MENT⊙Rme

Promoting social inclusion of people with fewer opportunities through the development of mentorship programme for HEIs students

IO2 – A3 CROSS-BORDER ACCREDITATION OF TRAINING PROGRAMME

September 2021

Prepared by:

ACQUIN

Your intention. Our focus.

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PROJECT CONSORTIUM

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P3	GR	ACTIVE CITIZENS OF MEDITERRANEAN	
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P7	PL	Strefa Inspiracji i Rozwoju	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

Acronym / Initials	Explanation
EQF	European Qualification Framework
ESG standards	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
HEI	Higher Education Institution

1. Introduction

The MENTORme project is a 28-month Erasmus+ project designed to support the testing of innovative practices for enhancing HEIs civic engagement. The project seeks to equip HE staff with innovative teaching material for training HE students to become civically engaged, to support HE students in acquiring transversal skills and competences to meet the demands of the labour market and to promote the development of social practices within the universities' actions for promotion of civic engagement.

1.1 Purpose and scope of guidelines for curricula certification

These guidelines are not intended as a rigid organisational and conceptual specification; they should rather be understood as flexible assistance offering a catalogue of questions (esp. in chapter 4.3), which should be answered from within the training programme and its examination regulations. The self-documentation should be freely prepared on the basis of these guidelines and clarify the profile of the training programme in terms of content and implementation.

Based on ACQUIN's experience and the studies that have been conducted at European level, these guidelines illustrate the key quality features that guarantee transparency in the process of curriculum certification and strengthen the confidence and trust among learners, educational sector and labour market not only at national, but also at European level.

1.2 Methodological note

ACQUIN is a registered association whose members are higher education institutions, professional associations and business companies. The institute operates under the license of the German Accreditation Council and is thus empowered to award its quality seal to study programmes which have successfully undergone accreditation. At European level, ACQUIN is registered in **the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)**, is a member of the **European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA)**, as well as of many other professional associations and networks.

Within this framework, the proposed methodology is based on 20 years of experience in national and international accreditation and certification procedures. The following chapters will describe the content, the criteria and the process of the external quality audit and provide assistance in preparing for the procedure. As an external quality assurance instrument, the certification procedure aims both at assessing the study programme's existing quality and at recommending improvements. To guarantee impartiality of the peer-review panel, the external experts scrutinize the study programme against a set of criteria

following the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) providing a framework for quality assurance processes, which may also integrate national and/or subject-specific standards. The findings of the peer-review panel will result in a certification report and the ACQUIN Accreditation Commission will make the certification decision.

To ensure transparency throughout the whole process, ACQUIN methodology identifies the key quality certification features below:

- addressing certification in formal quality assurance mechanisms;
- providing clear reference points for assessment;
- provision of information to stakeholders and partners;
- selection, requirements and training of external experts;
- quality of assessment methods and procedures;
- documentation, evaluation and monitoring of certification.

2. Added value of certification

2.1 Principles and drivers of quality

In the context of comparability and recognition of qualifications across Europe, it is essential to ensure that certification and quality assurance processes effectively generate credibility and trust among the institutions. Specific principles and quality assurance arrangements are applicable when developing a process for certification. During the certification procedure, the principles of validity, reliability, impartiality and transparency are applicable. These principles are identifiable in the designing of the assessment methods/standards and procedures:

a) **validity** of assessment ensures that assessment methods, materials and instruments measure as precisely as possible the intended learning outcomes and that evidence fully supports the assessment;

b) **reliability** is about whether the same assessment results can be obtained in different cases (e.g. in relation to context, time, external experts or assessment tasks). It refers to the degree of consistency and accuracy of the assessment outcomes;

c) **impartiality** or fairness means that assessment is not unequal on the grounds of race, gender or on any other grounds. It does not disadvantage particular candidates or groups of candidates and that personal views or feelings of the external experts have no influence on the assessment;

d) **transparency** means that the approach to assessment, the methods and tools used, the context, timing and the criteria applied as well as the implications of its results must be known by all the parties involved in assessment.

2.2 Benefits of international certification procedure

The MENTORme project concept includes the opportunity to certify the developed curricula providing following benefits for the project at European and international level:

- Differentiation in the market & at European level, increasing the exploitation and sustainability of MENTORme results;
- Enabling the transferability and comparability of skills and competences around Europe;
- Supporting the development of a common understanding of certification requirements among stakeholders;
- Strengthening the public perception of the value of certification, national legislation and regulation;
- Providing a stamp of excellence based on European QA framework and international standards;
- ACQUIN is full member of ENQA-European Association for Quality Assurance and registered at EQAR-European Quality Assurance Register and INQAAHE-International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies;
- The procedure is transparent, its results are officially published;

The procedure follows transparent criteria and certifies that:

- The program has clearly defined and valid objectives;
- The concept of the program enables the (intended) realization of the objectives;
- The necessary organizational and resource requirements are met;
- The provider periodically checks whether the objectives of the program are successfully reached and whether the program needs modification.

3. Applicable Framework

3.1 EQF Framework

The European Qualification Framework is an 8-level, learning outcomes-based framework for all types of qualifications that serves as a translation tool between different national qualifications frameworks. This framework helps improve transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications and makes it possible to compare qualifications from different countries and institutions.

The EQF covers all types and all levels of qualifications and the use of learning outcomes makes it clear what a person knows, understands and is able to do[1]. Within the certification procedure of the MENTORme programme, the objectives and contents will be assessed in reference to EQF level 6.

For detailed information please refer to Annex 3.1.

3.2 ESG Standards and Bologna process

The ESG are a set of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in higher education. The ESG are not standards for quality, nor do they prescribe how the quality assurance processes are implemented, but they provide guidance, covering the areas which are vital for successful quality provision and learning environments in higher education[2].

Bologna reforms could improve quality in multiple ways: through the opportunities they offer to reflect and review curricula, to reform teaching methods (student-centered learning, continuous assessment, flexible learning paths) and even through strengthening horizontal communication and institutional transparency (EUA, 2008).

The assessment criteria applied in the certification procedure closely follow these European Standards and Guidelines described in Part I of the 2015 compiled document, including the following aspects:

- Policy for quality assurance
- Design and approval of programmes
- Student centered learning, teaching and assessment

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[1] Source: https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-qualifications-framework-eqf
[2] Source: https://www.eqar.eu/kb/esg/

- Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
- Teaching staff
- Learning resources and student support
- Information Management
- Public information
- On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
- Cyclical external quality assurance

Systematic quality assurance of training programmes is of high importance in order to assure relevance of qualifications within the labour market. The certification process that will be carried out within the MENTORme project is particularly important in this context: it confirms that the learner has successfully completed a learning process through a regulated training and education programme, passed the required exams or assessments and is awarded the qualification on the basis of his or her acquired competences.

For detailed information please refer to Annex 3.2:

3.3 The profile of "Evaluation Committee"

The Evaluation Committee (external experts, assessors) usually consists of professors, practitioners and students' representative (usually 4 members). Depending on the countries that are interested in the certification and the number of curricula, ACQUIN will compose an Evaluation Committee containing universal experts and national experts. **All external experts are required to sign an agreement of impartiality and data privacy**.

Suggested composition of Evaluation Committee:

- 1 representative of civic engagement and social practice;
- 2 professors including expert in didactics and expert in a field of civic engagement and social practice;
- 1 participant/student in a similar training course.

Short profile of external expert/assessor:

- Expertise and relevant qualification in the sector to be assessed;
- Knowledge of the sector-specific and country regulations and characteristics;
- Understanding of the background and principles of the field of study;
- Proven professional experience (5 years and more);
- Written and verbal communication skills;
- ICT skills;
- At least one external expert should have experience with EU Framework, and/or cross border certification, co-funded projects etc.

The review-panel will engage in a conference with all project partners involved in the curriculum and its implementation in order to clarify any questions. In case the review-panel forgoes an onsite visit at the providing partners premises, the resources can either be presented via online conference call or a national expert can visit the premises (laboratories, libraries, working and computer rooms etc.) representative for the panel to evaluate whether they are equipped adequately to run the study programme successfully. All panel members will write parts of the certification report (work can be split among experts) which will serve as the basis for the certification decision.

The certification process is a collegial advisory process based on constructive critique: If the experts perceive ways in which the training programme could be improved, they should discuss them with the directors of the programme.

4. Practical Guidelines

4.1 Description of roles among the partnership

The universities are the partners with the necessary expertise for curricula design. ACQUIN will be in close cooperation with the education partners, reassuring in every step the quality of the training course. For the certification procedure the following information is essential:

- Learning Outcomes and Objectives;
- The Concept of the course (Curriculum and Teaching format);
- Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment;
- Teaching staff;
- Learning resources and student support;
- Information management;
- On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes;
- Cyclic external quality assurance;

Furthermore, the MENTORme online platform is also subject to the evaluation process. It should be user friendly and offer a student centered approach (clear assessment of learner, good communication mechanism between tutor and learner etc).

4.2 Agreed workplan

- Appointment of Certification Team (ACQUIN + contact persons in each organisation) until September 2021;
- Application of Certification Request of HEIs (SAN, UCLAN, UVA) as well as platform developer until September 2021;
- Preparation of Guidelines for self-assessment report by ACQUIN in September 2021;
- Compilation of self-evaluation report by HEI Partners in cooperation with other partners October-February 2022;
- Recruitment and training of external experts by ACQUIN in consultation with responsible partners November-January 2021;
- Finalised training programme uploaded on the platform until February 2022 (all partners);
- Conduction of online assessment conference by ACQUIN + HEIs + External experts in March 2022;
- Compilation of the Evaluation Report by ACQUIN until April 2022;
- Feedback from educational institutions on the Evaluation report including possible adjustments on the programme until May 2022;
- Final certification decision by ACQUIN's Accreditation Commission in June 2022.

Important Note: The above plan assumes that the training programme will be at least 90% finalized and available in English language until February 2022. Any deviation on the plan will transfer ACQUIN Accreditation Commission in September 2022 with relevant adaptations on each task before that.

4.3 Preparation of self-assessment report

In order to provide all necessary information for the certification process, a self-assessment report should be prepared jointly by all those partners, who are engaged in the development of the curriculum, but also who will offer the programme (or parts of it) within its institution.

The following **Suggested structure of the Self-Assessment Report** can of course be adapted if necessary:

Part I. Information on the HEIs/Departments offering the programme

1. Management and Responsibilities regarding the programme

2. Description of the Internal and External Quality Assurance System

3. Resources and Provision of the Programme

4. Teaching staff

5. Scientific Research Activities

6. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Part II. Description of the Study Programme

1. Short profile of the Study Programme

2. Objectives

3. Content of the programme

4. Online Platform and mobile App of the Study Programme

Part III. Annexes Other documents which the higher education institution/ college considers relevant.

For further information on the preparation of the self-assessment report, please refer to Annex 5.2.

4.4 Certification Team

In preparation of the certification procedure, all project partners process appointed one or more contact person in order to create a certification team:

Partner	Name-Surname	E-mail
SPOLECZNA AKADEMIA NAUK	Aleksandra Zając	azajac@san.edu.pl
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5. Annexes

5.1 Guidelines for International Certification Procedures

Guidelines for International Certification procedures are published in ACQUIN website and can be accessed here: **https://www.acquin.org/en/certification/**. Partners should carefully read the document and contact ACQUIN Team for any question or clarification.

5.2 Template for self-assessment report (common parts & individual parts)

Attached as a word-file to the current Guidelines.

5.3 Letter for identification of external experts

All partners can provide suggestions on the external experts that would have an interest in the training programme. The Evaluation Committee will be commonly agreed with ACQUIN and MENTORme Certification Team. The below template can be used:

Dear Professor/Mr./Mrs.,

As Project Manager of the Erasmus+ Project MENTORme, I would like to contact you with the following request based on your extended expertise in the field of ….

MENTORme Project (https://mentorme-programme.eu/) aims to strengthen Higher Education Institutions' interaction with society, by supporting higher education students to become civically engaged through effective guidance and motivation practices and by raising cultural awareness and promoting diversity acceptance among them.

The project's main objective will be to develop an online tool in order to establish mentoring relationships between students – who will be the mentors, the professors – who will act as the supervisors and the people with fewer opportunities – who will receive mentorship as they will be the mentees. In this context, we are currently preparing an international certification procedure undertaken by the Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Agency (ACQUIN) for the training course that will be developed.

The training programme will be offered by:

- *Coordinator Społeczna Akademia Nauk, Poland: www.san.edu.pl*
- *Universidad de Valladolid, Spain: www.uva.es*
- *University of Central Lancashire, Cyprus: www.uclancyprus.ac.cy*
- *Platform developer Emphasys Centre, Cyprus: www.emphasyscentre.com*

We would be honoured if you accepted to be part of our Evaluation Committee (External Expert Group) and contribute with your experience and expertise in the evaluation procedure of the training programme. In this certification procedure ESG standards https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/ are applicable.

*For this certification procedure there will be two (2) online conferences. One with ACQUIN for the preparation of the Evaluation Committee and one with Education Institutes, Evaluation Committee and ACQUIN to clarify questions and aspects on the training programme. On-site visits to the premises of HEIs could be possible for local external experts. It is estimated that the online conferences will be held **between March-April 2022 training of Evaluation Committee and Accreditation online conference**, further confirming your availability. As a member of the Evaluation Committee, you are granted access to our online platform, as well as all available training material, handbooks etc.*

*Regarding the reimbursement, for your participation in the online calls, the review of training programme and your written feedback on the final Evaluation Report, we have envisaged a **budget of 450 Euro**.*

We are looking forward to a positive reply and we remain at your disposal for any further question or clarification you may have.

Yours Sincerely,

5.4 Impartiality agreement of external experts

All members of Evaluation Committee will initially sign ACQUIN's Impartiality Agreement and Privacy Policy. Agreement includes (indicatively):

Impartiality

Please mark here:

☐   *I declare to be personal and by business impartial.*

☐   *Due to the following reason I cannot exclude all evidence of impartiality:*

_____

_____

Confidentiality

I agree to handle all the documents made available to me and also any other information about the HEI and the training programmes mentioned above, which are presented to me during the certification procedure, confidentially.

Data protection

After completing the process, the certification results will be published on the websites of ACQUIN and the Database of European Quality Register (DEQAR). I agree that my name will be published as part of these reports. The processing of personal data is in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR);

I have read the ACQUIN privacy policy..

5.5 HEI application to ACQUIN

Place and Date:

Subject: Application of (insert your organization) for the certification procedure of the developed training programme under Erasmus+ Project MENTORme

Dear ACQUIN partners,

hereby, we would like to submit our application to ACQUIN regarding the cross-border assessment and certification procedure of the below training programme:

- **Mentorship programme for HEIs students**

 that will be developed as part of the Erasmus+ Project MENTORme.

The Higher Education institute/platform developer consents to submit the self-assessment report by February 2022, following the guidelines of ACQUIN. ACQUIN is entitled to request further information until the completion of the assessment and certification procedure.

All information regarding the training programme and the certification procedure (methodology, employees involved, business products, correspondence etc) are confidential.

Yours Sincerely,

(Signature)

Name and Position

(to be signed by officially declared Project Managers or Director of each participant organisation)

Annex 1: Time plan

Annex 2: Certification procedure outcomes

5.6 ESG standards

Methodological note: The guidelines should not be understood as rigid organisational and conceptual requirements; rather, they should be conceived as *offering flexible assistance* with a list of questions whose answers can also be derived from the training programme and examination regulations. The self-documentation should be compiled freely on the basis of these guidelines and illustrate the quality profile of the study programme by specifying the strengths and weaknesses of the individual elements.

ESG Part 1, 1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standard: Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

Guidelines:

Policies and processes are the main pillars of a coherent institutional quality assurance system that forms a cycle for continuous improvement and contributes to the accountability of the institution. It supports the development of quality culture in which all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance at all levels of the institution. In order to facilitate this, the policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach. Such a policy supports

- the organisation of the quality assurance system;

- departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units as well as those of institutional, leadership, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;

- academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud;

- guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff;

- the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

The policy translates into practice through a variety of internal quality assurance processes that allow participation across the institution. How the policy is implemented, monitored and revised is the institution's decision.

The quality assurance policy also covers any elements of an institution's activities that are subcontracted to or carried out by other parties.

ESG Part 1, 1.2 Design and approval of programmes

Standard: Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Guidelines:

Study programmes are at the core of the higher education institutions' teaching mission. They provide students with both academic knowledge and skills including those that are transferable, which may influence their personal development and may be applied in their future careers.

Programmes:

- are designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional

  strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes;

- are designed by involving students and other stakeholders in the work;

- benefit from external expertise and reference points;

- reflect the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (cf. Scope and

  Concepts);

- are designed so that they enable smooth student progression;

- define the expected student workload, e.g. in ECTS;

- include well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate;

- are subject to a formal institutional approval process.

ESG Part 1, Standard 1.3: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Standard: Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Guidelines:

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. This means careful consideration of the design and delivery of study programmes and the assessment of outcomes.

The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching

- respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;
- considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;
- flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;
- regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods;
- encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher;
- promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship;
- has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints

Considering the importance of assessment for the students' progression and their future careers, quality assurance processes for assessment take into account the following:

- Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field;
- The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance;
- The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process;
- Where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner;
- The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances;
- Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;
- A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.

ESG Part 1, Standard 1.4: Student admission, progression, recognition and accreditation

Standard: Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and accreditation.

Guidelines:

Providing conditions and support that are necessary for students to make progress in their academic career is in the best interest of the individual students, programmes, institutions and systems. It is vital to have fit-for-purpose admission, recognition and completion procedures, particularly when students are mobile within and across higher education systems. It is important that access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner. Induction to the institution and the programme is provided.

Institutions need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression.

Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on

- institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country.

Graduation represents the culmination of the students' period of study. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

ESG Part 1, Standard 1.5: Teaching staff

Standard: Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

Guidelines:

The teacher's role is essential in creating a high quality student experience and enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competences and skills. The diversifying student population and stronger focus on learning outcomes require student-centred learning and teaching and the role of the teacher is, therefore, also changing (cf. Standard 1.3).

Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. Such an environment

- sets up and follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment and conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching;
- offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of teaching staff;
- encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research;

- encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

ESG Part 1, Standard 1.6: Learning resources and student support

Standard: Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

Guidelines:

For a good higher education experience, institutions provide a range of resources to assist student learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries, study facilities and IT infrastructure to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors and other advisers. The role of support services is of particular importance in facilitating the mobility of students within and across higher education systems.

The needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities), and the shift towards student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources and student support.

Support activities and facilities may be organised in a variety of ways depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are fit for purpose, accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.

In delivering support services the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.

ESG Part 1, Standard 1.7: Information management

Standard: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

Guidelines:

Reliable data is crucial for informed decision-making and for knowing what is working well and what needs attention. Effective processes to collect and analyse information about study programmes and other activities feed into the internal quality assurance system.

The information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the institution. The following are of interest:

- Key performance indicators;
- Profile of the student population;
- Student progression, success and drop-out rates;
- Students' satisfaction with their programmes;

- Learning resources and student support available;
- Career paths of graduates.

Various methods of collecting information may be used. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

ESG Part 1, Standard 1.8: Public information

Standard: Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

Guidelines:

Information on institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students as well as for graduates, other stakeholders and the public.

Therefore, institutions provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer and the selection criteria for them, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students as well as graduate employment information.

ESG Part 1, Standard 1.9: On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Standard: Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

Guidelines:

Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programmes aim to ensure that the provision remains appropriate and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

They include the evaluation of:

- The content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline thus ensuring that the programme is up to date;
- The changing needs of society;
- The students' workload, progression and completion;
- The effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students;
- The student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme;
- The learning environment and support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme.

Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date. Revised programme specifications are published.

ESG Part 1, Standard 1.10: Cyclical external quality assurance

Standard: Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Guidelines:

External quality assurance in its various forms can verify the effectiveness of institutions' internal quality assurance, act as a catalyst for improvement and offer the institution new perspectives. It will also provide information to assure the institution and the public of the quality of the institution's activities.

Institutions participate in cyclical external quality assurance that takes account, where relevant, of the requirements of the legislative framework in which they operate. Therefore, depending on the framework, this external quality assurance may take different forms and focus at different organisational levels (such as programme, faculty or institution).

Quality assurance is a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback or report or its follow-up process within the institution. Therefore, institutions ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.

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