

## IEP Internal Quality Procedures

*Consistent with institutional autonomy, the mission of the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is to support higher education institutions and systems in developing their strategic leadership and capacity to manage change through a process of voluntary institutional evaluations.*

### **Related procedures:**

The IEP Steering Committee is responsible for all essential matters of the Programme (i.e. the methodologies employed in IEP and decisions on Programme activities) and in this respect ensures that all activities are fit for purpose and aligned with this overall mission of the Programme.

IEP operates a strategic planning cycle in which goals and objectives are set and reviewed. The operational plan for achieving the objectives set in the Strategy is included in the annual Work Programme, and progress is reviewed in the Annual Report.

*IEP evaluates higher education institutions in the context of their specific goals and objectives with the aim of improving quality. The Programme emphasises an inclusive self-evaluation process and institutional self-knowledge as a contribution to improved strategic leadership accompanied by efficient internal governance and management, as well as for external accountability purposes.*

### **Related procedures:**

In order to be eligible for an evaluation, an institution must be recognised as a legitimate higher education institution in its own national legal framework.

All evaluations undertaken by IEP are based on the IEP Guidelines. There is one set of Guidelines for institutions undergoing an IEP evaluation, and another complementary set for evaluation teams. The IEP Guidelines are updated annually under the responsibility of the Steering Committee and the pool is informed of any changes by written communication and/or discusses them during the annual seminar.

In addition to the IEP Guidelines, preparatory training is organised for the participating institutions in the beginning of each evaluation round, in order to prepare them for the evaluation.

*Therefore, IEP evaluations focus on the effectiveness of quality culture and the degree to which the outcomes of internal quality processes are used in decision-making and strategic management, as well as on identifying any gaps in these internal mechanisms. The evaluation methodology is based on a peer-review approach.*

### **Related procedures:**

The responsibility for the quality of an individual evaluation and the evaluation report lies with each team.

Evaluations are undertaken by members of the IEP pool of experts. A team always includes former or acting university rectors or vice-rectors, a student with experience of quality assurance processes and a team coordinator (who is usually an experienced higher education

or quality assurance administrator). All decisions regarding the management of the IEP pool are made by the IEP Steering Committee based on the Guidelines for Managing the IEP Pool. This document defines the criteria for pool membership and the processes for recruitment as well as departure from the pool.

In order to ensure the quality of evaluations, all evaluation pool members are required to attend an IEP annual seminar before taking part in an evaluation. The Charter of Conduct for Pool members, included in the Guidelines for Evaluation Teams, defines the manner in which the pool members are expected to conduct themselves.

The members of evaluation teams are appointed by the Steering Committee. In so far as it is feasible, teams are balanced in terms of gender, country of origin and academic discipline. No two experts from the same country are appointed to a team and no expert is appointed to evaluate an institution in his or her own country.

*IEP is committed to continuous improvement of its own processes and operates in a manner consistent with good European and international practice, including the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.*

**Related procedures:**

The responsibility for the day-to-day management of IEP rests with the IEP secretariat. It is guided in its work by the Guidelines for the IEP Secretariat that defines the procedures of the Programme for the secretariat staff and summarises the internal quality assurance processes of the secretariat. The Guidelines are updated regularly.

The Programme uses several opportunities to monitor the quality of its activities:

- Upon completion of each evaluation, the evaluated institution is invited to complete a survey, giving feedback on the evaluation process and outlining possible areas for improvement of the Programme.
- IEP pool members are invited to complete a survey on a yearly basis, giving feedback about the Annual Seminar, reflecting on the activities of the past year, and providing input for future developments. The annual seminar also provides an opportunity for collecting feedback from the pool.

The IEP secretariat staff collates the responses to the surveys and submits an analysis to the Steering Committee for discussion in their spring meeting. The secretariat also takes note of informal feedback received from pool members, for example, through discussions and various email exchanges. The feedback received either through the surveys or informally is taken into account when preparing the Work Programme, revising the Guidelines, and planning IEP activities.

In order to demonstrate the quality of IEP, the Programme undergoes regular external reviews. The most recent ones were coordinated by ENQA in 2014 and 2018.