

## **Governance of IEP: Roles and responsibilities**

**March 2023**

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) was launched in 1994 by the Conférence des Recteurs Européens, one of the predecessor associations of the European University Association (EUA). When EUA was formed in 2001, it retained IEP as part of its portfolio of membership services. IEP is now a recognised quality assurance agency, operating in line with the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). It is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). IEP is governed by an independent Steering Committee, on the basis of a mandate from the EUA Board.

This document explains in more detail IEP's governance and management structure and sets out the division of roles and responsibilities.

### **1. Role of the Steering Committee**

The mandate from the EUA Board gives the IEP Steering Committee full responsibility for the development and operation of the Programme. The role of the Steering Committee is to:

- Ensure the strategic development of IEP;
- Develop policy priorities and guidelines, including adopting the annual IEP work programme;
- Provides oversight to the IEP Secretariat in the implementation of the IEP work programme;
- Monitor IEP activities, including the approval of the IEP annual report and taking note of the accounts of the Programme;
- Appoint the chair and new Steering Committee members according to the guidelines in these Terms of Reference of the IEP Steering Committee.

The EUA Board receives the IEP annual report for information.

### **2. Composition and appointment of the Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee is composed of eight people: a chair, and seven members covering the different roles as explained in the IEP Guidelines. All of them are members of the IEP pool, following this distribution:

- the chair of the IEP SC
- 2 team chairs
- 2 regular team members
- 2 team coordinators
- 1 student.

Steering Committee members are carefully selected to achieve geographical and gender balance as well as on the basis of their experience in IEP and elsewhere. The chair of the Steering Committee is selected from among the team chairs in the IEP pool. Before the mandate of the chair ends, the Steering Committee appoints a new chair. The new chair should be proposed by the incumbent chair. Additionally, a minimum of three other Steering Committee members may make an additional proposal for consideration by the whole Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee appoints new members based on a proposal by the chair, with an exception of the student representative, who is appointed based on a proposal made by the European Students' Union (ESU), as defined in the Memorandum of Understanding between IEP and ESU. The chair may propose new members as long as they meet the requirements listed above, and the balance of positions is respected.

Steering Committee members hold a mandate of four years which can be extended once for a further two years. This also applies to the chair. However, the student representative is appointed for a term of two years, renewable once. This creates a rotation in which typically half of the Steering Committee members change every two years. The appointment of student members is further regulated by the Memorandum of Understanding between IEP and ESU.

### **3. Operation of the Steering Committee**

The work of the Steering Committee is primarily conducted through two meetings per year: once in the spring and once in the autumn, this latter in conjunction with the IEP Annual Seminar. The chair leads the Steering Committee in its discussions. Decisions are usually taken by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, decisions are taken by a simple majority vote, with the chair holding the decisive vote in case of a tie. More than 50 percent of those invited to the meeting with voting rights need to be present in order to constitute a quorum.

If it is not possible to reach a quorum in a meeting, the Steering Committee shall still convene and discuss the items on the agenda, with formal decisions to be made through email or videoconference afterwards or, if appropriate, in a subsequent meeting.

Typically the two meetings of the Steering Committee are used to discuss the following issues:

- Spring meeting, in March/April
  - Feedback from the pool and institutions from the previous evaluation round
  - Financial accounts
  - Status of the current evaluation round
  - Preparation of the next evaluation round
    - i. Guidelines for institutions and teams
    - ii. Annual Seminar programme
  - Adoption of the IEP Work Programme for the upcoming year
  
- Autumn meeting, in September/October
  - Adoption of the IEP Annual Report for the past year, including a report on communication efforts
  - Status of the past evaluation round
  - Status of the new evaluation round: registrations and teams

In this meeting there is also typically room for a more in-depth discussion on how to improve the evaluation process, and IEP's strategic and policy development.

The team chairs that have participated in the evaluations of the past IEP round are also invited to the autumn Steering Committee meeting, during which they take part in discussions and decision-making with voting rights.

The IEP Secretariat prepares all items to be discussed during the meetings, in cooperation with the chair of the Steering Committee. Any Steering Committee member or pool member can contact the IEP Secretariat or the chair with suggestions for issues to be included on the meeting agendas. Staff of the IEP Secretariat attend the meetings in order to provide additional information during the discussions and to take minutes.

In between meetings, the chair will liaise with the Secretariat on behalf of the Steering Committee as required. If needed, the Steering Committee may also choose to organise additional meetings or videoconferences, or to form ad hoc working groups.

Steering Committee members work on a voluntary basis, without remuneration. Expenses for attending the two Steering Committee meetings are covered in full: the IEP Secretariat arranges and pays for accommodation, while economy class travel expenses are reimbursed to Steering Committee members after each meeting upon provision of an expense claim and supporting documentation.

#### **4. Role and composition of teams**

IEP evaluations are carried out by evaluation teams that hold responsibility for the individual evaluations and evaluation reports. All evaluations are conducted in accordance with the Guidelines adopted by the Steering Committee (*Guidelines for initial evaluations, for follow-up evaluations and for evaluation teams*).

Individuals interested in becoming IEP pool experts may respond to a call for expressions of interest or send a spontaneous application to the IEP Secretariat. The IEP Steering Committee selects individuals to be included in the pool based on a proposal from the Secretariat, with the exception of student members which are proposed by the European Students' Union. The selection is based on the needs to the pool and takes into consideration factors such as area of expertise, language competences, country of origin, gender, and experience. Regular team members need to be former or current rectors or vice-rectors, while coordinators need to have experience and expertise in quality assurance but need not hold an academic position.

Evaluation teams are composed of members from the IEP pool of experts. The Steering Committee is informed of the teams, composed by the Secretariat, taking into account a variety of factors, including:

- Preferences (if any) expressed by the pool members regarding evaluations in the upcoming round;
- No team members from the country in which the university operates;
- Not more than one member from a country in each team and geographical balance across the whole team;
- Combining pool members with a strong experience in IEP and new pool members;
- Balancing discipline backgrounds: so that the team is able to address specific needs (particularly in specialised universities or evaluations with a special focus), yet offers diversity of discipline backgrounds within a team;

- Gender balance;
- Whenever possible, avoiding repeating the same team composition as in previous rounds, or having the same chair and coordinator paired together except for follow-up evaluations, where chairs and coordinators of the original evaluation should be invited to act in the same role, whenever possible;
- Language skills that would allow for a better grasp of the national background or for conducting the evaluation in another language, whenever appropriate;
- Any real or potential conflict of interest stated by the pool member when expressing preferences for the upcoming round (the university is also given an opportunity to express any conflict of interest regarding the propose team);
- Any other factor that might potentially enhance or hinder team dynamics.

The Steering Committee is responsible for decisions related to the IEP pool, based on the principles defined in the *Guidelines for managing the IEP pool*.

#### **5. The IEP Secretariat**

The IEP Secretariat is responsible for the daily operations of IEP and ensuring the implementation of the Steering Committees decisions. The concrete tasks and procedures of the Secretariat are described in *Guidelines for the Secretariat*, which are updated regularly.

The management of the IEP Secretariat, including operational, human resources and financial management, is under the responsibility of the Director of the IEP Secretariat, who is appointed by the Secretary General of EUA.

#### **6. The role of EUA**

EUA provides IEP with the support infrastructure that enables its work. This includes:

- Human resources: the IEP Secretariat is formed of staff employed by EUA.
- Physical infrastructure: office facilities and IT support are provided by EUA.
- Financial management: IEP's accounts are managed through EUA's Geneva office, with IEP having a separate budget line in EUA's financial system.