



Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences

Guidelines for the Self-Evaluation Report

Institutional Audit



0. Introduction

This document provides guidelines for submitting the Self-Evaluation Report for Institutional Audits and for compiling the relevant documentation. The structure and the corresponding indicators have been developed by the AHPGS in close compliance with the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area", established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

The objective of the Institutional Audit performed by the AHPGS is to provide higher education institutions (HEIs) with the possibility of enhancing their internal mechanisms and quality management processes. It determines whether, and to what extent, higher education structures and control functions serve to achieve the set aims.

The procedure also provides an improved management tool for the management of the HEI and can be used as a non-binding precursor to institutional accreditation or system accreditation and to increase competitiveness.

During the Institutional Audit procedure, the expert group assesses various areas of the HEI's activities. The assessment focuses primarily on supporting improvement and development within the HEI and is aimed at enhancing the HEI's activities and structures to enable it to pursue higher standards in education, teaching and research. The assessment by the expert group consists of a "strength-weakness analysis" and provides constructive feedback. Thus, the Institutional Audit procedure is not only bonded to meeting a specified set of "standards". Rather the vision and goals the HEI hold priority within the Institutional Audit procedure.

The assessment by the expert group focuses on the following main areas:

- A. Profile, objectives and strategy of the institution
- B. Quality assurance and quality management system
- C. Institution management and administration
- D. Educational activities, including study programmes
- E. Infrastructure and functional resources

These are the main conventional areas for Institutional Audits formulated in compliance with international standards. The application for Institutional Audit (see below) is structured on these five areas.

1. Workflow of the Institutional Audit procedure

The Institutional Audit procedure is based on a three-stage plan, according to the established international common practice in external quality assurance procedures.



Prior to initiating the Institutional Audit procedure, preliminary discussions are held between the AHPGS and the applicant higher education institution. The final objective of the procedure is agreed and the general course of action is adapted to the profile of the HEI. The procedural steps are delineated and additional criteria are set if necessary.

- I. The HEI submits the application for Institutional Audit to the AHPGS along with the additional documentation – the annexes. In general, the annexes complete and support the statements made in the application and provide a comprehensive and clear overview of the HEI. They should contain sufficient information to enable the AHPGS and the expert group to assess the HEI.

The AHPGS reviews the documentation submitted in terms of adequacy and comprehensibility. Coherence between the objectives set for the Institutional Audit and the documentation submitted is also observed.

If necessary, as a result of this initial review, the AHPGS produces a set of open questions, which are forwarded to the HEI. The HEI then submits its responses to the open questions, together with any additional documentation requested.

Following the responses forwarded by the HEI, and after examining the documentation submitted, the AHPGS produces a summary of the application documents, which is to be approved by the HEI and subsequently forwarded to the expert group with all other documentation.

At the same time, the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS nominates the expert group to perform the Institutional Audit.

The AHPGS forwards the summary, the application and all additional documents to the expert group.

- II. The on-site visit of the expert group at the HEI take place. During this, the consistency and accuracy of the written documents is verified. It also reviews additional aspects, which the written documents might not have covered. As a result of the visit, the expert group produces a report, which summarises the results of the visit, as well as a set of recommendations for further enhancement of the HEI's activities. The expert report is forwarded to the HEI for verification and approval. If the case, the HEI submits a response to the expert report.

- III. The expert report, the HEI's response, as well as all previous documentation are forwarded to the AHPGS' Accreditation Commission, which revises the documentation and reaches a final decision regarding the HEI's compliance with the aforementioned criteria. The AHPGS quality audit seal is awarded on the basis of this.

If the case, the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS forwards a recommendation to other participating bodies.

According to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the final report will be published.



Application for Institutional Audit

Name of the applicant higher education institution:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
E-mail:	
Contact person(s) for Institutional Audit:	
Year of foundation of the higher education institution:	
Legal status (public/private/other):	
Management board:	
Faculties and departments:	
Affiliated institutions (research centres etc):	
Number of study programmes, their profile and type:	
Number of enrolled students:	
Number of full-time teaching personnel: If the case, number of full-time research personnel:	



Application structure:

A. Profile, objectives and strategy of the institution

A.1. Mission, objectives and standards

Details of:

- The HEI's mission statement, its objectives, and short, medium and long-term strategy.
- The international feasibility and comparability of the mission and strategy within a higher-education context.
- The methods by which the HEI assumes academic freedom and educational responsibility.
- The methods by which the HEI assumes social responsibility.

If the case, details of the schools of thought developed by the HEI.

A.2. Profile

Details of:

- The profile the HEI develops.
- The accordance between the HEI's profile and educational and labour market demands.
- The official status of the HEI.
- Its corporate responsibility with reference to its internal processes and the external effects of its actions.

A.3. Strategy and policies

Details of:

- The strategies and policies developed by the HEI.
- The stakeholders involved in implementing the strategy and policies.
- The resources employed by the HEI in implementing its strategy.

A.4. Institutional autonomy

Details of:

- How the HEI secures institutional autonomy and how it implements relevant legal regulations.
- The methods by which the HEI ensures impartiality and independence.
- How external stakeholders and target groups are involved in the process of securing autonomy and how they respond to this.

A.5. Cooperation

A brief overview of national and international cooperation secured in order to achieve the set objectives.

Relevant documentation:

Mission statement, brief description, institutional strategic plan, information brochure, development concepts and policies etc.



Quality indicators:

The mission and strategy of the HEI are clear and comprehensive. HEI members of the personnel are aware of them. External stakeholders and potential competitors, too, are aware of the HEI's profile, strategy and mission. Its presence is discernible and classifiable on the higher-education market. Policies are realistically formulated and correspond to its profile, mission and objectives. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) are identifiable in relation to the strategy of the HEI. Relevant institutional and legal specifications are properly implemented. The HEI develops target- and task-related cooperative partnerships to achieve its objectives.

B. Quality assurance and quality management system

B.1. Quality assurance system

Details of:

- The quality assurance concept and system developed at the HEI.
- The management structures and members of staff involved in the quality assurance system.
- The division of tasks and responsibilities.
- The integration of students in the quality assurance system.
- The manner in which all HEI members of staff become aware and are included in the system.
- The policies and strategies for measuring the effectiveness and results of the QA system.
- The existence of a Management Information System.

B.2. Internal and external quality assurance

Details of:

- The internal and external quality assurance systems.
- How the quality assurance system responds to the HEI's profile, mission and strategy.

B.3. Quality assurance monitoring

Details of:

- The evaluations performed for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning at the HEI.
- The evaluations performed for monitoring additional activities at the HEI.
- The results of the evaluations.
- The existence of feedback loops.

Relevant documentation:

Quality management handbook, evaluation forms, evaluation results, documentation on the strategies implemented and expected results.



Quality indicators:

The quality management system follows the quality-control loop (PDCA Cycle). This ensures the achievement of targets in teaching, studies, research, development and management. The HEI has an independent, objective structure that monitors the development and implementation of quality assurance. All the HEI's areas of activity undergo internal and external evaluations. These evaluations are performed on a regular basis and are transparent.

The HEI members of staff are aware of their duties. The quality assurance system is integrative, it takes into account each area of performance and its effects are identifiable.

The quality management system includes the participation of stakeholders and complies with internationally-acknowledged standards and common practices.

C. Institutional management and administration

C.1. Organisational structure

Details of:

- The HEI's organisational structure.
- The division of tasks among the HEI's members of staff.
- The participation of examining boards and programme committees in the organisational structure.
- Recruitment and employment procedures.
- How the HEI's structures aid the institution in achieving its mission and objectives.
- The inclusion of students in the HEI's organisational structure.

C.2. Academic and teaching freedom

Details of:

- The structures established for ensuring academic and teaching freedom.
- The methods by which academic and teaching freedom is ensured.

C.3. Decision-making processes

Details and description of the decision-making processes in place within the HEI.

Details of:

- The internal bodies responsible in the decision-making processes.
- How the participation of relevant groups (e.g. students, stakeholders) is ensured in these processes.
- The methods by which funding is secured within the decision-making processes.



C.4. Areas of activity

Details of:

- The bodies which regulate and manage the HEI's areas of activity.
- The division of the areas of activity within the HEI.
- The methods and processes by which these areas are regulated, from teaching to research and management.
- How these areas interconnect at a HEI level and how they interact with stakeholders and external factors.

C.5. External mechanisms

Details of how external management and organisational mechanisms participate in the HEI's structure.

Relevant documentation:

Legal specifications and documentation regulating the HEI's activities, organisational chart, statutes, basic orders, documentation on the main decision-making processes, regulations for recruiting teaching and academic personnel, vacant positions announcements and descriptions, regulations concerning financial resources, administrative regulations, flow chart for decision-making processes, documentation on committees involved in the administrative and teaching processes, partnership agreements.

Quality indicators:

The HEI has a homogeneous, clear and unambiguous organisational structure, which results in internal management competencies, responsibilities, and decision-making processes. Funding and resource allocation are regulated in a task-specific manner.

Regulations are formulated in a clear and unambiguous manner. The corresponding documentation is available to all HEI members of staff. Institutional autonomy is ensured by means of both external and internal structures and institutional processes and mechanisms encourage academic freedom.

The areas of activity present strategic targets that match the HEI's vision, mission and profile and are formally regulated by orders and statutes. All members of the HEI should partake in these activities. The HEI should also ensure stakeholder participation in all areas and at all levels (institution and programmes as well as research and development).



D. Educational activities, including study programmes

D.1. Study programmes, teaching and learning activities

D.1.1. Intended learning outcomes (ILO), qualification objectives and competencies

Details of:

- How the study programmes the HEI develops respond to the HEI's overall mission and strategy.
- The qualification objectives set by the study programmes offered by the HEI.
- How the study programmes and their corresponding ILOs form a unitary concept.
- How the HEI's range of courses responds to national and international qualification demands.
- The target groups targeted by the range of courses offered by the HEI.
- The graduate market targeted at and how the qualifications achieved respond to it.

D.1.2. Structure and content of the study programmes

Overview of the content of the study programmes and how it responds to the HEI's profile.

Details of:

- The general structure of the study programmes offered by the HEI.
- The didactic and teaching methods employed within the curricula and how they respond to the qualification targets.
- The final degrees awarded and their international conformity.
- The inclusion of international credit systems and qualification frameworks (e.g. ECTS, EQF).

D.1.3. Admission regulations

Details of:

- The admission requirements necessary for enrolment at the HEI; listing of the acts by means of which these are regulated.
- General requirements necessary for access to higher education.

D.1.4. Student assessment methods

Details of:

- The assessment methods for students.
- How evaluation methods ensure achievement of the qualification objectives.
- The methods by which the transparency and objectivity of the evaluation methods is ensured.



D.1.5. Quality assurance methods for the study programmes.

Details of:

- The evaluation and revision methods of the study programmes.
- Securing the participation of relevant stakeholders in the programmes.
- External evaluations or accreditation procedures the HEI has undergone.

D.1.6. Further programmes

Details of additional educational courses offered by the HEI (e.g. continuous education, professional training).

Relevant documentation:

Executive summaries of programmes at the HEI, overview of the educational courses offered, regulations on the degree programme structure (if required, legal regulations), overviews of the curricula, regulations for practical phases (internships) and exchange periods (semesters or academic years), regulations for admission and enrolment (if required, legal regulations), documentation on additional programmes, statistics on enrolled students and graduates, cooperation agreements with partner institutions.

Quality indicators:

The information provided on the HEI's educational offer is clear, succinct and comprehensible. The study programmes respond to the HEI's profile and form a consistent unit. They are comparable with the international education market and conform to international qualification frameworks.

The structure and content of the study programmes corresponds to the education level aimed at. The educational offer is differentiated according to the target group and the degree targeted. Parallels are identified between the ILO, the final qualifications and degree awarded. The final qualifications offered are based on a survey of the labour market and respond to its demands.

Implementation of the study programmes is assisted by scientific, administrative and research personnel. International systems and qualification frameworks are employed, which enables the participation of foreign students and facilitate international mobility. The examination methods assess students' knowledge, competencies, skills and abilities.

The study programmes are reviewed periodically and upgraded to meet national and international developments.

D.2. Conditions for teaching and learning

D.2.1. Infrastructure and Premises

Details of:

- The management and organisational structures responsible for directing the study programmes.



- The spatial and material resources available for the study programmes.
- The partner institutions (including internship or labour-market institutions) involved in the study programmes.

If required, details of the laboratories, practical rooms, or institutions/companies from industry, which offer students their equipment for practical exercises.

D.2.2. Library

Details of:

- How access to study materials and to further research libraries is ensured.
- The library available, as well as cooperative links the HEI has with other libraries.
- The electronic resources and databases available.

D.2.3. Student counselling and assistance

Details of:

- The internal facilities and structures providing student assistance.
- The methods and strategies employed for student counselling.
- The feedback system developed for identifying potential problems with students.
- Further personal development opportunities for students.
- The assistance provided to students within international mobility and exchange frameworks.
- The financial assistance options (e.g. scholarships, student loans).
- How contact with the alumni is maintained.

Relevant documentation:

Specifications regarding the teaching and learning premises (if required, details of the premises allocated for study programmes), specifications regarding the library, specification of access to external libraries, databases, regulations for tutoring and mentoring programmes, specification of the material resources and equipment available for the study programmes, specification of the alumni programmes.

Quality indicators:

The premises encourage an adequate qualitative and quantitative study process. An ongoing enhancement of the premises is planned. A library is available – or the HEI holds cooperative links with other institutions to secure the library resources necessary for implementing its educational courses. Depending on the profile of the study programmes, the HEI can secure adequate spatial and material resources for practical applications.

The HEI should offer counselling services for international students or for students involved in exchange programmes. There should be corresponding centres or committees assigned. The HEI should maintain contact with its graduates and monitor their integration into the labour market.



D.3. Research strategy and activity

Details and description of the main areas in which the HEI develops research activities.

Details of:

- The research strategy and its intended objectives.
- How the research strategy responds to the HEI's mission and profile.
- The correspondence between the study programmes and the research activity.
- The involvement of the teaching staff in the research activity, as well as the participation of researchers in the teaching and didactic activities.
- Students' participation in research.
- The personnel, functional and financial resources for research.
- The incentive system developed at the HEI for motivating research staff.
- How the HEI supports junior scientific staff.
- External, internal and inter-departmental partnerships developed within research.
- The system developed for evaluating research results.

Relevant documentation:

Research strategy and policies, relevant regulations, documentation and reports on research projects, cooperation agreements, budget and funding overview, documentation on the incentive system.

Quality indicators:

The HEI provides an adequate, productive environment which allows its members to undertake research activities. The HEI sets short, medium and long-term objectives for its research strategy. The research strategy is clearly formulated and involves as many members of the teaching and academic staff as possible. The research activity responds to the HEI's profile and mission. The HEI provides evidence of the adequacy of the research personnel, its facilities and material resources for properly running its research activities.

Research results are continuously monitored and traceable to developments at national and international level.

E. Infrastructure and functional resources

E.1. Spatial, material and functional resources

Details of:

- The spatial and functional resources the HEI has for developing its academic, teaching and research activities.



- The additional resources for supporting students and HEI members of staff (e.g. student dormitories, campus, sports facilities, facilities for extra-curricular activities, for public events or conferences).
- The electronic resources available at the HEI.

E.2. Teaching and additional personnel

Overview of the teaching personnel at the HEI.

Details of:

- The qualifications and experience necessary for occupying a teaching position.
- The academic degrees and the corresponding percentage amongst the HEI's members of staff.
- Recruiting strategies.
- Personal and continuous development opportunities for both teaching and administrative personnel.

Overview of administrative and non-teaching staff.

E.3. Financial resources

Details of:

- The HEI budget and financial resources.
- The strategy developed by the HEI for securing financial resources and allocating them.
- Planned developments and how resources will be secured.

Relevant documentation:

Ground plan of the HEI, plan for the allocation of spatial resources at the HEI, regulations for the employment of teaching and administrative personnel, financial and business budgets, regulations for allocating financial resources.

Quality indicators:

The resources available within the HEI support its teaching and learning activities, as well as administrative and management structures and processes. The electronic resources are up to date and accessible and relevant software is available for enhancing the learning process in study programmes with a specific profile.

The HEI has regulations for recruiting teaching, administrative and academic personnel, which are clear and conform to national and international standards. The regulations ensure an adequate level of qualification and experience according to the position available when recruiting personnel.

Adequate personnel is employed to run all activities within the HEI and their qualification and experience is adequate for the tasks they are assigned.

The HEI provides adequate opportunities for the personal and continuous training of its staff, which are available both internally and externally. It monitors the development and results of its staff.

The HEI secures adequate revenue for the proper development of all its activities. The status of the HEI conforms to international and national regulations and does not infringe upon them. The financial resources are adequate for implementing the HEI's strategy, as well as for implementing future plans.

