

International Programme Accreditation

(Decision of the Foundation Board, February 18th 2016, updated December 1st 2017)

Objectives

Using the peer review methodology, the Programme Accreditation assesses one programme or a bundle of study programmes in the same academic field, makes recommendations for their enhancement and – upon successful completion – awards the **evalag** international programme accreditation label. For the assessment, **evalag** applies its criteria for international programme accreditation.

The accreditation process

1. Application and pre-accreditation check

To apply for an international programme accreditation, the institution fills in the application form with some structured information and data on the programme(s) and submits it to **evalag**. On the basis of the information provided by the application, **evalag** checks, whether the programme(s) fulfils (fulfil) minimum conditions that allow in principle a successful accreditation process. Upon a successful pre-accreditation check **evalag** will plan the accreditation process and identify appropriate experts.

2. Self-evaluation report by the higher education institution

On the basis of guidelines, the institution will produce a self-evaluation report that describes the programme(s) according to the assessment criteria. This self-evaluation report will be the basis for the site visit and the assessment.

3. Site visit by the expert panel

The site visit at the institution allows the expert panel to analyse the programme(s) and substantiate its (their) 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.

Depending on the number of programmes the expert panel will consist of four to seven members who represent the different disciplines covered by the programme or the cluster of programmes. The majority of the panel members will have substantial expertise in programme assessment. Experience with international higher education systems is also a necessary requirement. At least three experts will be from higher education institutions, and one expert will be a student. Upon request of the institution the size of the expert panel may be increased.

The duration of the site visit will be two days, including internal meetings of the expert team which will take place at the beginning and at the end of the site visit.

4. Assessment report

After the site visit, **evalag** will draft the assessment report on the basis of the self-evaluation report and the results of the site visit. The report will include an assessment of the programme(s) on each assessment criterion and recommendations of the expert panel for 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.

5. Award of the quality label

Based on the assessment report of the expert team the **evalag** accreditation commission will decide about awarding the programme(s) the **evalag** international programme 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 six 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** accreditation commission.

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

Indicative time-frame

Preparation of self-evaluation report	three to six months
Site-visit of the institution (2 days)	following month
Preparation of assessment report	two to three months
Decision about the award of the quality label	meeting of evalag accreditation commission following the finalisation of the assessment report (three meetings a year)

Altogether the completion of the accreditation procedure will take 8 -14 months. The concrete timeline of the accreditation will be coordinated with the expert panel and the higher education institution.

Language

The accreditation will be carried out in English.

Assessment levels

Passed

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

Passed subject to conditions

The programme 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 programme does not fulfil relevant criteria, but it is likely, that the institution 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 programme does not fulfil relevant criteria, and the institution is not expected to be able to meet all assessment criteria within 18 months' time.

Assessment criteria

The accreditation criteria used by the **evalag** international programme 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. Programme profile

Profile and objectives of the programme

The expert team checks

- 1.1. whether the objectives of the programme are in line with the profile and the strategic goals of the institution
- 1.2. whether the intended learning outcomes of the programme are well defined and publicly accessible
- 1.3. whether the intended learning outcomes correspond to the type and level of qualification provided by the programme
- 1.4. whether the intended learning outcomes are based on academic or professional requirements (standards), public needs and the demands of the labour market and contribute to the employability of the graduates
- 1.5. whether the (academic) study programme is related to research (procurement of scientific methods in theory and practice, research based teaching)

- 1.6. whether the profile and objectives of the programme comply with internationally accepted standards
- 1.7. the international dimension of the programme
- 1.8. whether the qualification of the academic staff is adequate with regard to profile and objectives of the programme.

2. Curriculum

Curriculum and teaching and learning methods

The expert team checks

- 2.1. whether the curriculum of the programme is adequately structured to achieve the intended learning outcomes
- 2.2. whether the curriculum provides the necessary knowledge and methodological expertise of the relevant discipline(s)
- 2.3. whether the learning experience is organised in a way that takes the diversity of students and their needs into account, employs appropriate student-centred teaching and learning methods and encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process.

3. Student assessment

Organisation of student assessments

The expert team checks

- 3.1. how the assessment of intended learning outcomes is organised
- 3.2. whether the amount and requirements of assessments are adequate with regard to the intended learning outcomes
- 3.3. whether the requirements of the thesis reflect the level of the degree
- 3.4. whether the assessment criteria are transparent and used in an consistent way
- 3.5. whether the staff undertaking assessments is adequately qualified
- 3.6. whether examination regulations exist and
- 3.7. whether they provide clear and fair regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating conditions.

4. Organisation of the study programme

Implementation of the programme

The expert team checks

- 4.1. the appropriateness of entry qualifications
- 4.2. the regulations for the recognition of qualifications (i.e. Lisbon Convention)
- 4.3. whether the organisation of the study process allows the programme to be carried out in such a way that the intended learning outcomes will be achieved

- and whether the organisation of the study process also takes the diversity of students and their needs into account
- 4.4. how the implementation of the programme is managed (roles and responsibilities)
 - 4.5. whether the workload of the programme is adequate with respect to the necessity to reach the intended learning outcomes in the scheduled time frame
 - 4.6. how the student life cycle is organised (i. e. all (organisational) relationships between the student and the institution from enrolment to graduation)
 - 4.7. whether the care services and student advisory services are suitable
 - 4.8. in case of a cooperation with internal and external partners: how the cooperation is organised.

5. Resources

Deployment of resources (finances, personnel, facilities) to sustain HEI programmes

The expert team checks

- 5.1. the sustainability of funding and financial management
- 5.2. whether the number and qualification of academic staff (full-time and part-time) is adequate to ensure intended learning outcomes
- 5.3. which strategies and processes for the staff recruiting and staff development are used
- 5.4. whether amount and quality of facilities and equipment allow the provision of the programme (library, laboratories, teaching rooms, IT equipment)
- 5.5. whether the amount and quality of the resources provided are adequate to reach the objectives of the programme.

6. Quality assurance

Internal and external quality assurance of the programme

The expert team checks

- 6.1. how study programmes are designed and implemented and how their improvement is organised
- 6.2. whether a quality assurance concept of the programme is available and how it is connected to the quality assurance system of the institution
- 6.3. what kind of quality assurance processes and instruments for programmes are implemented
- 6.4. whether quality assurance is regularly, systematically and effectively used for quality enhancement
- 6.5. whether quality feedback loops are closed
- 6.6. how the persons responsible for the programme systematically collect, analyse and use relevant information

- 6.7. how stakeholders (students, teachers, administration, employers) are involved in quality assurance)
- 6.8. whether relevant programme information for students and prospective students is provided.