



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE



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## "Guidelines on Internal Evaluation of Quality in Higher Education"

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## INTRODUCTION

The social developments that have occurred in the country as a whole and at Higher School environments in particular, the integration policies pursued by our country towards integration into the European Community, the inclusion of our Higher Education into the common Higher Education European Area, the desire and the efforts of our higher education to get empowered and gain more in the way of autonomy have reinforced and enhanced the extent of responsibility of both university and state institutions that are closely and directly related to Higher Education.

The official commitment of Albanian politics to formally acknowledge and implement documents that are closely linked to Bologna Process, the signing up of such a document on the part of the Albanian government at the Berlin Conference in September 2003, among other things, sets out the need for the promotion of the Culture of Quality and procedures to be put in the mainstream in our university surroundings.

The evaluation process helps in establishing and maintaining a mutual climate of trust between the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), represented by the academic staff, supporting and leading personnel at various levels, the real providers of Higher Education and

the direct beneficiaries, that is, students and the public at large. Also, the evaluation process is believed to be a useful tool in the hands of the various leading and executive educational officers at various levels of higher education institutions to accomplish their mission and to help further increase their extend and scope of autonomy.

Alongside the efforts undertaken to allow a higher degree of autonomy, under the circumstances, there arises an urgent need to make Higher Education more accessible and transparent to the public. The stakeholders with vested interests on education are far and wide. They include the society, parents, students, employers and people involved with politics. That is one strong reason for us to recognize the fact that supplying information and conducting analysis on the situation and quality of Higher Education is a test that the higher education institutions do accept the responsibility they have taken on or the ones they will face in the future, in order to increase the extent of trust among the social partners and the end users of it.

In this framework, the Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (AAHE) has attached special importance to the development of Evaluation Guidelines and Contemporary Standards of Quality and transparent procedures in the evaluation of these institutions in a clear and reliable manner at all levels of university organization and in its wide range of activities. The development of such guidelines is the best response to the permanent responsibilities they have in ensuring

Quality Assurance at Higher Education as part of the Accreditation System. The ever growing demands on Higher Education, not only in the field of education, but also in the scientific research area, makes such an obligation both fundamental and essential.

This is one strong reason why the AAHE is coming up with such Guidelines on Internal Evaluation of Quality at Higher Education. The main aim of this manual is to help the Self-evaluation groups to conduct a complete evaluation and accreditation process; on the other hand it will be of great help to the Higher Education Institutions in order for them to evaluate the structures of their programs on a voluntary and permanent basis, to take stock of the situation and to undertake timely effective measures by turning Self-evaluation into an integral part of developing short-term, medium-term, and long-term institutional development strategies.

In this fashion, AAHE has taken special care to prepare and publish such an important document. This document is intended for all concerned institutions and stakeholders (each HEI, each unit comprising universities, faculties, departments and branches). Such a document will be a useful tool that will help institutions in establishing the internal procedures for the evaluation of quality. The establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Systems at HEIs, including Self-evaluation, which in turn will foster the Culture of Quality at HEIs is undisputedly the final and ultimate aim of the external institutions (AAHE, Council of Accreditation and Ministry

of Education and Science) responsible for Quality Assurance.

The Guidelines offer a perspective to the unit (institution) on how it is going to reflect upon higher education. It will initially help institutions to better know the situation, to develop internal development policies and at the same time to build effective approaches through which the unit will show to society and the other social partners if its mission matches with its achievements and outcomes.

It's the first time ever that such a complete guideline is made available to the Higher Schools. As a result, this undertaking has to be taken with a pinch of salt; it will come alive in the course of the evaluation process and it will gain new and additional specific elements down the road. These elements by and large will stem from the very nature of the institution as well as by the undivided attention that will be paid from both the end users and the policy-makers to the evaluation process. In this context, AAHE is ready and willing to accept comments and suggestions from Higher Education Institutions in the country, in order for the current publication to become much more comprehensive with the upcoming editions. The further developments of our Education Reform in the context of implementing the Bologna Process will safely add more impetus to the improvement of such a guideline.

**Authors**

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## I. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Quality Evaluation in Higher Education is done under the care and guidance of Agency of Accreditation of Higher Education. The evaluation of quality will have to be characterized by a number of principles such as professionalism, trust, objectivity, fairness, complete transparency and the involvement of all actors through the entire stages of evaluation. Evaluation is a two-step process: the **internal phase** as well as the **external phase**; the two phases are commonly referred to in today's extensive literature on evaluation as **Internal Evaluation** and **External Evaluation**. But Self-evaluation can be conducted also at initiative of the Higher Education Institution for its own benefit and independently of the periodic evaluation and accreditation process.

**Internal evaluation** (hereinafter as Self-Evaluation) is the evaluation that the unit (institution) conducts of its own will, as a part of a periodical evaluation and accreditation process and under its responsibility. Such an evaluation is recorded in the **Self-evaluation Report**. The latter is part at the **Self-evaluation Folder**, which will serve as the main basis for the **external**

**evaluation** to be conducted by the External Evaluation Group awaiting selection and appointment by AAHE.

The main purpose of the **self-evaluation folder** is to present the unit in the light of its development and evolution process, to compare it to the last evaluation and **to conduct analysis** on the significant aspects of its indicators on the unit or programme by bringing out into the light the strong and weak points as well as the prospects of the institution and/or programme, curricula etc.

The “**Guidelines on Internal Evaluation of Quality in Higher Education**” suggests a range of topics to be addressed and identifies the type of data to be collected and processed. It’s understandable that other related issues may be dealt with, since other specific documents of the unit can be brought forward (specific studies and statistics) as well as information that may vary from the information that was originally sought after. A series of tables have been proposed to be completed: modifications and adjustments are possible and to be consistent with specifications of the unit.

**External evaluation** is run and monitored by AAHE; during this stage the evaluation and analysis of the unit and/or programme, curriculum is done by experts in various fields who display no conflict of interest or compromises with the unit under evaluation.

At the end of the evaluation process, AAHE drafts the **Final Report of Evaluation** relying on three main sources:

- \* The Self-evaluation folder including the self-evaluation report;
- ✓ The external evaluation report and their field visit, and
- ✓ Discussions with HEI under evaluation run by AAHE during the self-evaluation and external evaluation process.

Shortly afterwards, the final evaluation report is submitted to the Council of Accreditation (CA) in order for it to issue its recommendations or to make its respective decisions. On the basis of this decision that CA makes for each evaluation, the result is made public in the way and extent decided by CA case by case.

The main task of the evaluation report is to provide HEI and the main interested partners with a written document that is going to serve as the main picture (tableau) on the existing status as well as a foundation for further improvements and developments to happen.

In this context we notice that the overall objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

✓ To deepen our understanding about the need for Quality Evaluation at Higher Education Institutions in our country;

✓ To develop the evaluation systems or to complement and improve the existing ones;

✓ To develop and disseminate the experience of the institution in this area;

✓ To conduct self-evaluation with the view to painting a full and transparent picture of the HEI in order to design development policies in full line with its mission;

✓ To serve as the basis for the further process of accreditation of institutions and programs;

✓ To make public the information with the aim that all partners and the broader public such as students, parents, academic and supporting staff, other social, economic and political partners be fully informed of the situation and quality of the unit, program, curricula, services etc).

✓ To help serve as a basis for the Culture of Quality at HEI to be cultivated and be an ever internal and steady aspect of its work.

## II. How to conduct an Evaluation Procedure

Any type of evaluation procedure goes through **several stages:**

1. Filling a request for evaluation purposes and its reviewing by AAHE and Council of Accreditation (CA);
2. Approval of request and the defining of evaluation deadlines (schedule) by AAHE and CA;
3. Self-Evaluation (Internal Evaluation);
4. External Evaluation;
5. Drafting of Final evaluation report by AAHE;
6. Preparation of complete evaluation documentation by AAHE for the Council of Accreditation;
7. Reviewing of Evaluation by CA and the drafting of recommendation by CA for MOES;
8. The announcement and publication of evaluation outcomes, recommendations of CA and respective decisions made.

Further details on the complete procedures of Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education can be found in the manual of AAHE titled “**Procedures of Quality Evaluation in Higher Education**”, already adopted and approved by Accreditation Council in June 2004.

### III. SELF-EVALUATION (INTERNAL EVALUATION)

This could well serve as the first step of evaluation. It is undertaken by the staff of institution under evaluation. A well-structured evaluation highlights the weak and strong points of the unit (institution), within the general framework of obstacles or opportunities that determine the nature of its functioning [the SWOT analysis - **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, **T**hreats].

Self-evaluation is conducted in the context of a periodic process of evaluation and accreditation or at initiative of the HEI for internal purposes of its own. [In this instance, it is conducted upon the approval of CA and in accordance with the deadlines determined by AAHE and approved by CA].

Self-evaluation, as such, comprises several steps:

- ✓ Meeting of AAHE with unit to be evaluated and getting to know the deadlines (schedule) and obligations of evaluation;
- ✓ Setting up the self-evaluation team; this team is established by the head of the unit according to the criteria dealt with below;
- ✓ Training of the self-evaluation team by the AAHE staff: the guiding materials on evaluation, organization of

- groups and working in teams as well as getting to know the process, tasks, the rights and responsibilities of each person are made available;
- ✓ Conducting self-evaluation according to the guidelines in question (see further on). During this stage the self-evaluation team can also contact AAHE and gets all the attention and assistance of the latter in case there is a request pointing to such a need;
- ✓ Preparing the self-evaluation folder ( see further one);
- ✓ Drafting the self-evaluation report according to the requirements and instructions contained within this guidebook and after consultations over its contents with the HEI staff;
- ✓ Submitting to AAHE the self-evaluation report, when this process is done as part of the periodical evaluation and accreditation.

During the entire process, AAHE takes special care to honor all the pre-determined criteria and to allow for the procedure in question to be followed up closely and correctly. In case of failure to honor such requirements, AAHE takes the relevant measures to fulfill them.

When self-evaluation as such is conducted for purposes of the unit itself, the self-evaluation report is a document that is used to launch an analysis into its status and condition and to reflect upon the way and manner about how the unit best accomplishes its own mission.



The ultimate aim of the self-evaluation is to encourage all the members of the unit to start thinking that each of the members is responsible for quality and what measures are to be taken to enhance and improve it.

### III.1. SELF-EVALUATION TEAM

The **Self-evaluation Team** is set up to press ahead with conducting the self-evaluation process of the unit.

The Self-evaluation team is set up under the responsibility of the leading head of the unit, since the latter is expected to receive also the opinion of the relevant decision-making body of HEI under evaluation. In selecting the self-evaluation team we have to keep in mind some essential requirements such as professional competences, one-sidedness kept to a minimum, possibilities in collecting information in order to carry out evaluation and the necessary degree of familiarity of the team members, representing as many thoughts and opinions of the unit as possible by trying to avert at the maximum any inclusion of conflict-inducing person or persons that compromise the evaluation process. As a rule, the team is made up of 3-5 employees of the unit. The group is deliberately established to fulfill the evaluation mission (ad hoc group). It determines the organizational structure (the leader, secretariat etc) and a sharing of tasks and duties. It's a good idea to try and

include in its ranks members from the students' body. In cases when this is not likely, the group will have to secure the contribution of students to the Self-evaluation Group even when students are not members of the group.

*To accomplish this process the self-evaluation team makes use of these main documents:*

- ✓ *“Guidelines on Internal Evaluation of Quality in Higher Education” AAHE, 2005*
- ✓ *“Aspects and Indicators for Quality Evaluation in Higher Education” AAHE, 2004*
- ✓ *“Procedures of Quality Evaluation in Higher Education” AAHE, 2004*





The Evaluation group prepares the **self-evaluation folder**. While the **self-evaluation report** seems to be part and parcel of this folder. The contents of the evaluation folder are to be elaborated in some details in the paragraph that follows below.

Thinking ahead that the internal evaluations of the unit (institution) are going to be systematic at various periods of time, it's advisable that this group be set up with the second purpose of acting in the future as a permanently-based evaluation group, institutionalized or not, according to the specific conditions of the unit. On the other hand, evaluations are seen from the time

perspective. In such a manner the unit seems to have its own ‘experts’ of internal evaluation, whose service and expertise can be employed for other evaluations over periods of time (from one evaluation to the next) but also for the purposes of drawing comparisons between results contained within the report and other similar programs or units of Higher Education In the country or abroad. In the short run the establishment of such an evaluation experience serves the purpose of introducing the first stable and steady elements into establishing the Internal Quality Assurance Systems at HEIs, by clearing the way for the development of Internal Quality Culture in Higher Education in the country.

### III.2. SELF-EVALUATION FOLDER

Self-evaluation Folder should consist of:

-  **Thoughts in writing as expressed by the head of HEI;**
-  **Self-evaluation Report;**
-  **Quantitative data of HEI,programme etc;**
-  **Documentation requested in support of evaluation;**

### **THOUGHTS IN WRITING FROM THE LEADING HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS**

When it comes to providing some thinking, the head of HEI is required:

- ✓ To provide his own way the thinking where the strong values and the weak points have to come to the fore along with the institution’s perspective and the programme, curricula, diploma that he guides or is responsible for;
- ✓ To analyze the main developments since the last evaluation, by placing particular emphasis on the accomplishments of tasks that have been assigned from the previous evaluations;
- ✓ To show the main situation in the report and see how it matches with the situation that is targeted in the institution, programme or curricula.

### **SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

The Self-evaluation Report is made up of two parts: *the descriptive part* and *the measurable indicator part* with all the respective quantitative data provided. In the first part, the self-evaluation team describes the institution, programme, curricula and the diploma by sticking to the order of evaluation aspects of quality at higher education (see also material of AAHE “Aspects and Indicators for Quality Evaluation in Higher

Education”, Part 1, June 2005) which are presented in their concise form alongside the terms of reference as follows below.

### III.2.1 MAIN ASPECTS OF EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The overall terms on the basis of which any internal evaluation is to be oriented and presented would include the following:

**a. Mission and objectives of a Higher Education Institution; programme, curriculum etc.**

**Terms of reference:** Aims and objectives of teaching process and scientific research, the short-term, medium-term and long-term strategies, getting and aligning the objectives and aims with timelines, overall data on HEI (its history, statute, statistical data on the number of employees, number of students, study courses at various levels, data on the location of HEI in the national and international context.

**b. Organizational structure of HEI, its constituent units and its management**

**Terms of reference:** organizational structure, the hierarchical organization, issues of policies in the decision-making area, quality of supporting staff, composition of units and their respective staff, competences, working contracts and their work relations, collection and use of information for the personnel.

**c. Analysis of courses of study, diplomas MSc etc.**

**Terms of reference:** didactical structure of unit, data on admission, data on distribution of students across courses of study and academic years, data on the progress of students and passing rate, data on full-time and part-time academic staff, coordination of teaching process with other units.

**d. Study programs, organization of curricula, Bologna Declaration, credits**

**Terms of reference:** Aims of study programs, contents of programmes, distribution of workload across the various teaching units, organization of the academic year, terms, teaching syllabus, harmony of courses of study, literature and other supporting

materials, Bologna System with all its constituent elements.

**e. Teaching and supporting staff**

**Terms of reference:** structure of teaching and supporting staff in the curriculum of each course of study, teaching staff, supporting staff and student ratios, needs for additional staff, distribution of workload, relations with other structures outside the working hours, data on qualification of staff, on their age and criteria set in hiring staff.

**f. Teaching process**

**Terms of reference:** organization, types of teaching, workload and quality of fulfillment, knowledge check-up, number of students at point of entry (upon admission) and at point of exit (upon graduation), average duration of studies, passing-grade rate and other related issues, data on post-university studies: criteria, quality, admission enrolments, graduation, teaching methods and methodologies, technologies in teaching, internal evaluation of teaching process.

**g. Scientific research**

**Terms of reference:** research policies, publications over years, projects won over

and completed, participation in various activities at home and overseas, activities run by the unit (institution), cooperation with other institutions at the local, national and international level, linking up research to teaching, presence of Master's courses, institutional and individual participation confirmed in such courses, outcomes of Master's courses, official outcomes of individual research activities or activities for institutions.

**h. Students and graduates**

**Terms of reference:** procedures on admitting students, quality of students at entry point, statistics, knowledge check-up, getting students involved with other activities overseen by unit, hiring the freshly-graduated students, informing students.

**i. Facilities, material resources, logistics and other services delivered on behalf of community**

**Terms of reference:** facilities, infrastructure, information technology, libraries, other services for students, residence halls.

**j. Financing and management of financial resources**

**Terms of reference:** financial resources, data over the years, expenditures, costs per students, financial auditing, managing capacities.

**k. Internal Quality Assurance Systems**

**Terms of reference:** Institutionalizing quality assurance system, its functioning, self-evaluation and on-going upgrading of quality, outcomes of external evaluation

**l. National and international cooperation and relations with the public**

**Terms of reference:** contact with the local, national and international environment, staff mobility at each of afore-mentioned levels, communication with former graduated students, participation in national and international programs, links with the business community and the labor market.

The above topics and issues for ease of analysis can fall under **three main groupings**. They are expressed in the form and shape of terms of reference for purposes of asserting or negating, or to be more precise, for analysis. They serve just for **orientation purposes**. In case of the Agency doing the evaluation, then they could well serve to express in a clear way the aims and objectives of evaluation as well as to build up the structure of the

internal evaluation report. The three main groupings are presented below:

## A. EDUCATION POLICIES

- ✓ The unit (institution) ensures the formal education of students and the development of their autonomy, prods or urges their active participation within the leading entities of the unit;
- ✓ The unit is responsible for getting across knowledge and proposes to the students a set of knowledge complete with objectives clearly defined. The preparation aims at making it possible for students to join in the work force the very minute they complete their studies;
- ✓ The part-time education (the life-long learning) is part of the activities of the unit;
- ✓ The unit has in place the system for receiving and caring for students, it offers help in better orienting students throughout the formative years of study.

### A.I. What is the educational offer?

The plans and programmes are in full compliance with the mission and surroundings; the part-time education system and the life-long learning are an integral part of the activities undertaken by the unit; the offer is in full compliance with the local, national and international

objectives; the objective is discernable and easy to evaluate; the university diploma offers chances for employment; the post-university diploma relies on the scientific research of the unit and on the contacts it establishes with the social, economic and industrial partners, etc. outside the unit. The preparation provided by the unit enables the students to be involved in the labor market.

### **A.II. How is the educational offer achieved?**

Education takes place under proper conditions; the unit checks and evaluates in an undisputed manner the students; the educational offer is evaluated on a regular basis. The unit in a strict manner plays by the policy of improving the pedagogical methodology of teaching; it proposes to students a service that is likely to lead them to success.

### **A.III. Students from the entry point to the exit**

The unit has in place what we call a waiting policy, getting the students informed and providing them with the sense of orientation; it also caters to special categories of students (sportsmen, disabled peoples); it encourages the participation of students in the institutional life; it

places at the disposal of students documents and various types of information; it organizes for them assistance even outside the formal teaching programs and plans; the unit helps students to get employment or to stay in touch with the employment environment during and after the graduation process.

## **B.SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH POLICY**

As for this item, the self-evaluation team should bear in mind the following aspects:

- ✓ The unit is well aware of the strong and weak points in its own area of research;
- ✓ It encourages evolution, dynamics of research and it carries out such priorities, by guaranteeing the future of research;
- ✓ It defines its own priorities in the area of research;
- ✓ The unit has up and running a policy of evaluating research;
- ✓ It cares a great deal for the implementation of its policies.

In this part of report, the self-evaluation team should respond to the following questions:

- a. What is the productivity rate of research?
- b. What are the ways of making it public?

- c. How is it assessed?
- d. How is it being implemented and utilized by the interested parties?

## **C. ADMINISTRATION (GOVERNANCE) OF HEI SERVING ITS OWN MISSION**

### **a. Level of autonomy**

The unit has got a coherent statute, democratic debating is possible; autonomy is and feels real; the unit has real projects going on; the unit prepares each year an annual teaching and research report on activities based on individual reports etc.

### **b. Organization of HEI and its constituent units**

Organizational structure of unit; structure of unit and its mission ratio; distribution of competences across the unit; the internal debate; the internal services placed at the functioning of unit and its mission.

### **c. Partners of unit**

The unit is well aware of its own surroundings; it has established relationships with local, regional, national and international units; national and international mobility.

### **d. Administration of human resources**

Hiring policies, qualification policies and treating personnel at all its levels, academic or supporting ones,

competences within this field, policies of social treatment.

### **e. Financial administration**

The budget is prepared according to the defined rules; the financial means to attaining the aims are more than adequate; the policy of budgeting and financial auditing is well organized and acts in full compliance with the adopted procedures.

### **f. Administration of information systems and logistics**

The unit consists of information systems; the information systems are in full compliance with the timely levels; students' life is under the care of the unit; real estate (immobile property) are recognized and administered in a correct manner; the cultural and scientific heritage are evaluated, administered and well preserved; grounds and their administration, and the logistics administration.

### III.2.2 QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION

The above chapters appear to be the essential ones for any evaluation to press ahead. In several cases this evaluation is qualitative and comes out of any consideration and conversation in addressing problems on the spot. In other cases on the basis of the evaluation report some measurable indicators or standard data are discovered along the way, which act as complimentary to the evaluations. When the best case presents itself, the evaluation comprises both the quantitative and qualitative process.

This must be the very reason for the self-evaluation report to be accompanied by a list of indicators, that is, a set of data and terms of reference, which do create the possibility to arrive at the quantitative indicators and to express qualitative considerations, which are to be analyzed by the institution.

As a follow up, a list of measurable indicators is strongly recommended which will be made use of in better presenting any evaluation topic. Below follows just a condensed version of the measurable indicators, at a time when the complete and comprehensive list of indicators is provided at the manual published by AAHE titled "Evaluation Aspects of Quality at Higher Education", part B. The list is neither comprehensive, nor complete. The institution can add up to it or change its appearance according to the various specifications that may come along.

The major indicators on the basis of which data are collected for evaluation are as follows:

#### **a. Teaching and supporting staff**

Data on the personnel of the unit according to the classification as provided by the personnel office; data on the distribution of full-time academic staff; data on the distribution of part time academic staff.

#### **b. Teaching**

Physical workload of the full-time staff; physical workload of the part-time staff; the overall workload of the full-time staff; the overall workload of the part-time staff.

#### **c. University studies**

Amount of teaching hours (workload) that engages the unit, according to entire set of workload elements (potential of hours) within and outside the unit.

#### **d. Part-time studies**

Amount of hours (workload) on the basis of which the unit appears to be engaged, according to all the elements of workload (teaching hour's potential) within and outside the unit. The potential hours of the unit (statutory potential and fulfillment) distributed according to the nature of those who realize it (internal and external ones) and the type of workload.



#### **e. Scientific research**

Number of texts written by the staff, number of books published, number of articles published in scientific journals at home and abroad, number of scientific conferences at home and abroad in which no contribution has been made, number of reports written for purposes of research and study, number of scientific seminars held per unit, number of scientific conferences at home and overseas hosted by the unit or in joint cooperation with others, research projects etc.

Number of staff members qualified abroad, number of staff members which is engaged or invited to teach, seminars, (“invited professor”), cooperation.

Number of foreigners who have paid a visit to the unit for teaching, research or cooperation purposes.

Number of training courses organized for third parties outside the unit of Higher Education (on-going qualification); number of staff members that is engaged or involved with training courses, number of academic staff members which has won membership in professional organizations.

#### **f. University students and graduates**

Students: numerical data on the personnel, depending on the study level: university, master’s, doctoral and demography etc: numerical data on the outcomes if exams, for each academic year and for each level (number of students enrolled, number of exams, number of students sitting for the exam, number of

students making the grade, number of repeaters); number of likely candidates enrolled per branch, number of students admitted, number of students majoring in all branches, university, masters, doctoral students, number of diplomas awarded at university, master’s and doctoral degrees.

#### **g. Facilities, material resources, logistics and other services towards the community**

Information technologies and unit. Department space, area for the academic staff, expenditures on maintenance, investments. Dormitories, entertaining and relaxing (soothing) facilities for students.

#### **h. Funding and management of financial resources**

Incomes and various financing over the past five years; expenditures over the past five years according to the source of funding.

In the manual titled “*Aspects and Indicators for Quality Evaluation in Higher Education*”, Part 2, the Agency is proposing some tables to be assessed and to sum up the numerical information at some later point. The shape of the tables can be modified in order to best suit the specifications of each unit. If the unit has tables of its own, they can easily and readily replace those that are proposed, but they should appear in the material of the internal evaluation. In all instances the information

should indicate clearly the period of time when the collection of data was made in the report.

As well as the above, the self-evaluation report encompasses an analysis and reflection on all the data or considerations. Eventually this report contains the analysis of the pedagogical approaches to teaching of the unit (university has a faculty and/or schools, faculty has departments or branches, the departments can have its own divisions, when there are such things they have to match the international counterparts). On the other hand the subject of evaluation may comprise other institutional elements (organizational structure) but also pedagogical elements of teaching process; the various systems of schooling both full-time and part-time, the plans, programs, outcomes etc. They are attached as appendix at the back of the descriptive part of the report.

The self-evaluation report should include even data, ideas, comments and suggestions provided by **students** for all those aspects of quality in which they can help the evaluation process and improve such an evaluation. From the practical point of view, the ideas of students can be drawn in various ways: with free discussions, face-to-face talks with them, through various questionnaires, meetings with their governing bodies, through ideas in writing, or when a combination of the above is preferable. The ideas of students can be depicted separately at the end of the descriptive part of

the report, or for each aspect or sub-aspects of evaluation. It's important that students should not be selected but they should represent the community of students within the unit.

**At the end of the descriptive part of the report, the self-evaluation team brings to the fore the strong and weak points of the unit, programme, curricula, diploma and reasons as why such objective and subjective factors have generated or led to weakness, what is the responsibility of the unit and issues recommendations on the ways and measures to be considered in improving them.**

### III.2.3 DOCUMENTATION ACCORDING TO ASPECTS OF EVALUATION

The folder consists of its own parts as well as the official and non-official documentation, statutes or functioning regulations, other informative-related documents or materials that the unit itself may have issued that can otherwise be used for the purposes of evaluation and which could serve as materials on the smooth functioning of the institution.

*The self-evaluation report should be prepared in open, transparent way and all-inclusive manner.*

During the whole process of drafting up the report, the self-evaluation team should take into consideration

the fact that it will have to incorporate into the report the lofty thoughts of the HEI in terms of the institution or the programme under evaluation. This in turn asks for other opinions to be drawn in and on the other hand the unit needs to be fully informed of the content of the report. The collection of opinions can be done on the basis of the informal meetings, while the final familiarity with the self-evaluation report can be done through a meeting of the entire unit in which discussion on data, various opinions, comments and recommendations as expressed in the report can be held.

During this stage, the self-evaluation team will have to **be open** and **receptive** to the various ideas and opinions and to make sure to incorporate into the final version those ideas, suggestions, or comments that are rightly argued.

After going through the above stages, the self-evaluation report takes its full final shape. The latter is submitted to the Accreditation Agency for Higher Education in two original copies and signed by all of the members of the self-evaluation team. The report in its final version should not exceed the maximum of 30-35 page volume but it will have to include all that is given in the way of the above instructions. The completed tables can be brought in the form of appendixes to this report. With the receipt of the self-evaluation report, the Accreditation Agency for Higher Education double checks to see if the report has been drafted according to the

instructions, ensures if it has been written in a transparent and all-inclusive manner, and only after the above criteria have been duly met, it submits the report to the external evaluation team.

#### IV. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SELF-EVALUATION TEAM AND THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WITH THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION

It's important for the evaluation process to be characterized by trust, objectivity, fairness and complete transparency with respect to the institution, programme, curricula or diploma that is the subject of such an evaluation. The institution is keen on getting the word out on its own status, initially to better determine the path it has to further follow in compliance with the mission and the parameters set on quality. On the other hand, it is also interested to know more about its condition through the external evaluation; the latter being considered as an instrument of informing the high-ranking authorities to which institutions are responsible: at times the instruments used in the daily functioning of the institution are the responsibility of authorities outside. The relations established with the external evaluations are relations that are based on the mutual trust and assistance necessary in helping the institution fulfill the tasks it has taken on or tasks assigned by others.

The interrelations and cooperation between the two groups of evaluation, the internal and external one, is essential in building up a real situation for the institution, which identifies the strong and weak points (SWOT analysis), which explores the possibilities out there for the further development of the institution and which guarantees its own success and accounts for the hurdles it is likely to meet down the road towards the development and success. To help fulfill the above, the external evaluation team writes the external evaluation report relying on the self-evaluation report by making use of the contacts it has established with the self-evaluation team and the familiarity, stemming from the visits, it has gained with the institution under evaluation. The external evaluation report, prior to becoming a final draft, is discussed with the self-evaluation team to correct any imprecise information or to reflect on any suggestions that have been offered by such a team.

All in all, the considerations in relation to the four aforementioned elements, derived from the self-evaluation and the external expertise, do constitute the core of conclusions and recommendations that are integrated into the Final evaluation report that is developed by the AAHE. In this report are included and reflected upon the thoughts and suggestions collected in the course of discussions that are carried on at the institutions itself, or during the evaluation process.

## V. ACCREDITATION

When evaluation takes place within the frame of a periodic evaluation and accreditation process of the institution, programme, curricula and diploma, the evaluation folder along with the external and final evaluation reports are submitted to the Council of Accreditation, which, based on all of the evaluation reports and documentation presented, adopts its own attitude and issues the respective recommendation and proposals, which at some later point take on the final shape and are to be executed by MOES and/or (as the case might present itself) the Council of Ministers. The Council of Accreditation is in the position to decide on the extent and on the way how the evaluation in question is to be released and made public.

At the end of the evaluation and accreditation process, AAHE is still bound by obligation to present the Final Evaluation Report, Recommendations and Proposals of the CA to the HEI that was evaluated and makes the publication according to the decision made by the CA on that evaluation.

*May, 2005*