways in which studies are organised and managed? Who is responsible for what?)
- Duration of doctoral studies including recent changes and trends?
- Recruitment criteria, admission requirements, procedure and selection of doctoral candidates (regulated or unregulated; transparency about eligibility, application, selection and decisions on admission)
- Award of degrees and titles (Thesis and the ways of defence? What kinds of degree are awarded? Types of doctorate available: European doctorate, industrial doctorate, professional doctorate? Who can award doctoral degree?)
- Disciplinary differences (Are doctoral programmes in 'soft' and 'hard' sciences organised differently? What are the differences? What are the trends?)

b) Financing Doctoral programmes

- Institutional financing (sources of funding; new ways of funding and co-funding /co-operation with industry, sponsorship; financial management; introduction of tuition fees; grants and scholarships; loans; salaries)
- Are different financing practices an obstacle for mobility (e.g., do tuition fees in some countries prevent students from countries with free education to be mobile?)
- The doctoral candidate's legal status (Status as a student/ or an employee? What are the duties and tasks of the doctoral candidate, e.g. teaching/ or research assistance and what is the extent of these duties? Access to security benefits, e.g., does the candidate have the right to health insurance, maternity leave, pension, unemployment benefit, etc.?)
- Additional financial support for doctoral candidates, e.g., for conference attendance, summer schools, mobility, etc.
- Availability/importance of national/European/other support mechanisms
- Financial drawbacks and benefits for embarking upon a research career
- Disciplinary differences (Is it different in soft and hard sciences to get funds?)

c) Quality of Doctoral Programmes

- How is the quality of doctoral programmes understood in the institution?
- How is the quality of programme structure, academic content and skill development ensured (including core skills /and additional skills, e.g. team working, networking, communication, project management; career development training etc.)?
- How is the quality of equipment and facilities insured (health and safety in labs, access to and quality of labs and libraries, access to work space and computers, access to email and Internet)?
- How is the quality of organisation and evaluation of supervision ensured (how the supervisor is selected; nature of interaction between a student and a supervisor, is there a contract or is it informal; one-on-one relation or team supervision; how is the co-operation candidate-supervisor organised – regular contacts or occasional; is supervision evaluated internally or externally, etc.)?
- How is progress monitored (e.g., are there regular follow-ups, work plans and timelines for each candidate)?

- How is the quality of the thesis defence ensured (e.g., organisation, transparency in selection of committee members, public/ private defence; decision-making)?

d) Innovative practice for doctoral programmes

- Is the institution open to innovative practice and change or does it follow 'traditional' models?
- Are there any good examples of new and innovative practices for doctoral programmes (structured inter-disciplinary programmes, inter-sectoral programmes like partnerships with industry and business; graduate/ doctoral schools; programmes leading to professional degrees, etc.)?
- Are there any examples of innovative practices in certain aspects of doctoral programmes (e.g., programmes on monitoring and supervision or innovative financial strategies, mobility programmes, etc.)?
- Is there a European dimension in doctoral programmes (award of 'European doctorates'/'co-tutelles' etc., European mobility as an obligatory part of doctoral programmes)?
- To what extent does the organisation of doctoral schools cluster doctoral programmes across disciplines, offer joint courses, provide team supervision and generally provide an enabling and creative environment?

e) Active career promotion/counselling

Academic advisors and career offices develop individual career plans for doctoral students

- Are academic advisors helping their students to
 - Establish links to possible research groups/universities for future employment?
 - Establish links to industry, when appropriate?
 - Participate early on in conferences?
 - Prepare for job interviews in academia?
 - Seek post-doctoral positions?
- Are career offices helping student to:
 - Identify skills and different career paths?
 - Establish links to industry?
 - Understand (international) legal/employment issues?
 - Prepare for job interviews in industry?

VI. E-Learning

The following checklist is provided to institutions requesting a focus on e-learning activities as a structure for that portion of the self-evaluation report.

Mission

- How do e-learning activities fit into the mission of the institution?
- What priority do e-learning programmes have in regard to regular programmes?
- What is the institution's targeted audience? What are the specific needs of this audience? How can these needs be met by e-learning technologies?
- What is the institution e-learning approach? Does the institution have a unified approach for all programmes or does every programme use its own approach?
- What is the relationship between e-learning and traditional learning methodologies?
 - E-learning as an independent product or as a complement to traditional learning?
 - E-learning as another way to deliver traditional courses and programmes?

Activities

- How does the institution deal with the distance between students/teachers, students/students, teachers/teachers? How does the institution facilitate community building? How does the institution deal with the advantages/disadvantages of distance?
 - How does the institution organise its programme portfolio?
 - How does the institution organise students' and teachers' access to library resources?

- How does the institution deal with examination of long-distance students?
- What is the human resource strategy of the institution in respect to academic staff involved in e-learning? Does the institution have its own cadre of permanent staff for this area? Does it provide training opportunities in e-learning technology to its entire academic staff?
- How does the institution involve e-learning teachers/students in governance?
- Who is in charge of making decisions and what are the reporting relationships regarding:
 - Programme development
 - E-learning didactics
 - E-learning technologies
 - Staff recruitment
 - Communication strategy with students and teachers

Internal quality

- How does the institution evaluate its e-learning activities?
 - Student evaluations
 - Learning outcomes
 - Drop-out and progression rates
 - Communication interaction
 - Library resources and access
 - E-learning material
 - Technological environment
 - Student support services
- How does the institution improve the quality of its staff?
 - Staff development for teachers and tutors
 - Training on e-learning technology and didactics

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