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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
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HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

**ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONS
AND ACCREDITATION
OF INTERNAL SYSTEMS
OF QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION AREA**

PREFACE

April 2014

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FOREWORD

The text that follows and the procedures proposed for the preparation and implementation of the protocols for the Assessment of Institutions of Higher Education and Accreditation of their Internal Quality Assurance Systems are the product of a process that began in the first half of 2011 and was recently completed, so that the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQAA) can fulfill its obligations under Law 4009/2011.

In compliance with the provisions of this Law on the functions of the HQAA for periodic accreditation (a) of the internal quality assurance systems of Institutions of Higher Education provided for in Article 14, and (b) of the programmes of study in higher education (see in particular Article 66, par. 1), guidelines, analyses of criteria, and model reports with accompanying tables as proposed by the HQAA were drawn up. These were based on the "Principles and Standards for Quality Assurance" of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) (see in particular Article 66, par. 2a), in conjunction with the criteria and procedures provided for by Law 4009/2011 (in particular Articles 66 and 70-72) and in other articles of the same Law, referring to the composition, responsibilities and operation of the Quality Assurance Units (QAU) of Institutions of Higher Education (see in particular Article 15).

This Preface refers to the action of the Assessment of an Institution and the Assessment/Accreditation of its Internal Quality Assurance System.

April 2014

INTRODUCTION

Law 3374/2005 sets out as a fundamental objective of Greek Higher Education the expectation and assurance of quality in universities and the programmes of study and qualifications they offer, in order to best meet the needs of society and the expectations society places on Institutions of Higher Education.

By *Quality Assurance* (QA) is meant a systematic, structured and continuous commitment to quality. It calls for the establishment of an **internal system** of principles, criteria, and regulations, the proper functioning of which is attested by periodic procedures of internal and external assessment.

These objectives were further strengthened by the enactment of Law 4009/2011, of **Accreditation** at both the level of the Institution and that of the programmes of study. The awarding of Accreditation is entrusted by the State to the independent Agency for the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency in Higher Education¹, upgraded under the same Law.

The aim of the HQAA is the development of a unified framework of QA teaching and research in institutions of higher education at the national and international level, with a view to the national interest but also to the further development and continuous improvement of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In particular, the HQAA has been given responsibility for the formulation, organization, completion, specialization and standardization of principles, criteria and indicators, as well as for the methodology and accreditation procedures in the above framework.

1.1 The European Dimension

The introduction and development of a culture which recognizes the importance of quality and QA in the work of universities constitutes an important step in furthering the unified European Higher Education Area. At the same time, however, it contributes at the national level to greater confidence on the part of the State and the general public in the self-governance of institutions, enhancing the self-knowledge and social accountability of universities.

This dual purpose is addressed by the formulation of a common European framework of principles, procedures and guidelines for Quality Assurance. This framework has been put together by the *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ENQA)² and has been published under the title “European Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education” (ESG)³. It is now the basic

¹ Law 4009/2011, Articles 64-75, in particular 66, 70-72.

² European Association – formerly Network – for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

³ *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*, 4th revision (in press), 2015.

manual of the principles, rules and guidelines for the formulation of national QA frameworks for more than 45 countries.

The spirit of the Declaration of the European University Association (EUA, Graz, July 2003), that "the purpose of a European dimension for QA is to promote mutual trust and improve transparency with respect for the diversity of national contexts and scientific fields," was adopted in the text issued by the ESG. At the same time, however, it stressed that "recognizing the principle of the self-governance of institutions, **the primary responsibility for QA in Higher Education is borne by the individual institutions themselves**, a circumstance which provides the basis for the social accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework."

For these reasons, while the "principles and guidelines" proposed by ENQA should be applied to all Institutions of Higher Education in Europe, regardless of their structure, function and size, and irrespective of the national system to which they belong, they do not include recommendations for detailed "procedures", as these are an important part of the responsibility of institutions in the context of their independent operation. While national quality assurance systems of Institutions of Higher Education, like the one established by Law 4009/2011 and specified by the HQAA, as well as "internal quality assurance systems of institutions", must meet the requirements of national and European institutional frameworks, they are, however, free to add or refine specific elements which, in their judgment, best reflect their particular characteristics.

2 THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF THE QA UNIT

2.1 Internal QA

In every institution of Higher Education an **internal quality assurance system** designed to cover the full range of functions and activities of the institution is formulated and implemented under the charge of and at the initiative of the relevant Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)⁴.

The QA principles and criteria that should govern the basic functions of institutions of Higher Education in the EHEA and general guidelines for their implementation make up the First Part of the ESG. To assist Greek institutions of Higher Education in the formulation, adoption and implementation of their internal QA system, these principles are analyzed one by one, and criteria, guidelines and assessment indicators are proposed for each of them in the Appendix of the present document. The main points assessed in the external assessment of the system are also highlighted.

It is worth noting that the main factor in the QA system and procedures must be the greatest **transparency** possible. Both the QA principles and procedures should be predetermined and widely publicized.

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2.2 Operational Framework of the QAU

Responsibility for the organization and implementation in each institution of higher education of an internal QA system, with specific principles, criteria, regulations and procedures for maintenance and continuous improvement, is assigned by law 4009/2011, Article 14, to the *Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)*, an organ of the central administration of institutions of Higher Education.

According to the law, the QAU is responsible, in particular, for (N. 4009/2011, Article 14.2):

- (a) the development of the specific policies, strategies and procedures necessary to continuously improve the quality of the work and services of the institution, which constitute the internal quality assurance system of the institution,
- (b) the organization, operation and continuous improvement of the internal quality assurance system of the institution,
- (c) the coordination and support of the processes of assessment of academic units and other services of the institution, and
- (d) support of the processes of external assessment and accreditation of programmes of study and of the internal quality assurance system of the institution, according to the principles, guidelines and directives of the HQAA.

Moreover, among the general criteria for the accreditation of internal quality assurance systems of institutions of Higher Education by the HQAA, are included, in particular (Article 72.2):

- (a) the establishment of clearly defined objectives to ensure and continuously improve the quality of programmes of study and support services of the institution,
- (b) the policy planning process, effective organization, and the decision-making process for the continuous improvement of quality,
- (c) the process of implementing the policy to continuously improve quality, and
- (d) documentation of improvement of quality.

In any case, to ensure continuous improvement of the quality of teaching and research, as well as the effective functioning and efficiency of services in accordance with the criteria set out in Article 72.2 of the Law 4009/2011, the internal QA system of each institution must be constituted in accordance with international practices, in particular those of the European Higher Education Area, and with the principles and guidelines of the HQAA (Article 14, 1).

It is obvious that with Law 4009/2011, the QAU, as the body responsible for the quality operation of the institution at all levels, emerges as a critical factor in higher education, the quality of which it is called upon to ensure continuously, to monitor and to coordinate on an ongoing basis; also, that the success of the QAU's work depends on (Article 14.4):

- (a) cooperation with the HQAA

- (b) the development of an information system for the management of data relating to the operation of the institution,
- (c) responsibility for the monitoring and publication on the institution's website of the procedures relating to the assessment and their results.

2.3 Organization and Development of the Internal QA System

It follows from the above that the particular project which is the sole pre-requisite for the start of the accreditation process for each institution has a wide scope and many and varied requirements, which constitute a great challenge for the current structures of academic administration and require the mobilization of all the forces of the institution.

In its continuous effort to support institutions in this difficult task, the HQAA has undertaken specific initiatives for the **design of the system**, which proceed as the first phase of the accreditation process under the heading "Assessment of the Institution and of the Internal QA System".

2.4 Monitoring of the Internal QA System

As the body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the internal QA system of the institution, the QAU:

Was funded by ESPA to develop a broad information system for managing data in regard to the functioning of the institution on the basis of a single language and structure.

Coordinates the collection and **annual** inventory from all academic units of the institution of all details of their operations. This information is recorded in the *Annual Internal Reports* submitted to the QAU by the individual schools of the relevant Faculty, and serves as a basis for the preparation of the biennial *Internal Report* (see below).

Based on the Annual Internal Reports of the Academic Units of the Institution, an *Internal Report* is prepared and submitted biennially to the Senate on the functioning of the QA system of the Institution and recommends taking actions and initiatives to improve the functioning of the system.

2.5 Assessment and Accreditation of the Internal QA System

More important, however, is the role of the QAU in the periodic, **quadrennial** assessment of the Institution and the **accreditation** of the QA system, as it has the responsibility for the preparation of the Institution's *Self-Evaluation Report*⁵.

3 PROCEDURES

3.1 *The Framework*

The QA policy and procedures for Institutions of Higher Education, as for their academic units (Faculties, Schools, etc.), are assessed and accredited periodically - both internally, with responsibility borne by the QAU, and externally, with responsibility borne by the independent Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (HQAA).

According to Law 4009/20⁶, requirements, criteria (quality of Programmes of Study, of Teaching, Research, and Other Services) and the procedures for Internal and External Assessment and Accreditation of the internal quality assurance system of Institutions of Higher Education are analyzed and elaborated with specific directions and instructions which are made public by the HQAA.

The accreditation process consists of four phases:

Phase 1 – **Design** and development of the Internal QA System of the Institution.

Phase 2 – **Self-evaluation** of the Institution and of its QA System.

Phase 3 – **External evaluation** of the Institution and of its QA System by a panel of independent external experts.

Phase 4 – Issuance of the **Accreditation decision** by the Council of the HQAA.

3.2 *Design and Development of the Internal QA System of the Institution*

This particular phase includes:

(a) **HQAA Actions** (visits, meetings, seminars, workshops, issuing of circulars, etc.) in order to analyze and clarify the principles, criteria, methods and organizational and assessment procedures for the QA system for institutions.

(b) **Systematic “analysis of the general QA principles and criteria for institutions”**, under the responsibility of the HQAA. The relevant diagram (see Appendix) is based on international practices, as mentioned above, especially those of the European Higher Education Area, and on the principles and guidelines of the HQAA (Law 4009/2011, Article 14, 1).

The principles and criteria and the specific points analyzed dictate the configuration/structure of the specific arrangements, regulations, and observations which constitute parts or chapters of the internal QA system of the institution and should be included as supporting documentation in the self-evaluation phase.

The "Analysis of the Principles and Criteria" is the basis of the "Standard Self-Evaluation Scheme" of the institution" (see below). It is anticipated, however, that it will also serve to shape the standard framework of the Accreditation Report (see below), against which it is checked, and that each of the criteria and the individual points included will be assessed by the External Committee of experts.

(c) Establishment by the QAU of working groups of specialists and members of the academic community to whom the design, development and handling of individual sections of the internal QA system of the institution will be assigned. The HQAA is available to Institutions of Higher Education for substantial assistance in the design, implementation and monitoring of the internal QA system.

3.3 Self-Evaluation of the Institution

- Provides for the preparation and submission of the **Self-Evaluation Report** of the Institution to the HQAA for accreditation.
- For the sake of the completeness of information and data and to facilitate correspondence/comparison with the internal QA systems of other domestic and foreign institutions of higher education, the HQAA has proposed the "Standard Self-Evaluation Scheme of an Institution" as a basis for the preparation of the Report, structured according the "Analysis of QA criteria" above.

The indicators needed for system monitoring are derived from the annual survey reports of individual academic units of the institution (see above).

- The report shall be transmitted to the HQAA by the Institution's QAU, after having been approved by the Institution's Senate and Council.

3.4 External evaluation of the Institution and Accreditation of the QA System.

The conditions for putting together the Committee of external experts, and the external evaluation procedures, and the accreditation of the Institution are the responsibility of the HQAA, as provided for by Article 70 of Law 4009/2011.

The process of evaluation responds to four key questions:

- 1. Where does the institution wish to go?**
- 2. How does it plan to achieve its objectives?**
- 3. How does it evaluate of its effectiveness?**
- 4. How does it promote the changes necessary to improve its effectiveness?**

The external evaluation leads to the drafting of the relevant **Report** submitted to the HQAA and communicated to the institution's QAU, which may, within a specified period, make comments or register an objection. Comments shall be forwarded to the Committee by the HQAA and shall be addressed at its sole discretion. Any objection shall be addressed by a special committee on objections.

3.5 Accreditation Decision

Based on the final External Report, the Council of the HQAA issues the accreditation decision, which may be positive, positive with conditions, or negative.

External Reports are published on the HQAA website in Greek and English.
With respect to the length of time the decision is in force, the terms and conditions and the schedule for review of accreditation decisions of the QA system, the provisions set forth in Law 4009/2011, Article 71 1-5, apply.

Rating System of the External Committee

(to be completed)

This page is independent and represents a first approach to the future scoring for accreditation of SQA. It concerns only Unit II of Self-Evaluation by Institutions of Higher Education.

APPENDIX

ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION (on the basis of the ESG)

1. Policy and Strategy for Quality Assurance (QA)

Institutions of Higher Education should have a specific official QA policy which is part of their strategy and which should be made public. The development and implementation of this policy, along with the appropriate structures and procedures, should involve all internal stakeholders. It should also provide for the participation of students and interested external social groups.

The formulation of official policy and the establishment of specific procedures ensure the framework within which institutions of higher education can develop and periodically monitor the effectiveness of their Quality Assurance systems and the process of continuous improvement. At the same time, they build the confidence of the state and society in the self-governance of universities, while supporting the development of a culture of quality in which all internal stakeholders assume the responsibilities appropriate to them and participate in the QA at all levels of the institution. It is therefore advisable that policy and procedures take on an official character and be publicly available and easily accessible in order to provide the necessary and useful information to those who need to know the practical aspects of the implementation of these procedures.

The official text of the policy of an Institution should reflect the relationship between research and teaching and take into account the context in which the institution is operating, the particular context of the institution, and its strategic approach. It must include:

- The organization of the QA system.
- The schools, faculties and other academic units, as well as all administrative and other units, members of staff, and students.
- Issues of academic integrity and independence.
- Issues of protection of students and staff from any partisan interference and discrimination.
- Involvement in QA of external interested parties.

The policy is translated into action through a variety of QA procedures affecting all stakeholders within the institution. The QA policy should cover all activities of the institution contracted out to or executed by third parties. The implementation, monitoring and review of the policy is at the discretion of the institution.

The official text of the Institution's policy should typically address the following points, among others:

- 1.1. The Institution has determined its policy, the targets arising from it, and the means to achieve them.
- 1.2. The Institution has formulated a specific QA system, whose effectiveness in achieving its objectives it assesses and analyzes.
- 1.3. The QA policy and procedures have been formally ratified by the competent authorities, announced to all personnel of all kinds, and to the public.
- 1.4. The Institution shall prepare an implementation guide which details the procedures by which the QA system operates.

The official version of the Institution's policy specifies:

- the strategy of the institution to ensure the quality and high level of its studies and the qualifications it awards,
- the organization of the internal QA system of the institution,
- the responsibilities with respect to QA that pertain to various individual bodies and persons,
- the role of students in QA,
- the procedures for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy.

The avenues for development and improvement of education shall be clearly defined.

The objectives of each programme of study shall be accurately defined and publicized.

The management of human resources shall permit monitoring of the suitability and commitment of teachers and researchers, as well as administrative and technical staff, and of the library and health services to achieve institutional objectives.

Points to be covered in the external evaluation of the system:

- The existence of a policy that guarantees the quality of programmes of study and the qualifications conferred, and how this translates into operational procedures.
- The definition and implementation of a strategy of continuous improvement of quality.
- The publicizing of policy, strategy and procedures.
- The role of students and interested social groups, both internal and external, in the implementation of QA policy.

2. The design, approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes of study and qualifications conferred

All institutions should have procedures in place for planning and approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes of study and qualifications conferred. Programmes of study should be designed in such a way as to attain the goals set for each of them, in particular the expected learning outcomes. Programme objectives must be identified and communicated

clearly and relate to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and consequently to the corresponding European framework.

These programmes of study form the core of the educational mission of higher education. They provide students with scientific knowledge and skills which may affect their personal development and can be applied in their future careers.

Programmes of study:

- Have been designed with general objectives consistent with the strategy of the institution and have clearly specified learning outcomes.
- Have been planned with the participation of students and other stakeholders.
- Make use of outside experience and specific benchmarks.
- Are designed to enable the smooth progress of students.
- Identify the expected student workload, e.g. in ECTS.
- Are subject to formal approval by the institution.

The adoption and systematic implementation of effective QA measures offer assurances that programmes of study are well designed, monitored regularly and reviewed periodically in order to ensure their continuing relevance and currency. At the same time, however, they build and maintain confidence in Higher Education among students and other interested social groups.

These actions should provide for, among other things:

- 2.1 The regular evaluation of programmes of study with predetermined procedures and criteria.
- 2.2 The drafting of a Guide for organizing programmes of study and qualifications conferred, comprising the following actions:
 - precise definition and publicizing of learning objectives,
 - description of the procedure for preparing programmes of study and individual courses,
 - reference to the various programmes and types of higher education
 - identification of the needs and means of ensuring appropriate educational resources,
 - description of the approval process for each programme of study by a body other than that of the teachers of the programme,
 - monitoring of the progress and success of students,
 - regular evaluation of programmes by external experts,
 - Regular feedback from representatives of the sector of employment and other relevant organizations.

Points to be covered in the external evaluation of the system:

- The existence of a publicized, applied, and assessed process that describes the conception, implementation and success of programmes of study and qualifications conferred.

3. Education, teaching and assessment with the student at the center (student-centered)

Institutions should ensure that programmes of study encourage students to take an active role in the creation of the learning process, and that the evaluation of students reflects this understanding.

3.1 Student-centered learning and teaching kindles the desire of students to engage in the learning process. It requires special care in the design and provision of programmes of study and evaluation of results.

The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching:

- Respects and protects the diversity of students and their needs, providing diverse but coherent learning paths.
- Studies and uses different ways of teaching, as needed.
- Uses a variety of teaching methods.
- Encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring appropriate guidance and support from the instructor.
- Promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship.

3.2 Student-centered evaluation of students

Because the quality of education has serious implications for the progress and future careers of students, the relevant QA procedures should take into account, among other things, the following:

- Evaluators are familiar with current testing methods, and the development of their skills in this area is supported.
- The choice of procedures and evaluation methods must take into account the existing wide knowledge and experience of examination procedures.
- The criteria and method of assessment as well as the marking criteria are made public in advance.
- The achieved learning outcomes are analyzed against the expected results. Students are provided with relevant feedback, which, if necessary, is accompanied by advising on the learning process.
- To the extent possible, evaluation is carried out by two or more examiners.

- The rules of evaluation take account of any particular circumstances or cases.
- The evaluation of students provides valuable information on the effectiveness of teaching and the support of learners.
- Evaluation is consistent, is applied equally to all students, and is conducted in accordance with predetermined procedures.
- There is a formal procedure for dealing with complaints and appeals by students.

The evaluation of students presupposes, among other things, the following:

- The procedures and criteria for evaluation of students are defined and updated regularly.
- The institution uses the results of student assessment as a means of assessing the effectiveness of teaching and support to students.
- Procedures for the evaluation of students:
 - are designed with a view to assessing the success of the objectives of education
 - are adapted to different goals: progress, intermediate results, final assessment
 - have clear and publicized scoring criteria
 - take account of current regulations
 - establish clear rules on the weighing of absences, illnesses and other special cases.
 - Evaluation of students is carried out by examiners with demonstrated knowledge of the subject.
 - There are regular checks as to whether student evaluations are being made in accordance with applicable rules and predetermined procedures.
 - The institution uses specific means of informing students of how knowledge will be tested and what the applicable criteria are.

Points to be covered in the external evaluation of the system:

- The existence of procedures and criteria for the evaluation of students, made publicly available and evaluated regularly by the institution.
- Checking by the institution on the systematic and continuous application of procedures and of respect for the criteria.

4. Admission of students, progress, recognition and certification

Institutions should continuously apply public and predetermined rules for all phases of the educational cycle of students, i.e. from admission, progress, and recognition to certification of studies.

Ensuring the conditions necessary for the progress of students' academic careers and for their support is in the interest not only of students, but of programmes, institutions, and systems of higher education. The procedures for admission,

recognition, and completion of studies are of vital importance, especially when there is student mobility within and beyond the national system of higher education.

It is essential that admission criteria be applied consistently and transparently and that an informational program about the institution and the academic unit be offered.

Institutions should adopt procedures and tools for the collection, monitoring and management of information on the progress of students.

The recognition of qualifications in higher education, of periods of study, and prior knowledge are key factors in ensuring the academic progress of students, and they promote mobility. The correct recognition procedures are based on the following principles, among others:

- Recognition procedures are in accord with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.
- There is cooperation with other QA institutions and organizations and with the national QA organization in order to ensure consistency of recognition throughout the country.

For students, graduation represents the culmination of the period of studies. Students should graduate with detailed information on the qualifications acquired, the learning outcomes achieved, and on the framework, level, and content of studies successfully completed.

Points to be covered in the external evaluation of the system:

- The existence of published procedures for the admission, progress, recognition and certification of studies.

5. Ensuring the Quality of the Teaching Staff

Institutions should have specific means of ensuring and guaranteeing the quality and abilities of the teaching staff. These instruments should be available to external evaluation committees and be evaluated in their reports. The procedures for the selection and development of staff should be objective and transparent.

The role of the teacher in creating a high-quality educational experience and in the acquisition of knowledge, abilities and skills is central. The role of the teacher, however, is changing, due to the diversity of the student population and the greater emphasis on learning outcomes, which call for student-centered learning and teaching.

Institutions of higher education have primary responsibility for the quality of their staffs, to whom they should provide a supportive environment in which to carry out their work effectively.

Requirements include, among others:

- The establishment and implementation of clear, transparent and objective appointment procedures and of working conditions that recognize the importance of teaching.
- Offering opportunities for and promoting the professional development of teachers.
- Encouragement of scientific and scholarly activity aimed at strengthening the link between education and research.
- Encouraging innovative teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

As the most important factor in the learning process, it is essential for all teachers:

- to have full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching,
- to have the necessary skills and experience to effectively communicate their knowledge and understanding to students in a specific educational context, and
- to receive the necessary feedback on their personal performance.

In line with the above:

The evaluation process of the teaching-research staff should include:

- assessment of the scientific/scholarly and pedagogical abilities of teacher-researchers at the time of their hiring,
- an assessment of the quality of educational activities by students,
- informing teachers of the views of students in regard to the quality of their educational activities,
- assessing the needs of the teaching-research staff for training,
- the development and implementation of training programs for teaching-research staff,
- monitoring the effectiveness of the educational work of the teaching-research staff,
- participation by the teaching-research staff in the activities of the institution.

Points to be covered in the external evaluation of the system:

- The existence of procedures that guarantee the quality and effectiveness of the teaching-research staff, as defined, implemented and evaluated by the institution.

6. Educational infrastructure and student support

Institutions should have resources sufficient to support educational and teaching activities and to ensure adequate infrastructure to support learning and students.

The effectiveness of the learning process depends, in addition to teachers and a variety of support services, on everything from material infrastructure such as libraries and IT to human support in the form of individualized educational counseling, etc. All the supporting infrastructure should be readily available to students, designed according to their needs, and readjusted on the basis of feedback from those who use it.

The role of support services is particularly important for facilitating the mobility of students.

Institutions should systematically monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to students.

The infrastructure and support activities can be organized in various ways. Internal QA, however, ensures that all are suitable to serving whatever needs may arise, that they are easily accessible, and that students are informed about the services available.

The evaluation of the quality of educational infrastructure and student support requires:

- recognition of the needs of students,
- examination of the adequacy of resources available to meet specific needs,
- regular assessment – and improvement – of the adequacy of infrastructure and the effectiveness of support activities.

Points to be covered in the external evaluation of the system:

- Existence of an evaluation process for educational infrastructure and student support, as determined and implemented by the Institution.
- Regular evaluation of the effectiveness of the process.

7. Information Systems for the Recording and Analysis of Data and Indicators

Institutions should ensure the collection, analysis and use of valid information to effectively manage programmes of study and other functions and activities.

The basis and starting point for effective QA institutions is self-knowledge. It is important that institutions have the means to collect and analyze information relating to their activities, so that they know what works well and what to watch, or the results of innovative operations.

On the basis of these data, the institution should seek to compare itself with other similar organizations within and beyond the Common European Higher Education Area, with the aim of furthering self-knowledge and finding ways to improve operations.

At each institution, the requirements for QA information systems should cover at least the following elements.

The monitoring indicators should include at least:

- data on the composition of the student population
- data on student progress and rates of success/failure
- data on the employment of graduates in the labor market
- information about the degree of satisfaction of students with their programmes of study
- information on the achievement of the institution's objectives
- available educational infrastructure and its cost
- careers of graduates

Various methods are used to collect information.

The collection and analysis of information should involve students and teachers.

The institution should compare its findings with data from other European institutions.

Points to be covered in the external evaluation of the system:

- The existence of a monitoring process that permits evaluation of the effectiveness of programmes of study and other activities and functions, including:
 - the systematic collection of data (indicators and monitoring tables)
 - the analysis of results and the undertaking of actions for improvement.

8. Informing the public

Institutions should regularly make public up-to-date, clear, accurate, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, on the activities, programmes of study, and qualifications they offer.

As part of the fulfillment of their public role, institutions of Higher Education have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes of study they offer, the intended learning outcomes, qualifications conferred, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures they use, and the learning opportunities they offer to their students. Public information may also include the opinions and places of employment of graduates and the composition of the current student population.

The information must be clear, accurate, impartial, objective and easily accessible, and should not be used merely as an opportunity for marketing. The Institution should show that, in matters of impartiality and objectivity, it meets its own expectations.

The dissemination of this information is useful for both prospective and enrolled students, other interested social/scientific groups, and the general public.

The basic conditions should include at least the following.

The information published by the institution should refer to:

- its educational work,
- the programmes of study offered,
- the objectives,
- the expected learning outcomes,
- the qualifications conferred,
- the procedures for training and evaluation,
- information compiled from graduates: satisfaction in the workplace,
- the characteristics of the current student population.

The institution must update the published information and verify its accuracy, objectivity, and impartiality.

Points to be covered in the external evaluation of the system:

- The existence of a process of making information public, established, applied, updated, and evaluated.
- The content and ease of access to public information.

9. Continuous monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure the achievement of their objectives and to respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should result in continuous improvement of programmes. Every change planned or adopted should be communicated to all stakeholders.

Regular monitoring and review of programmes of study aims to ensure that the programmes offered continue to be well received and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

Evaluation is envisaged of, among other things:

- The content of the programmes in the light of a recent research in the specific field of knowledge, so that the programme is up to date.
- The changing needs of society.
- Student loads and the rate of progress of enrolled students and the rate at which they complete their studies.
- The effectiveness of student assessment procedures.
- The expectations, needs and satisfaction of students with the programme.
- the learning environment and support services and their adequacy in relation to the programme.

Programmes are reviewed regularly with the participation of students and other stakeholders. The information that is collected is analyzed and the programme properly modified to ensure its currency.

The aspects of the program that have been revised are made public.

Points to be covered in the external evaluation of the system:

- Documentation of the most recent change in the programme of study in accordance with the above criteria.
- The rationale for the next revision, if it has been scheduled.

10. Periodic external evaluation

Institutions should be subject to periodic external evaluation according to European QA principles

External evaluation can confirm the effectiveness of the institution's QA system, to act as a catalyst for improvement, and to offer new perspectives to the institution. It also highlights information that validates the institution and society in regard to the quality of the institution.

Institutions undergo periodic external evaluation that assesses their role and prospects for development and that takes into account, where appropriate, the requirements of the legislative framework within which they operate. Therefore, depending on the context, this external evaluation of QA may take various forms targeted at different organizational levels (e.g., programmes, academic units, or institutions).

QA is a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback or report or repeated monitoring procedure within the institution. Therefore, institutions shall ensure that the progress made since the last external evaluation is taken into account when preparing for the next.

Points to be covered in the external evaluation of the system:

- Existence of a strategy for achieving objectives, including the development of structures for synergies, raising the profile of the particular character of the institution, etc.
- Progress of measures taken in response to observations made in the previous external evaluation.