

KOÇ UNIVERSITY
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
EXTERNAL REVIEW (EUA) SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

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1. Introduction

The External Review Sub-committee has been assigned to analyze the requirements for European Universities Association (EUA) external review for universities and to evaluate the feasibility of EUA accreditation for Koç University. This report includes basic information about the EUA external review process and the possible time-table for accreditation process.

For the purposes of this report, the Sub-committee refers to the "Institutional Evaluation Programme: Guidelines for Institutions"¹.

2. The Institutional Evaluation Program (IEP) of the EUA

2.1. In general

The Institutional Evaluation Program (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA). IEP is a full member of ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) and is listed in EQAR (the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education).

Created in 1994, IEP ensures that higher education institutions gain maximum benefit from a comprehensive evaluation conducted by a team of experienced higher education leaders. To date, IEP evaluation teams have carried out nearly to 400 evaluations and follow-up evaluations of diverse higher education institutions in 45 countries worldwide. Upon request, IEP also conducts coordinated evaluations at the national or regional level.

IEP evaluates higher education institutions in the context of their specific goals and objectives with the aim of improving quality. The evaluation begins with a self-evaluation process conducted by the institution, followed by two site visits by an evaluation team, and is concluded with an evaluation report by the evaluation team highlighting good practices identified and providing recommendations for improvement.

An IEP evaluation examines the institution as a whole and not the individual study programs or units. Recommendations and insights are provided on the institutions' structures, processes, policies and culture, to enable them to perform the full range of their activities in line with their strategic plans and objectives, and build the capacity to address change processes. The IEP, however, never enforces the implementation of the recommendations because of its voluntary nature.

¹ http://www.eua.be/Libraries/iep/guidelines_for_institutions_2016_2017_regular_final.pdf?sfvrsn=2

2.2. Criteria for IEP

IEP focuses on an inclusive self-evaluation process. It focuses upon:

- Capacity of strategic leadership and effectiveness of internal governance and management processes that support it.
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms. As part of this larger framework the evaluations address the issues on internal quality assurance identified by the first part of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

IEP does not impose externally defined criteria, yet the evaluation is structured around four central questions:

- *What is the institution trying to do?* This question focuses on the norms, values, mission and goals of the institution. This section includes institutional profile, the degree of the centralization/decentralization of institutional governance and local, national, European and international positioning.
- *How is the institution trying to do it?* This question focuses on institutional governance and decision making, quality culture and internationalization and teaching and learning, research and service to society.
- *How does the institution know it works?* This question focuses on the tools used to monitor and evaluate the institution's different activities (esp. teaching) and the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the evaluation processes.
- *How does the institution change in order to improve?* This question focuses on the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and the strategy management and capacity for change and the participation of internal and external stakeholders in the improvement process.

3. Phases of the IEP evaluation

3.1. Registration

IEP evaluation process starts with the Institution's registration during the regular registration period in spring. For the phases to commence, the institution registers for participation in the Institutional Evaluation Program (April-June). The IEP and the institution sign a contract and the institution subject to review is expected to pay the fee for the evaluation.

3.2. Self-evaluation phase

3.2.1. Self-evaluation group

The institutional leadership is required to appoint an **institutional liaison person** for the evaluation process and set up **a self-evaluation group** as soon as IEP has confirmed the registration of the institution.

The institutional **liaison person** will liaise with the IEP secretariat and team coordinator on all aspects of the evaluation, including the arrangements of the site visits (arranging transportation for the evaluation team to and from the airport, between hotel and institution, hotel reservations, dinners, lunches and scheduling meetings).

The self-evaluation group (hereafter 'group') will steer the self-evaluation process and write the self-evaluation report based on the guiding questions for the IEP evaluation. The self-evaluation group should have the following characteristics:

- The group is small (max. 10 members) to ensure that it is efficient.
- Its members are in a good position to judge the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- It is representative of the main stakeholders in the institution (academic and administrative staff and students). While it is important that the major constituencies of the institution are represented, the group should not be an exhaustive gathering of all units and faculties within the institution.
- The rector should not be part of the group.
- It plans, coordinates and distributes the work. This might include tailoring the guiding questions to the national and institutional context, gathering and analysing the data, coordinating the work of any sub-group, compiling the final report.
- It provides opportunities for a broad discussion of the self-evaluation within the institution in order to promote shared understanding and ownership of the process and the report.

3.2.2. Self-evaluation report

Conducting the self-evaluation process and writing the report is an ambitious task that requires a substantial time investment, usually over a period of approximately three months. The self-evaluation report should be submitted at least 4 weeks before the first site visit.

The self-evaluation report should not be simply descriptive, but analytical, evaluative and synthetic. As an important step in the evaluation exercise, the self-evaluation report has four major purposes:

- To present a succinct but analytical and comprehensive statement of the institution's view of quality and strategic management
- To analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, identify the opportunities and threats it faces and propose specific actions to address them
- To provide quantitative and qualitative data supporting the analysis
- To provide a framework against which the institution will be evaluated by the IEP team.

The maximum length of the self-evaluation report is 20-25 pages, excluding the appendices. Appendices may include the current Institutional Strategic Plan, an organizational chart(s), demographic data for academic staff and students, key data on funding research and teaching, funding sources, etc., and infrastructure.

The self-evaluation report is written partly for an internal audience (the institution's staff members and students) and partly for the evaluation team. The self-evaluation report should be made available to all institutional members. IEP and the evaluation team will consider the self-evaluation report as confidential and will not provide the report of any information about it to third parties.

3.3. IEP Evaluation phase

3.3.1. Evaluation teams

IEP evaluation teams consist of highly experienced and knowledgeable higher education leaders –rectors or vice rectors (current or former), a senior higher education professional acting as the team coordinator, and a student. Each team member comes from a different country, and none come from the same country as the participating institution. The number of team members is determined by the size of the participating institution. Generally, teams consist of five members; institutions with fewer than 3500 students will have a four-member team.

3.3.2. Site visits

Each institution will be visited twice by the IEP evaluation team. The aim of the first visit is to allow the team to gain a general picture of the institution and the way in which it operates. The first visit lasts 2 days. The second visit then allows for a more in depth investigation of the priority areas of concern. The standard length of the second visit is three days. At the end of the second visit, the evaluation team delivers the oral report, presenting their preliminary findings, firstly to the rector alone and then in a meeting with members of the institutional community.

3.4. IEP evaluation report

After the site visits, the evaluation team will draft a written report based on the contents of the oral report presented at the end of the second visit. The report will present the key findings of the evaluation and recommendations for how the institution can improve. IEP also publishes all final evaluation reports on its website.

After receiving the final report, evaluated institutions may also use the “Evaluated by – Institutional Evaluation Programme” icon on their websites and other informational products for up to five years to signify their completion of an IEP evaluation.

Examples of selected institutions' IEP evaluation reports can be found in the Annex.

3.5. Follow-up activities

Following the voluntary nature of IEP and the principle of institutional autonomy, institutions are free to implement (or not) the recommendations. It is, however, expected that each institution will analyze the experiences and results of the evaluation process (both in terms of self-evaluation phase and IEP team's contribution) and address the recommendations made in the final evaluation report.

Beyond this, there are two further stages of follow-up with IEP, which are outlined below.

3.5.1. Progress report

Within one year of receipt of the final evaluation report, the institution should submit to the IEP secretariat a brief progress report. The aim of the progress report is to shed light on how the institution has addressed the recommendations made by the evaluation team. This does not mean that the team will expect the institution to have taken up all their recommendations, instead feedback is expected on whether the institution is implementing specific recommendations or not, in what way and why.

3.5.2. Follow-up evaluation

Evaluated institutions have the option of registering for a follow-up evaluation carried out by IEP one to three years after the initial evaluation. At the request of the institution, IEP will form a team of four evaluators (usually including two of the team that carried out the original evaluation) to conduct a follow-up evaluation to identify the impact that the initial evaluation has had on the institution's development, investigate the experiences gained from changes implemented after the initial evaluation and give further impetus for change.

4. Possible time table

The following time frame applies for institutions that register for an IEP evaluation during the regular registration period in the spring. *However, the IEP secretariat is prepared to work with each participating institution to adapt this time frame to specific circumstances and requirements.* The regular registration period in spring 2016 has

closed. However, *the time frame can be adapted to KU if they are contacted soon*. Koç University may also consider the registration process to begin in 2017 spring.

The below time frame has been included in the website of the EUA for 2016. The time frame has not been updated yet for 2017. However, the below time line can be expected to be the same in 2017.

Stage 1: April-June 2016

- The institution registers for participation in the Institutional Evaluation Program by the end of June.

Stage 2: July-October 2016

- IEP and the institution sign a contract
- The institution is expected to pay the fee for the evaluation by the end of September unless otherwise agreed upon
- IEP establishes an evaluation team for each participating institution
- The institution is invited to attend a workshop or an individual videoconference organized by IEP to discuss the objectives of the evaluation and to receive guidance on planning the process

Stage 3: October 2016 - February 2017

- The institution undertakes a self-evaluation and provides IEP with a self-evaluation report on the basis of the framework outlined in the IEP guidelines. The institution must send the self-evaluation report to IEP at the latest four weeks prior to the first site visit.

Stage 4: March - June 2017

- The evaluation team conducts a first site visit to the institution and requests any additional information as appropriate
- The institution submits any additional information prior to the second visit
- The evaluation team makes a second site visit to the institution, at the end of which it presents an oral summary of its conclusions

Stage 5: July – September 2017

- IEP presents the draft written report to the institution for comments on factual errors
- IEP sends the finalized report to the institution
- IEP publishes the evaluation report on its web-site (www.eua.be/iep)

Stage 6: October 2017 onwards

- The institution may use the “Evaluated by – Institutional Evaluation Programme” icon on its website and other informational products to signify the completion of an IEP evaluation. **The icon may be used for up to five years** after the receipt and publication of the final evaluation report.
- The institution will address the IEP recommendations in accordance with its internal procedures.
- The institution will send IEP a progress report within one year of the receipt of the IEP evaluation report.

5. Feasibility of IEP for Koç University

The External Review Sub-committee's observations are as follows:

According to Art.12 of the Quality Assurance Regulation of YOK², higher education institutions are required to take an external review at least quinquennially. Time frame for the external review of higher education institutions will be prepared and announced by YOK. External review will be held by external reviewers recognized or assigned by YOK or by independent registered institutions authorized by YOK. Within this framework, Koç University may consider to be externally evaluated by IEP.

Considering that the time frame for 2016 has closed, KU may consider applying for registration in March 2017. To that end, YOK Annual Review Report 2017 which will be compiled next year can be used for IEP. Under the Quality Assurance Regulation of YOK, the higher education institutions are required to complete their internal review preparations during the January - March period and submit the internal review report in April (Art.10(2)). The time frame more or less coincides with each other.

IEP declares that it is committed to continuous improvement and adheres to good international and European practice, such as the ‘Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area’ (ESG) and highlights compliance with the ESG. Thus, ESG as well as the four questions that IEP recommends can guide the internal review process at KU. The ESG are a set of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in higher education. The focus of the ESG is on quality assurance related to learning and teaching in higher education, including the learning environment and relevant links to research and innovation. In addition institutions have policies and processes to ensure and improve the quality of their other activities, such as research and governance³.

Standards for internal quality assurance can be summarized as follows:

² Official Gazette of 23 July 2015.

³ http://www.eua.be/Libraries/quality-assurance/esg_2015.pdf?sfvrsn=0

- Having a policy for quality assurance
- Having a process for design and approval of programs
- Creating a student-centred learning, teaching and assessment strategies
- Applying a pre-defined and published regulations for student affairs
- Having a clear process for the recruitment and professional development of academic members
- Providing rich resources for student learning
- Collecting and analyzing data for making decisions related to educational programs and other activities
- Sharing information on the university's activities with public
- Monitoring and reviewing programs periodically
- Undergoing an external review on a continuing basis.

6. The list of Turkish Universities that have undertaken IEP since 2009

Adnan Menderes University (2010)

Anadolu University (2015)

Ankara University (follow-up report 2011)

Atilim University (2012)

Bahçeşehir University (2009)

Bilkent University (2010)

Bulent Ecevit University (2016)

Istanbul Aydın University (2013)

Istanbul Bilgi University (2011)

Istanbul University (2010, follow-up report 2013)

Izmir University of Economics (follow-up report 2012)

Karadeniz Technical University (2010)

Marmara University (2014)

Pamukkale University (2009)

Sabanci University (2013)

Sakarya University (2016)

TED University (2016)

Yeditepe University (2012)

Reporters:

Prof. Dr. Billur Yaltı

Assist.Prof.Dr. Ilgım Alaca

Dr. Zuhâl Zeybekođlu

Annexes

IEP Reports of Bilkent University (2010)⁴ and Sabancı University (2013)⁵ are attached.

⁴ http://www.eua.be/Libraries/iep/Bilkent_University_Final_Report.pdf?sfvrsn=0

⁵ http://www.eua.be/Libraries/iep/Sabanci_University_Final_Report.pdf?sfvrsn=0