

## International Institutional Accreditation

(Decision of the Foundation Board, February 18th 2016)

### Objectives of the Institutional Accreditation

Using the peer review methodology, the Institutional Accreditation assesses the core functions of a higher education institution, makes recommendations for its enhancement and – upon successful completion – awards the **evalag** institutional quality label. For the assessment, **evalag** uses its criteria for institutional accreditation.

### The accreditation process

#### 1. Application

To apply for an institutional accreditation, the institution fills in the application form with some structured information and data on the institution and submits it to **evalag**. On the basis of the application, **evalag** is able to plan the accreditation process and identify appropriate experts.

#### 2. Self-evaluation report by the higher education institution

On the basis of guidelines developed by **evalag** in coordination with the institution and the expert panel, the institution will produce a self-evaluation report that describes the institution and its operations according to the assessment criteria. This self-evaluation report will be the basis for the site visit and the assessment.

#### 3. Preparatory meeting of expert panel

After receiving the self-evaluation report, the expert panel meets to discuss the report and to prepare the site visit. The panel may request some additional information to be provided for the site visit.

#### 4. Site visit by the expert panel

The site visit at the institution allows the expert panel to analyse the institution and substantiate its assessment. During the site visit the panel will meet different stakeholder groups. At the end of the visit the experts will present their preliminary assessment.

The expert panel will usually consist of four to five members. The majority of the panel members will have substantial expertise in the management of higher education institutions. Experience with international higher education systems is also a necessary requirement. Three experts will be from higher education institutions, among them experts with leadership experience. One student will also be member of the panel. Upon request of the institution the size of the expert panel may be increased.

The site visit will have a duration of three to four days, including internal meetings of the expert team which will take place before and after the site visit itself.

## 5. Assessment report

After the site visit, **evalag** will draft the assessment report on the basis of the self-evaluation report of the institution and the results of the site visit. The report will include an assessment of the institution on each assessment criterion and recommendations of the expert panel on possible enhancements. After finalisation of the report by **evalag** the expert panel will agree on the final version which will be submitted to the institution for correction of factual errors and a statement.

In case a criterion is not fully met by the institution but the expert panel believes that the institution is able to improve in this aspect, the panel may request a condition to be fulfilled by the institution prior to accreditation.

## 6. Award of the quality label

Based on the assessment report of the expert team the **evalag** Foundation Board will decide about awarding the institution the **evalag** institutional accreditation label and may impose conditions, in case a criterion is not sufficiently met. The label will be accompanied by the graded assessment of each criterion. The accreditation is valid for five years. During the accreditation period the institution is allowed to use the label for information purposes. The assessment report will be published on the **evalag** website.

In case of a conditional accreditation, the institution receives an appropriate deadline to prove in writing the fulfilment of the conditions to the **evalag** Foundation Board.

In case of extensive defects of the institution, the Foundation Board may request a second site visit to demonstrate that the institution meets the accreditation criteria.

### Indicative time-frame

Preparation of self-evaluation report	three to six months
Preparatory meeting of expert panel in Mannheim (1 day)	following month
Site-visit of the institution (3-4 days)	following month
Preparation of assessment report	two to three months
Decision about the award of the quality label	meeting of <b>evalag</b> Foundation Board following the finalisation of the assessment report (three meetings a year)

Altogether the accreditation procedure will have a duration of 8 -14 months. The concrete timeline of the audit will be adjusted with the expert panel and the higher education institution.

### Language

The accreditation will be carried out in English.

## Assessment levels

### Passed

The institution fulfils or exceeds all criteria. All activities are in line with the profile and objectives of the institution and provided at a high academic level.

### Passed subject to conditions

The institution does not fulfil some relevant criteria. However, the institution should be able to remedy the shortcomings within nine months after the assessment.

### Suspension of the accreditation procedure

The institution does not fulfil relevant criteria, but it is likely, that it will be able to remedy the shortcomings within 18 months after the assessment. The HEI may apply for a resumption of the accreditation procedure.

### Failed

The institution does not fulfil relevant criteria, and is not expected to be able to meet all assessment criteria within 18 months' time.

## Assessment criteria

The accreditation criteria used by the **evalag** institutional accreditation have been put into effect by the **evalag** Foundation Board. They refer to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and include an analysis of Part 1 of the ESG.

### 1. Institutional profile and strategy

The expert team checks

- 1.1. whether the strategies fit the profile of the institution (fitness for purpose)
- 1.2. whether the strategies and profile of the institution comply with internationally accepted standards (fitness of purpose)
- 1.3. the processes for the definition of strategies
- 1.4. whether strategies are adequate to reach the institutional objectives.

### 2. Governance

The expert team checks

- 2.1. the clarity and transparency of the organisational provisions and governance structure
- 2.2. whether governance structures are adequate to support the institutional strategies

- 2.3. how decision making processes are organised
- 2.4. how stakeholder groups are involved in governance
- 2.5. whether the institution provides relevant information about its activities for the internal and external public
- 2.6. whether academic freedom is assured. This includes:
  - 2.6.1. Adequate participation of academics in academic decisions of the institution
  - 2.6.2. The main responsibility for research and teaching lies with academics
  - 2.6.3. Adequate relations between academics and the funding body of the institution
  - 2.6.4. Transparent and science-based search, hiring and tenure procedures for academics which are documented in statutes.

### **3. Resources**

The expert team checks

- 3.1. the existence of a professional funding and financial management
- 3.2. whether the staff is adequate in qualification and number to support the institutional strategy
- 3.3. whether the search, hiring and tenure procedure are in line with international academic practices
- 3.4. whether resources, facilities and equipment are in accordance with the institutional strategy.

### **4. Teaching and learning**

The expert team checks

- 4.1. whether the study programmes comply with the institutional strategy and national regulations
- 4.2. the academic standards of the study programmes
- 4.3. how research and teaching are linked
- 4.4. whether the institution employs student centred teaching and learning processes which pay respect to the diversity of students and their needs
- 4.5. how the assessment of intended learning outcomes is organised
- 4.6. how the student life cycle is organised

### **5. Research**

The expert team checks

- 5.1. the research profile and academic goals of the institution
- 5.2. whether the research profile fits the institutional strategy
- 5.3. whether the academic standards are fulfilled

- 5.4. how the research process is organised and supported by the institution
- 5.5. how research is evaluated within the institution.
- 5.6. how the training of young researchers is organised
- 5.7. how the institution assures the academic standards of the training of young researchers
- 5.8. how the institution assures the rights of young researchers.

## **6. Institution and society**

The expert team checks

- 6.1. whether the strategy of the institution takes the needs of society into account
- 6.2. the activities with which the institution connects to society (e.g., cooperations, internationalisation, entrepreneurship, diversity)
- 6.3. whether the activities fit the strategy.

## **7. Quality Assurance**

The expert team checks

- 7.1. the quality assurance concept of the institution
- 7.2. the indicators for monitoring the achievement of objectives
- 7.3. how the institution systematically collects, analyses and uses relevant information about its activities
- 7.4. whether quality assurance is used regularly and systematically for quality enhancement
- 7.5. whether quality feedback loops are closed
- 7.6. how the institution fosters the development of a quality culture.