



2021 EQUIS  
**STANDARDS  
& CRITERIA**

**EFMD  
accreditation  
for international  
business schools**

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The leading international  
system of quality assessment,  
improvement and accreditation  
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## EFMD QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM

# EQUIS STANDARDS & CRITERIA

Document Version 2021<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The EQUIS documents are revised periodically and it is the responsibility of the School to always use the latest version of the document. Older versions of the EQUIS document set are only an acceptable reference with the prior approval from the EQUIS Office. EQUIS documents are updated annually at the beginning of each calendar year.

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## Introduction

The present document sets out the full range of the EQUIS quality standards and the criteria against which achievement of these standards will be measured. The standards and the associated criteria are grouped into ten chapters covering the different areas that will be reviewed. The purpose of this document is twofold: on the one hand, to provide a comprehensive description of the standards and criteria and on the other to give guidance to Schools in preparing their Self-Assessment Report.

It is important to bear in mind that EQUIS has been designed as an international accreditation system rather than one rooted in any particular national system. As a consequence, it must take into account the great diversity of national cultures and educational systems around the world. With its base in Europe, EQUIS is confronted with astonishing diversity within its own geographical region. It is, therefore, essential to begin any assessment with an understanding of the particularities of the local context. This does not mean that EQUIS will lower its expectations regarding basic standards because of local constraints, but it does mean that the assessment must accept wide differences in the organisation and delivery of management education.

From the outset, it must also be remembered that **the scope of EQUIS accreditation is institutional, the institution being defined as the organisational unit providing business and management education.** This unit may in some cases be a free-standing business school; in others the unit is part of a wider institution, usually a university of which it is a faculty, school or department, depending on the organisation of the parent institution. There are cases where the unit may be also part of a Foundation. In all cases, the unit must demonstrate as a requirement for eligibility to enter the EQUIS process that it has reasonable autonomy in setting its strategic agenda and in managing its budget and that it has its own dedicated faculty and administrative staff. It should be noted that **this organisational unit, whatever its name and status in its particular context, will be referred to as ‘the School’ in all EQUIS documents.**

In the light of this ‘institutional’ focus, the first chapter Context and Strategy is of particular significance. It serves to describe the School and its position in the regulatory and competitive environment in which it operates. EQUIS does not prefer one type of institution to another, but it does seek to analyse what works well and what works less well in the School’s organisational setup. Over the years, EQUIS has proved to be a very useful tool for helping schools to address problems in their decision-making structure and processes. This first chapter also assesses the School’s overall strategic agenda into which all its programmes and activities are expected to fit with a sufficient degree of coherence.

Five chapters look at the quality of the School’s resources and of its operations. These relate to Programmes, Students, Faculty, Research and on-campus Resources and may be considered central in defining the academic quality of the School. A major originality of the EQUIS approach is the inclusion of three transversal chapters dealing specifically with Internationalisation, Connections with Practice and Ethics, Responsibility & Sustainability, reflecting the importance that EQUIS attaches to these dimensions. Indeed, from the beginning, EQUIS has always differentiated itself as an international accreditation system and has worked hard to promote the internationalisation of the Schools with which it works. In the same way, it has

constantly striven to defend a vision of management education in which a balance is struck between academic quality and managerial relevance. The expanded coverage of Ethics, Responsibility & Sustainability reflects the need of business schools to contribute to the resolution of societal challenges and to act as ‘good citizens’ in the environment in which they operate. Each of the other chapters contain criteria relating to these three dimensions, but the purpose of the three separate chapters is to allow a focussed overview of the School’s achievements in these areas and to address the policy issues raised.

Executive Education is also covered in a separate chapter because it is a very specific activity requiring a different administrative organisation, different skills in faculty and staff, and different programme design. The successful integration of executive education – that is, the education of working adults in non-degree programmes – is a difficult task for business schools and university faculties of management. This chapter, which has been drafted with the help of leading executive education directors, is intended to help schools meet this challenge.

Each chapter begins with the EQUIS standard or standards relating to the area in question. Thereafter, an Introduction sets out the distinguishing features (or ‘philosophy’) of the EQUIS approach in order to help schools to better understand the spirit that underlies the questions that are being put. The following section entitled “The Assessment Criteria” lists the criteria, which have been grouped into a variable number of ‘key areas’. Within each key area, the School is invited through the bullet points to describe, explain, summarise, analyse, assess and so on. A series of questions is included to guide the School in the construction of its response.

In order to guide schools in the preparation of supporting documents and statistics, there is a section indicating the material that should be included in the Self-Assessment Report itself and a section indicating the material that can be made available in the Base Room during the Peer Review Visit (hard copies or electronically). In most cases, there is a section entitled “Notes” in which helpful definitions or explanations are provided. In some cases, an additional section entitled Key Indicators has been included as a reminder of the points that are of particular importance in making an assessment regarding a particular criterion. Examples of this would be the number of students participating in exchange programmes in assessing the international exposure of students, the existence of an Advisory Board in assessing external input into the governance system, a process for collecting student feedback in assessing the course monitoring and review system.

Other supporting documents to the Self-Assessment Report should include information on all campus operations and collaborative activities, as described in full detail in Annexes 15 and 16 of the EQUIS Process Manual Annexes – Policy on Accreditation of Multi-Campus Operations and Policy on Accreditation of Collaborative Provision.

In addition, a comprehensive Student Report is required from students of the EQUIS applicant School on issues of key interest in the EQUIS accreditation process. This Report should accompany the Self-Assessment Report and will be the focus of discussion when meeting those students during the Peer Review Visit. The purpose of this is to enable the peer reviewers to understand better the students’ perspectives on the School, since they are key stakeholders. The process that must be followed in

order to produce the Student Report is outlined in Section 3 of this document and in greater detail in the EQUIS Process Manual. If it is apparent that this process has not been strictly followed, the submitted Student Report may be returned to the School by the EQUIS Office for subsequent resubmission.

## EQUIS Standards and Criteria





# Chapter 1: Context, Governance and Strategy

## The EQUIS Standard

### **Mission:**

*The School should have a clearly articulated mission that is understood and shared throughout the institution.*

### **Governance:**

*The School should have an effective and integrated organisation for the management of its activities based on appropriate processes, with a significant degree of control over its own destiny.*

### **Strategy:**

*The School should have a defined, credible and coherent strategy, realistically reflecting its market positioning, resources and constraints.*

## Introduction

The purpose of this first chapter is to situate the School within the geographical, regulatory, competitive, and technological context within which it operates and, given this, describe its identity, mission and strategic objectives. The chapter is crucial for three reasons: first of all, it should provide the Peer Reviewers, who will not all be familiar with the national environment, with a concise, but comprehensive summary of the School's organisation and positioning in its home country context. Secondly, the School must be able to demonstrate that it has a full awareness of its operating environment and a coherent strategy towards the national and international markets for its programmes and services. Thirdly, the School should be able to demonstrate that it acts as an ethical and responsible institution in society, that it is built on principles of effective and responsible governance and that it demonstrates explicit concerns for promoting sustainability in the environment in which it operates.

The report should provide a description of the national higher educational system with an explanation of the norms, expectations and constraints under which universities and business schools operate. It should include an analysis of the national market for management education and of the interface with the employment market.

The School should define its identity and legitimacy within the national context as set out above. This will require a brief history of the School from its founding and an explanation of how its current mission has evolved from this historical experience.

Since EQUIS assesses whole Schools and examines all their activities, the effectiveness of the governance and decision-making processes is an issue of paramount importance. Experience has shown again and again that ineffective managerial processes are a major handicap in achieving quality in management education. The School must show that it operates with reasonable decision-making autonomy in setting its own strategy for future development, in establishing its portfolio

of programmes, and in the management of its resources. The report should provide a full description of the system of governance, both in terms of external control over the School and in terms of internal management processes.

The School should explain its current strategic positioning as regards resources available, programmes offered, ability to generate intellectual output, target markets and populations, and employment markets served. EQUIS will in particular look for evidence that the School takes explicit account of the international dimension of its activities, of issues related to ethics, responsibility and sustainability, the evolving role of technology in education and of the connections with the world of practice.

Digitalisation has an increasing impact on the broad scope of higher education institutions' offerings, research and outreach, internal processes and campus operations. Therefore, the EQUIS accreditation process will attach importance to the manner in which the School relates to technological developments. The process will also consider how digital technologies not only enable greater scale, efficiency and resilience of the School's operations but also assure better quality of educational experience and outcomes.

The School should also describe its strategic vision for future development, with a realistic appraisal of the steps to be taken to achieve its objectives. In this section of the Self-Assessment Report, mention should also be made of the sub-strategies that derive from the overall strategy in areas such as teaching and learning, programme development, research, internationalisation, ethics, responsibility and sustainability, connections with practice, and HR processes. This is especially important in those areas where the achievements of the School are still limited.

Emerging strategies are also relevant for EQUIS, it is understood that not everything can be undertaken as part of a pre-defined strategy and that Schools will seize opportunities as they arise and then integrate them *a posteriori* into their portfolio of activities.

Finally, the School should explain its policies and processes in the area of quality assurance and performance measurement. It is expected that the School's major stakeholders, and in particular its students, should be involved in these processes.

## The Assessment Criteria

The key areas are:

- a) Environment
- b) Institutional Status
- c) Governance
- d) Mission, Vision and Values
- e) Current Strategic Positioning
- f) Strategic Direction and Objectives
- g) Strategy Process
- h) Quality Assurance
- i) Internationalisation
- j) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability

- k) Connections with Practice
- l) Digitalisation

## a) Environment

- Provide general information on the environment in which the School operates, e.g.
  - ❖ The national educational system(s) within which it operates and grants degrees
  - ❖ Regulatory frameworks
  - ❖ Programme features pre-determined by the national system and environment
  - ❖ Student selection requirements within the national system
  - ❖ Degree certification procedures and the status of the degrees granted by the School within the existing hierarchy of existing national degrees
    - Does the School have a keen awareness of the environment in which it operates, including the constraints which the national or regional environment imposes on the School's activities, particularly in terms of:
      - the degree of freedom to innovate
      - access to resources and support (funding, faculty)
      - access to students
      - pricing of programmes
      - internationalisation
- Describe briefly the history of the School since its creation. It is often helpful to provide a one-page summary table illustrating the evolution and key events in the development of the School.
- Provide a description of the national market and the nature of competition within the national system to include statements on:
  - ❖ Key stakeholders, funding agencies and competitors
  - ❖ The interface of the School with the job market for which it trains graduates
  - ❖ The prevailing quality norms within the national system
- Describe the School's competitive environment in all relevant market segments (including online or blended provision).
- Describe the current demand and trend regarding programme delivery (on-campus, online or blended) in the School's market segments.
- Describe the societal environment of the School relevant for the School's mission.
- Describe the School's response to an education market being reshaped by digital technologies.

## b) Institutional Status

- Provide a clear explanation of the School's legal status and affiliation within its national system to include:
  - ❖ Type of institution (public, private, regulated/non-regulated, profit/not-for-profit, business school within a wider university framework)

- ❖ Parent organisation (e.g. Chambers of Commerce in the case of French Grandes Ecoles)
- ❖ Legal status and by-laws
- ❖ Relation to the national or regional educational and accreditation bodies
- ❖ Sources of funding which derive from the above
  - Do the legal status and by-laws for the School allow it freedom to pursue its mission?
  - What constraints do the legal status and by-laws place on the activities of the School?
- Identify, on the basis of the above information, the key factors which underpin the School's recognition and legitimacy within its own national context.

### **c) Governance**

- Describe the formal mechanisms through which the School is externally governed, either by the governance system of the parent university or by a governing body in the case of an independent business school with no university affiliation.
  - ❖ To whom is the Dean or Director of the School accountable?
  - ❖ How is the governance function exercised in terms of financial and strategic surveillance?
  - ❖ How is external academic surveillance exercised?
- Identify the School's principal stakeholders and assess their impact on major issues such as strategic planning, autonomy and funding.
  - ❖ To what extent are external stakeholders such as companies, national education authorities and government agencies involved in the governance of the School?
  - ❖ Does the School have an Advisory Body providing input that is external both to the School and the University?
- Describe the mechanisms for ensuring student participation in the School's governance.
- Describe the School's internal organisational structures and decision-making processes. Evaluate these in terms of their effectiveness in contributing to the overall strategy.
  - ❖ How are internal decision-making structures and processes reviewed and improved?
  - ❖ How do the current organisational structure and job responsibilities for individuals support the achievement of the School's strategic objectives?
  - ❖ How does the School apply to itself the principles of ethically and socially responsible governance?
- Describe the interface between the external governance system and the School's internal management system.
  - ❖ How are decisions that require negotiation between the two levels taken?
  - ❖ Is the School able to demonstrate operational autonomy within this context?

## d) Mission, Vision and Values

- Define the School's mission and explain how it relates to its identity.
  - ❖ Does the School have a clear sense of its own identity and is this expressed in the mission? Does the mission of the School clarify its role in society, its activities and its markets?
  - ❖ Does the School have a mission statement that is published, periodically reviewed and revised as needed?
  - ❖ Is the mission consistent with the parent organisation's mission and resources?
- Describe the School's vision.
  - ❖ Is it clear and widely known what the School aspires to be in the future? How challenging and realistic is this vision?
  - ❖ What evidence is there for progress towards meeting the vision?
  - ❖ What steps are taken to acquire key resources required by the vision?
- Describe the School's values.
  - ❖ Does the School have articulated core values?
  - ❖ Do the School's core values include an explicit commitment to ethically and socially responsible behaviour in the management profession? Do organisational members have a clear understanding of them?

## e) Current Strategic Positioning

- Provide a clear description of the School's current strategic position in its national and international market, i.e.
  - ❖ identify the strategic group to which it belongs and identify key competitors
  - ❖ explain the School's resources available, programmes offered, ability to generate intellectual output, target markets and populations, and employment markets served
  - ❖ describe how its strategic position has evolved over the past five years
  - ❖ explain its main strategic actions over the past five years
    - Is the School able to clearly define the strategic position it occupies and its differentiation from other institutions?
    - Who are the main stakeholders it serves? What is their relative importance and how is this reflected in the development of the strategy and the allocation of resources?
    - Has the School identified an appropriate set of measures to accurately pinpoint its competitive position in the market and its success in achieving the mission?
- Provide a brief analysis of the School's strengths and weaknesses in maintaining this strategic positioning.
- Explain the School's approach for pedagogical innovation.
- What strategic and tactical role do online or blended forms of delivery have?

## f) Strategic Direction and Objectives

- Demonstrate how the mission, vision and values have been translated into strategic direction as shown by the School's long term goals.
- Explain how medium-term strategic objectives have been developed from the broad long term strategic direction and how their achievement is assessed.
- Describe the relationship between the School's strategic objectives and the availability of resources. Identify the key constraints which limit future performance and the planned actions to eliminate them, decrease their impact or otherwise deal with them.

## g) Strategy Process

- Describe the process by which its mission, vision, values and strategic objectives are converted into strategic and operational plans.
  - ❖ How are the plans reviewed and updated and by whom?
- Give a broad description of the strategic plans for the coming years.
  - ❖ Does the overall strategic plan for the School reflect a keen awareness of the geographical, regulatory and technological context?
  - ❖ Have sub strategies been developed for areas such as:
    - Learning & Teaching
    - Research & Development
    - Human resources
    - Marketing
    - Internationalisation
    - Connections with Practice
    - Continued digitalisation
  - How will the plans for future development change the School's current strategic positioning? Are these plans realistic?
  - What changes will have to occur within the School and within its portfolio of programmes and activities for the strategic objectives to be achieved?
  - Does the School have the financial and human resources that will be necessary to achieve the objectives?
  - Are there shorter-term operational plans with appropriate metrics to measure progress towards the achievement of the stated objectives?
  - Is the strategic plan clear and communicated effectively to all concerned?
  - How is the School responding to opportunities and challenges of digitalisation?
  - How well does the School integrate its strategy processes into other improvement activities?
- Explain how the School takes advantage of opportunities as they arise and how or whether the activities that are then developed are eventually incorporated into the strategy.
- Describe the principal strategic risks that the School faces or may face in the future.

- List any policy and procedure documents that have been developed to support the implementation of the strategic plans.

## **h) Quality Assurance**

- Provide a brief description of the formal mechanisms for internal quality assurance.
  - ❖ How do the formal quality systems fit the context in which the School operates?
  - ❖ What policies are there for periodic reviews of academic departments, subject areas, research centres, programmes, etc.?
  - ❖ What general processes ensure the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning (including online or blended provision)?
- Explain the processes and indicators used to monitor overall performance.
  - ❖ What methods does the School use for tracking progress and completion of individual objectives?
  - ❖ What are the key performance indicators?
- Describe the ways in which students are involved in quality assurance processes.
  - ❖ How are students represented in the School's principal decision-making committees, either as voting or as non-voting members?
  - ❖ Do students participate in internal strategic reviews or in the preparation of material for external accreditation?
  - ❖ How has student input contributed to the preparation of this application for EQUIS accreditation?
- Describe the ways in which other key external and internal stakeholders are involved in quality assurance processes.

## **i) Internationalisation**

- Summarise the evidence that the international dimension is reflected in the School's governance, culture and strategy (See also Chapter 8).
  - ❖ To what extent do the Governing and Advisory Boards have international representation?
  - ❖ Does the School have an explicit policy and strategy for international development?
  - ❖ Are adequate resources allocated in support of this strategy?
  - ❖ What is the role of digitalisation in the School's internationalisation strategy?

## **j) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability**

- Summarise the evidence that ethics, responsibility and sustainability are reflected in the School's mission, vision and strategy (See also Chapter 9).
  - ❖ Are ethics, responsibility and sustainability integrated into the School's mission and vision?
  - ❖ Does the School have an explicit policy and strategy for ethics, responsibility and sustainability?

- ❖ Are policy and strategy broadly communicated and known among the School's stakeholders?
- ❖ Are adequate resources allocated in support of this strategy?
- ❖ What is the role of digitalisation in the School's ERS strategy?

### **k) Connections with Practice**

- Summarise the evidence that the School's connections, its engagement with practice and its intended influence on practice are reflected in the School's governance, culture and strategy (See also Chapter 10).
  - ❖ Which practitioners (business leaders, entrepreneurs, business-government policy developers) from outside the School participate in its governance structures?
  - ❖ Does the School have an explicit policy and strategy for managing its interface with the world of practice?
  - ❖ What is the role of digitalisation in the School's connections with practice?

### **l) Digitalisation**

- Explain how the School uses digitalisation as an integral, enabling factor, focusing in particular on the following questions.
  - ❖ Does the School have a clear digitalisation strategy? Is digitalisation, broadly defined, an integral part of the current strategy? Is the management team clear in its approach to digitalisation? How is this approach communicated to key departments in the School?
  - ❖ Is the School able to effectively execute this aspect to its strategy? Does the School have credible operational plans? Have the necessary resources for implementation been secured? Are the required competencies and capabilities already available or how are they being developed?
  - ❖ Is there an appropriate Quality Assurance framework in place? Are relevant activities monitored?
  - ❖ Does the School have adequate cyber security protection?

These questions may apply to all activities of the School.

## **Supporting Information and Documents to be provided in the Self-Assessment Report**

- History of the School (1-page summary table)
- Organisation Chart showing reporting lines
- Chart showing the Committee structure
- Cyber security policy



## Information and Documents to be provided in the Base Room during the Peer Review

- Documents describing the School's strategic plans and related policies (if possible in English)
- List of members in the School's Governing Body or Advisory Board (indicating name, position, organisation, nationality, year of appointment) *Double passport holders should always be counted as nationals, if one of the passports is the domestic one.*

## Notes

### 1. Mission

EQUIS defines 'mission' as the role for which the School was created or is currently mandated to fulfil. It derives, for example, from its status as part of a public university or as a private business school founded to serve practitioner markets. The mission answers the questions: 'Why does the School exist? What is it for? What does it do?'

The notion of 'mission' is related, therefore, to the stakeholders to whom the School is accountable and to the markets that it is serving. The mission should reflect its situation at different points in time. However certain elements of the mission are embedded in the founding act that gave birth to the institution, or are rooted in its history and culture. A good mission statement will capture this historical legitimacy and give it resonance in today's circumstances.

### 2. Vision

EQUIS defines the term 'vision' as the way the School would like to position itself in the future. The term encompasses the School's ambition as it projects itself into the future. It is a dynamic concept, expressing a willingness to take up challenges. However, it is not expressed as a detailed set of objectives, but rather as one or two simple, but powerful ideas.

### 3. Strategy

It is the role of the strategy to plan out the route towards realising the vision but within the scope of the mission. EQUIS expects that a School will have developed a formal strategy which will include clear and measurable (medium term) objectives, an action plan for achieving them and an estimate of the resources required (with sources) to implement the plan.

## Chapter 2: Programmes

### The EQUIS Standard

*Programmes should be well designed with clear learning outcomes and an appropriate balance between knowledge acquisition and skills acquisition. Delivery methods should be diverse and reflect up-to-date educational practice. The curriculum should emphasise student learning and allow for practical work. There should be rigorous assessment processes for monitoring the quality of students' work. Programmes should be regularly evaluated through feedback from students and other stakeholders. Programmes should be adequately staffed, managed and administered.*

### Introduction

Given the cultural diversity that exists at an international level, the aim of the EQUIS process is not to establish a common norm for the design, content and delivery of programmes. EQUIS will respect national and local diversity in an international context, leaving responsibility for national issues to the appropriate local associations. Nonetheless, the movement towards increased convergence of national systems and greater compatibility between programmes is gathering speed around the world. For all schools, the international positioning of their programmes has become a much more pressing concern than in the past. In Europe in particular, the Bologna inspired reforms that have been introduced across the entire continent are intended to create a convergent degree structure to facilitate the international “readability” of degrees and the mobility of students across academic borders. As an international accreditation system, EQUIS will seek to understand how schools are adapting their programmes to make them internationally compatible.

The design, content and delivery of programmes consist of an integrated set of core processes, each of which plays a part in the total value chain. The concern of EQUIS will, therefore, be to measure how much each core process adds value to the students' overall learning experience and the extent to which a concern for quality is reflected in all aspects of the design, content and delivery of programmes.

The School should be able to provide evidence of the quality of teaching on its programmes, but also of the quality of processes for the management of these programmes. There should be clearly defined roles relating to academic leadership and administrative responsibility for all its programmes. The process for designing programmes should be rigorous and involve feedback from students and representatives of the world of practice. Each programme must have clearly stated aims, objectives and learning outcomes. Students should also be given guidance on the way in which the School recognises, develops and assesses intellectual, analytical, personal, and enterprise qualities as well as the subject specific skills being developed on the programme.

The design and content of programmes should embrace a comprehensive range of theory, firmly connected to the practical world of business and management in a local

and international context. Ethics, responsibility and sustainability should be integrated into the design, delivery and assessment of all programmes offered by the School. The School should employ a range of teaching methods to optimise learning and the practical application of learning outcomes.

Digitalisation underpins a variety of learning designs which can enhance the synchronous or asynchronous learning processes. Different terminologies, refer to the fact that digitalisation has broadened the scope of teaching and learning. Hybrid, programmes, where significant web teaching may take place, flipped classroom designs which put a premium on synchronous discussion and collaborative forms of learning or specific initiatives where new technologies are mainly used to enhance face-to-face learning are but some of the current alternatives for schools.

Therefore, all schools need to have strategic considerations on the role of online learning in their programme offer. Online learning thereby should not be treated as a goal in itself, but rather an instrument to support the School's teaching and learning strategy. Furthermore, strategies will have to be consistently supported by an overall pedagogical approach the School makes explicit upfront.

The EQUIS Standards and Criteria do not require employing online learning in any particular way or to any particular extent. But schools should explain why they are not using online learning (if this is the case) and they should be able to prove how they maintain teaching and learning quality in situations where face-to-face is not possible. Ultimately, they have to demonstrate how they are preparing students for digital competencies and skills (e.g. data literacy, algorithmic thinking).

Online learning in programmes and courses must respect the same quality standards as regular on-campus provision. Schools that are significantly active in this field are asked to explain why certain technologies were adopted and the benefits that are associated with them. In addition, strategic coherence with the School's teaching and learning and the curriculum content should be transparent and comprehensible. In cases where the School offers (parts of) online learning activities in cooperation with a non-academic organisation, Annex 16 of the EQUIS Process Manual should be considered.

Technological developments not only change the way how students absorb knowledge and develop competencies. The changing nature of work requires that the School understands that new attitudes (e.g. greater emphasis on flexibility, collaboration, and experimentation) have to be developed. Likewise, a different orientation to learning throughout life (lifelong learning) results from the constant changes in the nature of work. Therefore, the School should demonstrate how it adopts, continually develops and innovates its processes and competencies related to its pedagogical approach, teaching methodology and didactical concepts, as well as programme content. This should also include aspects of how it organises the introduction of (technical) support structures for teaching staff, the improvement of links between pre- and post-experience education, and the introduction of new programme content.

The assessment regime for grading students' work should support the course design in terms of its objectives and general philosophy, but should also be proven to be rigorous, valid and reliable. The relative weighting in the assessment of coursework

should provide a good balance between intellectual development and the development of managerial competence.

The School should have processes in place to ensure the quality of its programmes, encompassing the relevance of course content, the quality of teaching, and the effectiveness of learning.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme design, delivery and assessment processes, EQUIS not only takes an overview of the programme portfolio and the management thereof but it also reviews one sample programme in depth as a check on the effectiveness of the overall programme portfolio management. The School should name three of its major programmes from its programme portfolio (no programmes abroad) such that there is a variety of programme types, e.g. an undergraduate (Bachelor), a pre-experience postgraduate (specialist Master) and a post-experience postgraduate (MBA). One of these will be selected as the sample or selected programme by the EQUIS Committee on the advice of the EQUIS Office. The overall portfolio and **a summary of the 'selected programme'** (for example, objectives, structure, components, quality assurance, evaluation and impact) **should therefore be described in the Self-Assessment Report** and they will then be assessed during the Peer Review Visit. Reference is made to the EFMD Programme Accreditation Standards and Criteria (chapters two to five) giving general guidance on the information that EQUIS expects to be provided on the Selected Programme in the School's Self-Assessment Report.

## The Assessment Criteria

The key areas are:

- a) The Programme portfolio
- b) Programme design
- c) Programme content
- d) Skills acquisition
- e) Programme delivery
- f) Student assessment
- g) Programme evaluation
- h) Internationalisation
- i) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability
- j) Relevance of Connections with Practice

### a) The Programme portfolio

- Describe how the strategy of the School is reflected in its programme portfolio.
- Describe the policies and processes used to develop the portfolio in line with the School's strategic objectives.
- Describe the School's strategy and policy as regards teaching and learning.
- Describe the role of online and distance learning for the School. How does it relate to the overall strategy (including research, executive education and support processes) of the School?

- Does the School's portfolio include online programmes? If so, describe their strategic fit within the School's overall portfolio.
  - ❖ What kind of opportunities has the School recognised for itself regarding the provision of such programmes?
  - ❖ What kind of risks does providing/not providing such programmes constitute for the School?
  - ❖ Have specific target groups of participants been defined for such programmes?
- Describe the overall portfolio of programmes that the School currently offers. Explain the School's policy as regards the balance between programme offerings at different levels (undergraduate, Master, MBA, doctoral, executive education).
  - ❖ What are the strengths and weaknesses of the present portfolio and how are these assessed?
  - ❖ What are the criteria for assessing the overall coherence of the portfolio?
  - ❖ How are decisions regarding the positioning of programmes made?
  - ❖ What constituencies and markets is the School serving?
- Explain how the programme portfolio has changed over the past five years.
- Summarise plans for future programme creation, repositioning or development.
- Describe the School's system for managing its programmes.
- Explain the School's principles with regard to the balance between programmes with different delivery modes.

## **b) Programme design**

- Describe the process for designing programmes. Explain how the School ensures that programmes meet the needs of the market and of participants.
  - ❖ How does the development and review cycle ensure that the programme objectives and intended learning outcomes (ILOs)<sup>2</sup>, as well as, content, delivery methods and materials for programmes are relevant, up-to-date and of high quality?
  - ❖ In what ways are programmes and student profiles differentiated with respect to similar programmes at other schools?
  - ❖ How does the School encourage innovation and creativity in programme design?
  - ❖ Does the School have well-thought out descriptions of the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviours it is seeking to instil in its students for all programmes?
  - ❖ Where the design of programmes is strongly modular, are participants provided clear guidance as to the means by which the integration of individual subjects is achieved?
  - ❖ How do programmes provide for interdisciplinary integration?
  - ❖ Which pedagogical concepts form the basis of the School's online learning activities?

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<sup>2</sup> For a definition of Programme Objectives and Intended Learning Outcomes: see Notes at the end of this Chapter.

- To what extent do technologies designed for online delivery provide a learning resource? For example, are they utilised across programmes with different delivery modes such as blended, block or face-to-face?
  - How is the School's teaching and learning philosophy reflected in the design of specific online programmes?
- Identify the key changes in programme design that have occurred in the last five years, together with an identification of key problems in the resourcing or design of current programmes.
- ❖ What steps does the School take to keep up-to-date with best practice, major trends and significant innovation in similar programmes around the world?

### c) Programme content

- For each programme:
- ❖ Describe the nature of the degree or qualification, its level of recognition in the national and international context, together with details of equivalencies as compared to other qualifications. Outline the qualifications which can be obtained after the successful completion of online programmes, if any. Do these comply with the general system of the School?
  - ❖ Provide a summary of the course philosophy, key programme objectives and intended learning outcomes (ILOs). Do the learning outcomes of online programmes, if any, match those of equivalent programmes offered in traditional formats?
  - ❖ Define the core content, options offered and the pedagogy adopted.
  - ❖ Describe the course work involved and details of extracurricular or special activities involved in the programme.
    - Does each programme have clearly stated objectives and learning outcomes? Are staff and participants fully aware of these and do they explicitly explain to participants what they are expected to know and be able to do at the end of the programme?
    - How are the programme objectives and intended learning outcomes translated into the practical aspects of programme content?
    - Are any programme requirements set by the nature of the employment market? How are these taken into account?
    - Does the design and content of the programme embrace a comprehensive range of relevant business and management theory, which is firmly connected to the practical world of management?
    - Does the School make clear the way in which the School recognises and assesses personal skills and qualities as well as the subject-specific knowledge and skills being developed by each course?<sup>3</sup>
    - Does the programme design and content explicitly include aspects of social responsibility?
    - Does the programme enable the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies (required in a digitalised world)? Does the School provide the

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<sup>3</sup> For a definition on the difference between Programme and Course or Module: see Notes at the end of this Chapter.

students with opportunities to experience technologies to prepare for the future workplace (e.g. artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics)?

- Does the School make available to its students full information about the programme?

#### **d) Skills acquisition**

- Describe the means by which transferable intellectual skills appropriate to higher education are integrated into the curricula. Schools should explain how the various learning and development outcomes for students are defined in their different programmes.
  - ❖ Do the programmes have general education aims to develop intellectual skills such as the ability:
    - to analyse, synthesize and critically assess complex material
    - to formulate and defend independent judgments
    - to conceptualise
    - to communicate effectively in writing and orally
    - to demonstrate an awareness of the wider context of the programme of study
    - to apply general concepts to practical situations
    - Does the School facilitate the development of a structured personal culture and a related set of values?
    - How are these skills assessed?
- Summarise the key managerial skills (team work, interpersonal skills, presentation skills, project management, leadership skills, etc.) which the School promotes in students and the methods used to achieve them. Discuss the role of practical work, internships and projects in developing these skills.
  - ❖ What opportunities are provided in the curriculum for students to apply the targeted managerial skills?
  - ❖ Is there an appropriate balance between intellectual development and the development of managerial skills in the delivery and assessment of coursework?
  - ❖ How are these skills assessed?
  - ❖ Does the programme include sufficient individual project work for the development and assessment of an individual's ability to integrate core subjects and to apply managerial skills?
  - ❖ Are students provided with adequate opportunities to carry out practical project work?
  - ❖ What opportunities are provided to allow students to benefit from group work and practical experience?
  - ❖ Do students receive training in research and consultancy skills?
  - ❖ Do students receive training in online collaboration skills, and if so, how are these assessed?

#### **e) Programme delivery**

- Describe the teaching methods currently used in programme delivery (lectures, case studies, business games, group work, project-based learning, tutorials...).

- ❖ Does the School employ a sufficiently diverse range of teaching and learning methods to optimise learning and practical application of learning outcomes? What is the balance between different methods and how does this support programme aims?
- ❖ How aware is the School of programme delivery practices in other countries?
- ❖ To what extent is there an emphasis on learning as well as teaching?
- Describe the School's processes for renewal and innovation in teaching and learning (new methodologies, didactical concepts) and its view on the role of technology in its programme delivery. Explain how the School's approach as regards pedagogical innovation translates into the educational process.
- Regarding the use of technologies in online programmes (if applied):
  - ❖ Explain how the delivery of online programmes is leveraged by technologies. E.g.:
    - Which kind of opportunities for interaction do the School's online programmes offer? How is student-teacher and peer interaction facilitated?
    - Describe the mentoring and academic support provided to participants of online programmes.
    - How does the School ensure that participants are sufficiently skilled to be able to manage and use technologies? What remedial support is in place for those who are not?
    - Are processes in place to assure quality of online programmes?
    - How does the School support students with challenges or specific accessibility requirements?
    - What data is collected on students in online programmes and for what purpose?
- Identify the main constraints which limit the range or scope of teaching methods and materials employed in the School's programmes.
- Describe processes for the allocation of staff to programmes.
- Describe the mechanisms for maintaining quality control on an on-going basis. Explain how the criteria and processes used to monitor programme quality relate to the programme objectives.

## **f) Student assessment**

- Describe the assessment system for monitoring and grading students' work and progression through the programme (including assessments used for online learning).
  - ❖ How does the School ensure that participants meet the agreed objectives and learning outcomes for individual awards?
  - ❖ Does the assessment regime support the programme design in terms of its ILOs, objectives and general philosophy?
  - ❖ Does the assessment regime explicitly identify the criteria for assessment and the range and relative weighting of the various assessment methodologies employed?



- ❖ To what extent does the assessment system distinguish between the attribution of a grade and marking designed to help students to understand their shortcomings and to improve? Is all assessment integral to learning? Are informative rather than summative methods used?
  - ❖ What provision is made for re-sitting assessments or examinations? Is this appropriate and does it support the programme's aims and objectives?
  - ❖ How does the School ensure that the assessment regime is applied with sufficient rigour? Describe the process which ensures sufficient rigour when assessing students' work in an online context.
  - ❖ How is the degree-awarding function handled by the School? What mechanisms are used to protect the integrity and validity of the process from abuse by individuals? What steps are taken to ensure objectivity in terms of the standards being applied?
  - ❖ Can the School provide evidence that the assessment regime itself is evaluated rigorously, particularly when new or innovative approaches are being applied?
  - ❖ What measures are taken against cheating or plagiarism? How does the School deal with such cases?
  - ❖ How does the School respond to gaps between ILOs and actual assessment results?
- Demonstrate that the quality of the students' work is appropriate to the level of the programmes.

### **g) Programme evaluation**

- Describe the processes for the evaluation of programmes. Explain how the School ensures that programmes meet the needs of the market and of participants and includes key stakeholder groups in the process.
  - ❖ How does the School evaluate the quality of the teaching input, in addition to evaluation by students? Is the feedback of participants used effectively in the reviewing process?
  - ❖ How does the School assess the quality of online learning?
- Summarise the evidence for satisfaction on the part of key stakeholder groups with regard to programme design, content and delivery.
- Describe the process for the review and revision of programmes.
  - ❖ What mechanisms exist for assuring consistency with programme standards required by external bodies? What have been the most recent actions in this area?
  - ❖ What adjustments to the programme design have been made in the light of feedback from programme teams and key stakeholders?

### **h) Internationalisation**

- Explain how the School's programmes are positioned internationally.
  - ❖ Which programmes are targeted at international students?
  - ❖ How attractive are the School's programmes to international students?
  - ❖ How many courses are delivered in a foreign language?

- Provide a set of statistics indicating international student enrolment in the School's various programmes over the past three years (if appropriate, cross-reference to Chapter 3 "Students").
- In the case of European schools, describe how the programmes are compatible with the Bologna-inspired reforms that have been introduced in most countries.
  - ❖ Are the School's programmes for younger students organised into the two-tier Bologna Bachelor and Master levels?
  - ❖ Does the School use the ECTS?
  - ❖ What arrangements exist for credit transfer arrangements with other schools?
  - ❖ Does the School issue the Diploma Supplement?
- Describe the international content of the School's programmes.
- Describe the current arrangements with other business schools and academic networks for joint delivery of programmes.
- Describe the opportunities for student exchange provided within the School's programmes and provide a table with appropriate statistics for the past three years (if appropriate, cross-reference to Chapter 3 "Students").
- Explain how the School ensures the same quality for its collaborative or off-campus operations (see EQUIS Process Manual 16: "Policy on Accreditation of Collaborative Provision").
  - ❖ What are the quality assurance mechanisms in this area?
- Describe the opportunities for international project work provided within the School's programmes (online or face-to-face).
- Describe the opportunities for students to participate in learning experiences offered in collaboration with or by other academic institutions.

### **i) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability**

- Describe how ethics, responsibility and sustainability are integrated into the design, delivery and assessment of the School's degree programmes.
  - ❖ Are there programmes that specifically address questions of ethics, responsibility and sustainability? Describe their orientation and content.
  - ❖ How are ethics, responsibility and sustainability integrated into the other programmes? Describe their content.

### **j) Relevance of Connections with Practice**

- Summarise the relevance and relationship of programmes with the practice of business and management.
  - ❖ Describe how perspectives from practice are built into the definition of learning objectives and into curriculum design.
  - ❖ Does the School have formal processes for involving practice-related stakeholders in programme design and monitoring?

- ❖ To what extent is the management community satisfied with the School's programmes and graduates?
- ❖ Summarise the extent of practitioner input into the delivery of the School's programmes.
- ❖ Does the School have joint programmes with practitioners (taught, online)?

## Supporting Information and Documents to be provided in the Self-Assessment Report

- A list of international academic or non-academic partners with an indication of the type of cooperation (joint degree, student exchange, research collaboration, faculty exchange, course or programme delivery)
- A table indicating international student enrolment in the School's various programmes over the past three years (if appropriate, cross-reference to Chapter 3 "Students")
- A table indicating student exchange flows in the School's various programmes (if appropriate, cross-reference to Chapter 3 "Students")

## Information and Documents to be provided in the Base Room during the Peer Review

Schools are advised to provide a list of all the documents available in the Base Room (hard copies or electronically) and to use clearly earmarked folders. This list should follow the structure of the Self-Assessment Report.

### General Programme Portfolio

(underlined documents should preferably be in English)

- Teaching and learning strategy (provide any available formal documents)
- List of programmes or programme sets (e.g. a common core but with named degree pathways or titles such as Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies in Marketing or in HRM designated as BABS (Marketing) and BABS (HRM))
- For each of the programmes or programme sets:
  - Aims and objectives
  - Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
  - Curriculum structure and its rationale
  - List of component courses
- Descriptions of the overall assessment regime and grading system and their relation to the programme ILOs (provide any available formal documents)
- Teaching evaluation questionnaires for completion by students
- Description of regular programme reviews
- Code of Ethical Conduct or similar document

## Selected Programme

The term 'Selected Programme' refers to the programme chosen for more intensive assessment during the Self-Assessment and Peer Review (see above – final paragraph of the introduction).

For this programme, the documents listed below should be made available in the Base Room, in hard copy or electronically. Underlined items indicate that the materials should preferably be in English:

- Programme structure document including:
  - Programme objectives and overall Intended Learning Outcomes
  - Rationale for the programme structure with a table or diagram showing how the component courses develop academic progression and lead to the attainment of the programme ILOs
  - Methods for measuring and evaluating results vs. goals in relation to ILOs
  - Quality assurance
- List of component courses including for each:
  - Intended Learning Outcomes
  - Syllabus
  - Rubrics
- Descriptions of the assessment regime and grading system
- Access to online material regarding course organisation and delivery
- Teaching evaluations (summary) by students for each course
- Teaching materials and student work: Six courses, three core (mandatory) and three electives should be selected for sampling and a folder for each course should be provided. Where possible, at least half the courses should be in English. For programmes without electives, electives should be replaced by more core courses.

Teaching materials should be provided for each of the selected courses to include the course notes or handouts, case studies, textbooks, journal readings, videos, projects, other online material.

Student work should be sampled based on mark or grade schedules or distributions (list of student names with marks or grades) within the selected courses. Note that mark schedules must be provided for each of the selected courses. For each of the same six courses selected above, the following student work should be provided:

- the assignments/exams set
- 6 graded samples of the major assignment (exam, dissertation, project report, etc.) for each course matching those assignments/ exams and illustrating the range of achievement on the part of the students. The PRT needs to see the quality of the students' work and of the assessment/feedback provided. These 6 scripts should include the highest mark, the lowest mark and 4 from close to the pass mark for the course (i.e. marginal scripts). If there are no failed papers, the sample should consist of the 2 highest and the 4 lowest marks or grades.

A sample of 12 graded final dissertations or internship reports (as appropriate, e.g. Master theses or undergraduate dissertations or internship reports) should also be provided, with 3 each with the highest and lowest marks/grades and 6 with mid-level marks. Doctoral programmes as selected programmes should be supported with a broader sample of 18 final dissertations and a supplementary sample of publications documenting the doctoral students' ability to get their doctoral research published.

## Notes

- All degree programmes should be included for assessment in this chapter, including those offered to practitioner markets such as the EMBA or in-company MBAs. If an accredited school introduces new programmes to its portfolio, it will be sufficient to report on these changes in the next re-accreditation.
- “Certification” programmes, i.e. programmes offered on the continuing education and practitioner markets, should not be included since these awards are not recognised university-level degrees and have no official recognition outside the School itself. These programmes should be described in Chapter 6 on Executive Education.
- Schools are invited to refer to the EPAS programme accreditation criteria, which may be of assistance in preparing this chapter (available from the EFMD website or from the EQUIS Office).
- Please refer to the “Policy on Accreditation of Collaborative Provision” in cases where the School offers its programmes in other locations outside its main campus in collaboration with other schools (see Annex 16 of the EQUIS Process Manual Annexes).
- In all EQUIS documents, ‘programme’ refers to a structured period of study, usually for a duration of one or more years, leading to a degree qualification as in ‘MBA programme’, ‘undergraduate programme’, ‘Master programme’, etc.
- The term ‘course’ refers to a single unit of study in a particular subject within the programme as in ‘Marketing course’ or ‘Finance course’. Each course is usually assessed separately and leads to a grade and a pre-established number of credits.
- The term ‘module’ is sometimes synonymous with ‘course’ and sometimes used to refer to an organised sequence within a course. In this sense, a course may be structured as a series of modules.
- In the case of more loosely organised programmes that may not have a strict course structure, the term ‘module’ may refer to short sequences focusing on a particular topic. For example, an Executive MBA programme may be organised into a series of one to three-week modules over a period of two years.
- It is useful to distinguish ‘programme objectives’ and ‘intended learning outcomes’. The programme objectives are general in nature, covering, for example the target market, the profile of students to be recruited, the jobs for which students are to be prepared. The intended learning outcomes or ILOs are more specific and relate to what students are expected to know, what they are expected to be able to do, and how they are expected to behave.

## Chapter 3: Students

### The EQUIS Standard

#### **Student Quality:**

*The School should ensure the quality of its students through appropriate selection processes, through the management of student progression in its programmes, and through the provision of appropriate student services. In particular, it should ensure the quality of the placement of its graduates through a well-resourced career service. It should strive to bring together in its programmes a well-balanced student body representing a diversity of backgrounds and nationalities.*

#### **Personal Development of Students:**

*The School should explicitly and effectively support the personal and professional development of its students beyond the acquisition of knowledge in such areas as managerial skills, values, ethics, leadership, etc. It should actively help students to define their future professional orientation.*

### Introduction

In this chapter, the assessment will address a range of issues regarding the School's management of its student population. Where appropriate, it will also include the management of the participants in its degree programmes for executives, such as the EMBA. The chapter covers the target markets, the School's selection processes, the quality of the students enrolled, the monitoring of students' progression during their studies, the support services for students in need of guidance, the career placement services, and the alumni association.

Where possible, the School should explain how the criteria for student selection, particularly to its programmes at the Master or postgraduate level, relate to its target market for these programmes.

EQUIS recognises that selection upon admission is not always possible, for example in many public universities in Europe. In these cases, the onus will be upon the School to demonstrate that high standards for progression through the programmes and for graduation at their end will compensate for the absence of selectivity upon entry.

The notion of quality in looking at the student body also encompasses students' motivation, commitment and seriousness of purpose as regards their programme of studies. The Student Report is intended to encapsulate the students' perspectives on the School and therefore must be produced independently of the School's leadership or other external support, by strictly following the guidance outlined later in this Chapter and in Annex 10 of the EQUIS Process Manual Annexes.

The School should demonstrate that it is successfully preparing students for potential careers in international management. The extent to which the School is able to attract students from other countries, both as regular students enrolled in its degree

programmes and as exchange students, is a major indicator in assessing the degree of internationalisation. It is also expected that home country students should be open to international experience and have exposure to an international learning environment, including opportunities for study abroad.

An important indicator of student quality is their employability upon graduation, as evidenced by time to employment, level of employment, and salary. The School should show it has the professionally qualified resources to help students in their search for a job, through career counselling and placement services. It should proactively manage the interface with companies in order to bring students and employers together. It should further demonstrate that it maintains a statistical record of employment results for each graduating class.

This chapter will also look at the way in which the School maintains contact with and supports its students after graduation and mobilises alumni in the pursuit of its strategic objectives in a process of lifelong learning.

An essential function of all institutions of higher education is to facilitate the intellectual, social and personal development of students in preparation for their future lives as responsible and creative citizens. In addition, management education institutions have the particular responsibility of preparing students to assume managerial roles in which very specific behavioural skills are needed. Furthermore, younger students will require support in defining their career paths. Older students enter postgraduate programmes in order to prepare themselves for an acceleration or a redirection of their careers. Particularly in MBA programmes, objectives relating to personal and professional development will occupy a significant part of the educational experience. The expected outcomes relate as much to behavioural factors as to the acquisition of new knowledge. In the area of executive education, the emphasis is increasingly on management and leadership development in which behavioural objectives are paramount.

EQUIS expects that the development of skills relevant to international management will feature among the explicit objectives of an institution's programmes. Learning in a digitalised world, language skills, intercultural sensitivity, the ability to function in a multicultural environment, experience outside the home country are important attributes that the School should promote.

A further expectation is that the School will educate its students to act ethically in their professional lives. Values such as integrity, respect for others, socially responsible action, service to society should be an integral part of the personal development agenda.

In sum, business and management education institutions play a key role in developing personal awareness and the appropriate attitudes, values, skills and behaviours to equip students in their professional lives as managers. Schools should be able to demonstrate a concern for the type of managers they are trying to educate, backed by suitable processes for helping students to manage meaningful change, direct their energies and personal skills, and define their own future.

As a consequence, the educational experience organised by the School should go much beyond classroom instruction and provide students with structured and monitored opportunities to develop the personal and professional qualities that have been defined as learning outcomes.

## The Assessment Criteria

The key areas are:

- a) Target profiles and criteria for selection
- b) Course preparation and progression
- c) Support and Counselling Services
- d) Personal and Professional Development
- e) Career placement and support
- f) Alumni Relations
- g) Internationalisation
- h) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability
- i) Connections with Practice

### a) Target profiles and criteria for selection

- Describe the target markets and profiles for incoming students in the School's various programmes.
- Describe the target profile for graduating students in terms of knowledge, values, managerial skills, professional competences, and entry level into employment.
- How does the School take into account different types of prior knowledge and the broadly diversified expectations of students?
- Provide a description of the selection processes and show how these relate to the objectives set for the School's different programmes.
  - ❖ What steps does the School take to ensure that individuals are selected on the basis of their expected contribution to programmes and of their capacity for personal development?
  - ❖ Can the School produce evidence that the procedures and standards applied for admission for each programme are rigorous, fair and appropriate?
  - ❖ What standardised tools does the School use in evaluating the readiness of candidates to successfully complete the programme of study for which they are applying (e.g. aptitude tests, language tests, etc.)? How do these contribute to the quality of the student selection process?
  - ❖ How do intake profiles relate to the target profile in the School's different programmes?
- Describe the results of the selection for the different programmes, including the number of applications, the number of students to whom a place was offered, and the number of students effectively enrolled for each of the past three to five years.
  - ❖ How selective is the admission process for the School's different programmes?
  - ❖ Is there an adequate pool of candidates to ensure sufficient numbers of students of the right quality? Do the selection and enrolment ratios support this conclusion?



- ❖ How does the School evaluate the effectiveness of its selection criteria and processes? Is information for all programmes analysed in sufficient detail to improve the targeting and effectiveness of programmes?
- In cases where selection upon entry is not possible, explain how quality is assured.
  - ❖ How does the School manage the impact on the quality of the education of all students?
  - ❖ How does the School assure the quality of its graduating students?
- Describe the current student population in terms of origin, previous study, age, and gender. For post-experience programmes such as the MBA, indicate the number of years of professional experience before admission. This information should be presented in a table with statistics for the past three to five years.
  - ❖ What trends emerge from the above statistics?
  - ❖ What future changes would the School like to see in the student mix?
  - ❖ What actions are planned to address issues in recruitment?
- Describe the mechanisms in place to ensure that socially disadvantaged students have access to the School's programmes.
  - ❖ Are scholarships available to help financially disadvantaged students?

## **b) Course preparation and progression**

- Describe the processes used to prepare students in advance of their entry into their course of study.
  - ❖ How does the School ensure that all students are adequately prepared and informed about course requirements before enrolment?
  - ❖ How does the School ensure that all students are adequately prepared for studying online?
  - ❖ What steps are taken to identify barriers to learning or progression as early as possible?
  - ❖ To what extent is assistance provided to students who experience difficulties or problems? How is the effectiveness of this support evaluated?
  - ❖ What actions are carried out by the School before the formal start of programmes to convey their sense of mission and core values to students?
- Describe the School's policy on credit transfer and exemptions.
  - ❖ Are the processes used to manage credits or exemptions explicit, valid and reliable?
- Provide a summary for each of the main programmes of progression, completion, failure and dropout rates. This should be accompanied by an explanation of these trends and the action taken to respond to them.
  - ❖ How is student progression through their course of study monitored?
  - ❖ Are dropout and success rates acceptable? Are there any fluctuations or trends in time and across programmes?
  - ❖ How does the School evaluate the match between its selection processes and the subsequent progression/performance of individuals? Is information for all

programmes analysed in sufficient detail to improve the targeting and effectiveness of programmes?

- ❖ How does the School evaluate progression, completion, failure and dropout rates including special arrangements for students on online courses, if any? What types of analytics are used to monitor student retention and progression?

### **c) Support and counselling services**

- Describe the processes used to provide learning support for students throughout their courses.
  - ❖ Does the School provide adequate support to develop learning skills in course participants who have been absent from formal education for an extended period of time?
  - ❖ How is student counselling organised? Does it work well? What evidence is there that problems are diagnosed at an early stage and remedied where possible?
  - ❖ Is special tutoring available to support disadvantaged students?

### **d) Personal and professional development**

- Identify the processes by which the School helps students to develop both personally and professionally.
  - ❖ What are the key personal skills that the School aims to develop in individuals?
  - ❖ Does the School encourage students to define their own personal and professional plans as they proceed through their course of study?
  - ❖ Does the School support students in adopting new learning technologies and learning about the impacts of digitalisation on organisations and society?
- Explain the role of any special techniques and tools in diagnosing the personal qualities of individual students.
  - ❖ Does the School have faculty members who are specialised in personal development?

### **e) Career placement and support**

- Provide statistics on the employment of graduates, such as
  - ❖ distribution of employment by market sector and function
  - ❖ distribution of salaries offered to graduates
  - ❖ geographical distribution
  - ❖ percentage of employment on graduation and six months after graduation
  - ❖ list of major employers over the past five years
  - ❖ How do these employment trends meet the stated programme objectives?
- Describe the arrangements for career development support for students and the alumni.

- ❖ What services are provided to help students identify job opportunities and prepare themselves for interviews?
- ❖ Can students obtain counselling in defining their career objectives?

## **f) Alumni Relations**

- Describe the way in which the School maintains and utilises contacts with its former students.
  - ❖ Is there an Alumni association?
  - ❖ How is it used to support the School's strategy, programmes and students in their career development? How effective is it?
  - ❖ How does the School support the Alumni?
  - ❖ To what extent do the Alumni contribute to the funding of the School?

## **g) Internationalisation**

- Provide evidence for the international nature of the student body, e.g.
  - ❖ International marketing of the programmes
  - ❖ Admissions procedures
  - ❖ International mix in programmes
  - ❖ International placements
- Describe the School's policy as regards language and intercultural skills.
  - ❖ Do language skills and international experience figure among the admissions criteria?
  - ❖ How does the School define the extent of language skills it considers should form an integral part of its programmes? What support is provided to achieve the agreed standards in language fluency? How successful are these?
  - ❖ How does the School help its students to acquire intercultural skills?
- Assess the readiness of the School's graduates to manage in an international context, supported by the evidence gained from the student body and from employment destinations.
- Describe the School's policy regarding international student exchange. Provide a table with information about outward and inward flows of exchange students.
  - ❖ How is the student exchange managed to provide an international learning experience to incoming and outgoing students?
- Describe the School's policy regarding internships abroad. Provide relevant data conveying the activity of the School in this respect.
- Describe the service provided to incoming international students.
  - ❖ Does the School have an International Student Affairs office?

## **h) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability**

- Describe how ethics, responsibility and sustainability are integrated into student recruitment, admissions and management (e.g. scholarships, awards, diversity).
- Describe how challenges relating to ethics, responsibility and sustainability are integrated into the personal development of students.
- Describe the curricular and extracurricular engagement of students in the areas of ethics, responsibility and sustainability.
  - ❖ Describe student organisations and initiatives focused on these areas.
  - ❖ How do School and faculty support these activities?

## **i) Connections with Practice**

- Summarise the relevance of the practice of business and management to the student experience. This includes a variety of possibilities where practitioners might be involved in the student journey, including selection, mentoring, assessment and placement as well as academic input.
  - ❖ Describe the extent to which – if at all – connections from the world of practice influence student selection on programmes.
  - ❖ To what extent do practitioners assist the School in activities such as mentoring, other extra-curricular assignments, such as shadowing, company visits, organised events?
  - ❖ Is there any input from practitioners in advising students in their career aspirations (corporate life, start-up advice, etc.)?
  - ❖ Does the School evaluate the satisfaction of students and graduates with the input they receive from their interactions with the world of practice?
  - ❖ Does the School evaluate the satisfaction of their connections with practice with the input they receive from students and graduates?

## **Supporting Information and Documents to be provided in the Self-Assessment Report**

- A Table providing for each programme the numerical data about the selection and admissions process (applications, offers, acceptances, enrolment, full-time equivalent in the case of part-time students) for the latest, complete year
- A list of major employers over the past five years
- A Table describing the outward and inward flows of international exchange students, with a breakdown by programme, by country of destination or by country of origin, by partner School, by length of stay for the latest, complete year
- A Student Report is required from students of the School on issues of key interest in the EQUIS accreditation process. A sufficiently large and representative group of students (rather than a group of student representatives) ideally coming from a selection of the School's main programmes, and where appropriate, including some exchange students, should focus on providing responses to the questions provided

in the EQUIS template (see Annex 10 of the EQUIS Process Manual Annexes). It must be stressed that this group of students should compile the Student Report independently, without involvement of the School's leadership or other external guidance. This Report should accompany the Self-Assessment Report and will be the focus of discussion when meeting those students during the Peer Review Visit.

### **Information and Documents to be provided in the Base Room during the Peer Review**

- Documents relating to the selection process: information packs, application forms, interview reports, test material, process documents, etc.
- Documents for incoming international students
- A description of the School's Alumni Association (e.g., members, chapters, services, activities, events, donations, etc. in the past five years). Alumni Directory, if available
- A Table showing the profile of each student cohort within the School's degree programmes (previous study, age, gender, percentage of international students, etc.). Indicate also the average number of years of professional experience for MBAs
- A Table for each programme detailing the job placement record of students graduating in the previous academic year

### **Notes**

- International nature of the student body: double passport holders should always be counted as nationals, if one of the passports is the domestic one.

## Chapter 4: Faculty

### The EQUIS Standard

*The School should recruit, develop and manage its faculty in accordance with its strategic objectives and have sufficient core faculty to cover the major disciplines and constitute a viable body of distinctive expertise (i.e. a minimum of 25 FTE).*

### Introduction

A key requirement for EQUIS accreditation is the existence of a permanent core faculty for whom the School is the principal employer and whose main allegiance is to the School. This definition excludes members of other schools employed on a part-time basis. EQUIS has set the minimum size of the core faculty at 25 FTE, because it is unlikely that all the multiple disciplines within the realm of business and management education can be covered adequately with less. These faculty members are the core group that ensures the continuity of the School, embodies its tradition and values, and builds up its distinctive expertise through research and programme innovation.

However, EQUIS recognises that most schools will deploy a second circle of teaching resources, beyond this essential core faculty. This group is comprised of contributors from other educational institutions and of practitioners from the professions or from business. The existence of a carefully selected and well-managed pool of external resources is a valuable asset in providing essential back-up to the core faculty and in enhancing the professional relevance of the courses offered.

The size, qualification, and composition of the faculty are expected to be sufficient to allow adequate servicing of the School's programmes and to be in accordance with the current position of the School. The appropriate size of the faculty in any given School will depend on the range of programmes offered and the number of students and participants enrolled. A small focused business school offering only postgraduate and executive education programmes will not require as large a faculty as a full-service university Faculty offering first degree, postgraduate and executive programmes.

Again, the profile of the faculty will depend on the mix of activities. A school with a primary focus on executive education will require a quite different faculty skills profile from a school that mainly offers full-time degree programmes. Schools in a process of strategic change, for example seeking to expand their activities into more market-oriented sectors through executive education or to strengthen their international positioning will have to adjust the size and composition of the faculty in line with the strategic objectives.

Technological developments will lead to new structures relating to the academic value chain, in teaching and learning, research and executive education. These developments require new forms of specialisation within the faculty and the development of new support functions for or within faculty (e.g. specialising in technical support for new teaching formats or supporting research in digitalisation and its

impact). Schools should ensure faculty sufficiency and demonstrate how they support personal and professional development of faculty with digitalisation in mind.

Effective faculty management is a crucial function within management education institutions. There should be processes in place for the recruitment, deployment, evaluation and development of the faculty. Workloads should allow a reasonable balance between teaching, research, new programme development, and internal managerial responsibilities. The pressure of teaching or management should not crowd out research and development.

The School should be able to demonstrate that it has an HR strategy, including a faculty development plan, linked to its strategic agenda and supported by an adequate budget. The School's faculty development plan should also reflect the institutional objectives with respect to ethics, responsibility and sustainability.

## The Assessment Criteria

The key areas are:

- a) Faculty size, qualification and composition
- b) Faculty management
- c) Faculty development
- d) Internationalisation
- e) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability
- f) Connections with Practice

### a) Faculty size, qualification and composition

- Provide a full description of the current core faculty as defined above, including the following information:
  - ❖ the number of faculty members holding a doctoral degree
  - ❖ the number of faculty members currently working towards a doctoral degree
  - ❖ the distribution of the faculty by subject specialisms
  - ❖ the organisation of the faculty (departments, chairs, professorial ranks)
  - ❖ the age distribution of the faculty
  - ❖ the gender mix of the faculty
  - ❖ the distribution of the faculty by nationality and international experience
  - ❖ the flows of new appointments and departures over the past five years
- How does the School justify the current size, composition and qualification of the faculty?
- What is the profile of the faculty in terms of expertise, academic qualification, business experience, etc.?
- Are the size and the composition of the faculty in accordance with the strategic objectives of the School?
- What teaching and learning qualifications or experience do the faculty have and are they appropriate to support the School's pedagogic approach?
- Does the School align the faculty competence with the requirements involved for the digitalisation of teaching and learning as well as research?

- Does the teaching faculty in terms of numbers and qualification ensure adequate coverage of the principal management disciplines?
- Does the teaching faculty have an inter-disciplinary approach i.e. is it able to integrate a broad range of themes that transcend disciplinary boundaries?
- What are the principal strengths and weaknesses of the current faculty?
- What are the key areas of shortfall in faculty expertise and what actions are being taken to address these problems?
- How has the faculty evolved over the past five years?
- What is the student/core faculty ratio?<sup>4</sup> How has this evolved over the last five years?

*Much of this information can be presented in the supporting documents listed in the next section.*

- When appropriate, explain the impact of the national environment as regards the organisation of the faculty (civil servant status, promotion procedures, tenure, career tracks, remuneration, etc.).
- Provide a full description of the non-core teaching resources available.
  - ❖ How are these additional resources recruited and integrated into the School?
  - ❖ What teaching and learning qualifications or experience does the non-core teaching resource have?
  - ❖ How does the School coordinate the contributions of non-core faculty within programmes?
  - ❖ How does the School evaluate the effectiveness of non-core faculty contributions?
- Describe the School's current deployment of teaching resources, including both core faculty and non-core faculty, within its different programmes.
  - ❖ What proportion of the total teaching provision is entrusted to non-core faculty? Is this balance considered to be optimal?
  - ❖ Does the School's workload model allow participants sufficient access to faculty for tutoring and counselling?

## **b) Faculty management**

- Describe the management processes governing the operation of the faculty.
  - ❖ How is responsibility for the management of the faculty allocated within the School? Is there a Dean of the Faculty with overall responsibility?
  - ❖ Does the planning process integrate all the requirements needed to meet the strategic objectives, the balance in core activities and the international perspective of the School? How are conflicts between strategic demands resolved? Is there a faculty resourcing plan which addresses all these issues?
  - ❖ Does the School provide a consistent framework of policy and practice which addresses the issues of School culture, workloads and the integration of faculty into the total teaching and learning environment? Does this consistently reflect the strategic plan?

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<sup>4</sup> For an explanation on student/core faculty ratio: see Notes at the end of this Chapter.



- ❖ Is there an adequate balance within core faculty members' workload between:
  - direct teaching and tutoring (both face-to-face and online)
  - programme administration
  - innovation, course development and the production of teaching materials
  - research and publications
  - service to the profession and the wider community?
- ❖ How are workloads managed?
- Describe the current policy and practice regarding the recruitment and induction of faculty members.
  - ❖ Is there a policy for the recruitment and selection process? What are the key factors that attract high quality faculty to the School? Can the School recruit faculty of a quality which is consistent with the strategy and programme requirements?
- Explain the processes in place for evaluating individual faculty members in both on-campus and virtual learning environments.
- Explain the processes in place for evaluating individual faculty members.
- Describe the processes for retention and promotion of faculty members.
- What are the formal processes for obtaining feedback from faculty members on critical issues?

### **c) Faculty development**

- Describe current policy for the development of faculty and explain how this supports the strategic plan for the School.
  - ❖ How are priorities for faculty development decided?
  - ❖ What formal processes for faculty development exist? How is their effectiveness reviewed?
  - ❖ What have been the major components of faculty development plans in recent years? What faculty time has been laid aside specifically for the purposes of individual development? What impact has the development plan had on programme quality and general innovation?
  - ❖ How are faculty supported to keep up with pedagogic developments including the use of digital delivery methods, if provided?
  - ❖ What opportunities exist for sabbatical periods and for periods as a visiting professor in other countries?
  - ❖ What opportunities do faculty have to interact with the management community? How do these benefit individuals and programmes? How does the School enable faculty to be fully aware of modern business practice?
  - ❖ Do faculty members participate in academic and professional organisations?
  - ❖ How does the School ensure that faculty are aware of the latest developments in their field and are fully aware of modern business practice?
- Summarise the strategic plan for the future development of the faculty. Identify the key priorities for the future and the budgets involved.

#### **d) Internationalisation**

- Describe the international dimension of the faculty.
  - ❖ What is the nationality mix of the faculty?
  - ❖ How many external visiting professors are involved in the School's activities?
  - ❖ What percentage of the home country faculty have had significant international exposure, including virtual engagements and experience?
  - ❖ What are the foreign language skills of the home country faculty?
  - ❖ Is the current level of internationalisation of the faculty in line with the School's aspirations in terms of strategic positioning?

#### **e) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability**

- Describe how the School integrates ethics, responsibility and sustainability into faculty training and development.
- Describe how the School recognises and supports community and public engagement of faculty.

#### **f) Connections with Practice**

- Describe the extent to which the School's faculty are connected to the world of practice.
  - ❖ Describe the nature of the connections between the faculty and the world of practice (through consulting, executive education, Board membership, etc.).
  - ❖ Is the exposure of the faculty to the world of practice as it relates to their discipline, sufficient to ensure the professional relevance of the School's programmes?
  - ❖ To what extent are practising managers part of the faculty or involved in programme delivery?
  - ❖ What percentage of the core faculty participates actively in executive education programmes?
  - ❖ What is the School's policy with respect to consulting by individual faculty?
  - ❖ To what extent do faculty members engage in consulting activities?

### **Supporting Information and Documents to be provided in the Self-Assessment Report**

- A summary list of the core faculty indicating: academic rank, highest degree, where degree obtained, nationality and international experience subject area, date of appointment, percentage of full-time engagement in the case of contracts that are less than full time (i.e. 75%, 50%, etc.).
- A table showing faculty staffing levels over the past five years, including the number of new appointments and the number of departures for each year, with a breakdown by category or rank.
- Distribution of the core faculty by academic department when appropriate.

- A table setting out for the current year the key statistics for the faculty (gender distribution, age distribution, nationality mix, number of PhDs, etc.).

## Information and Documents to be provided in the Base Room during the Peer Review

- HR strategy document
- Copies of the Faculty Handbook or other documents setting out the missions, rights and responsibilities of the faculty
- CVs in English for all the core faculty members including publications over the past five years (recommended format: 2 pages of CV plus publications list)

## Notes

- Core faculty members are employed to conduct research or to teach within the School.
- The term “non-core faculty” is used to designate any person employed on an occasional basis to teach or to conduct research. These persons may have an annual contract with the School, but the School is not their principal employer. They include, for example, practitioners from business and the professions, academics from other institutions, and visiting professors.
- There will always be grey areas in the description of an institution’s faculty resources, for instance between the notions of core and non-core faculty when it is hard to locate a part-time academic in one category or the other. In these cases, it is incumbent upon the School to explain clearly on what basis it has allocated a person to one group or another.
- In describing the size of the faculty, the “full-time equivalent” (FTE) is the total of faculty contract days divided by 5, assuming that 5 is 100% employment. For example, 5 faculty members with 3-day contracts would be the equivalent of 3 faculty members with 100% contracts. In this case, the headcount is 5 but the FTE is 3. The percentage of full-time employment refers to the number of contract days in the case of faculty members who are employed on a part-time basis. A four-day contract is thus the equivalent of 80%.
- The students/core faculty ratio is calculated by dividing the number of full-time equivalent students by the number of full-time equivalent core faculty. Calculating the full-time equivalent for students is obviously a question of reasonable estimation. For instance, the total number of part-time students on a two-year executive MBA programme can be divided by two in order to approximate the full-time equivalent. The resulting ratio has, of course, to be interpreted in the light of other variables such as the contribution of a well-structured non-core faculty. However, the ratio is useful as one indicator to measure faculty sufficiency.
- Distribution of the faculty by nationality: double passport holders should always be counted as nationals, if one of the passports is the domestic one.

## Chapter 5: Research and Development

### The EQUIS Standard

*The School should regularly produce original contributions to knowledge that are effectively disseminated. These should demonstrably make an impact on one or more constituencies that are strategically important for the successful development of the School: academic peers, management professionals, students, etc. The School should also demonstrate broad stakeholder involvement in the knowledge creation, development and diffusion processes.*

### Introduction

Research excellence contributes to the brand recognition of the School, to its capacity to attract high quality faculty and good students, to the quality of its programmes, to its capacity to attract funding, and to its ability to provide usable knowledge and new management methodologies to its clients. In sum, the research effort allows the School to better fulfil its public service mission and to better serve its chosen markets.

EQUIS recognises that Management research has been criticised for the gap between research and practice. That is relevance; along with concerns about credibility and replicability, that is rigour. EQUIS strives, therefore, for both rigour (credibility of evidence) and relevance (usefulness of the knowledge).

EQUIS defines “research” as a broad spectrum of intellectual endeavour ranging from scholarly publication aimed primarily at the academic community, through professionally relevant publications and activities aimed at organisations and business practitioners, to educationally relevant productions aimed at learners and teachers in universities, schools and companies. Therefore, within the EQUIS criteria, the term is not restricted to the purely academic conception of research. EQUIS considers that the broader view of research and development encompasses a diverse range of activities, all of which enlarge managerial knowledge and understanding, and improve the quality of a business school.

The objectives, recipients, and types of research vary among EQUIS accredited schools, but regardless of their variety, research must be relevant and its impact observable in the selected areas and for the school’s key stakeholders. EQUIS recognises that schools operate in different contexts. Whether geographical, national, or institutional, such contexts set limits and offer possibilities. Thus, the frameworks for each school’s research activities are embedded in its environment.

For this purpose, EQUIS classifies research activity into **three categories**, with the understanding that the boundaries between them will never be absolute.

## 1. Academic Research

In approaching the assessment of research, EQUIS takes into account the particular circumstances of the business and management discipline within the world of higher education. On the one hand, university-based business schools must conform to the principle that one of the missions within all schools of higher education with university status is to produce and organise new knowledge, to develop new theory, and to design new methodologies within the discipline. In fact, these schools are often evaluated within their own national systems on their research performance from this academic perspective in the same way as any other discipline within the university. Of course, the criteria and the standards may vary considerably from one country to another. In addition, university-based systems of faculty promotion and tenure reinforce research rooted in scientific methodologies and targeted principally at the academic community.

Business schools that are not part of a university, but that wish to be internationally recognised as high quality higher education schools, cannot disregard this academic dimension. Recognition by the international academic community and even by the relevant press depends partly on a certain perception of academic research excellence. In the group of the very best business schools of the world there are none that do not excel in academic research.

*Scholarly research quality will be assessed by its impact on the international academic community.* This impact may be measured by how often a publication is cited by other academic researchers or whether an article has been published in a widely read and reputed journal.

## 2. Practice-oriented Research

On the other hand, business and management schools have, by their very nature, a professional and practice-oriented mission, as is the case for schools of medicine or schools of law for which research will always be judged by its relevance not only to new knowledge and theory, but also to clinical and legal practice. Therefore, original contributions to knowledge should not be confined to traditional academic research as described above. They should also include new knowledge contributing to the effective advancement of management practice. Research of this type is usually supported by methodologies based on in-depth and close observation of complex business situations, often by means of case studies, surveys or even the rigorous rationalisation of significant accumulated managerial or consulting experience.

*The quality of practice-oriented research will be measured by its impact on practitioners.* This impact may be estimated by looking at indicators of funding provided by the world of practice for specific research projects or research centres or academic chairs. It can be also gauged by assessing the number of participants in open or tailored executive courses, or specialised degree programmes, covering the topic where a practice-oriented research strength is claimed. It can also be estimated by the number of articles published in practice-oriented professional journals, by articles in leading news outlets such as the FT, the Economist and by references from client organisations on the impact made.

### 3. Pedagogic Development and Innovation

The provision of innovative pedagogical methodologies, educational tools and learning materials in support of more effective learning in business schools and companies should also be considered an important dimension of a school's intellectual activities.

The research and scholarship in pedagogic developments and innovation may include use of student learning behaviours and experience data and its impact on choice and use of teaching methods. Where online and blended teaching methods are used, responsible and ethical use of analytics, artificial intelligence and other data governance aspects of research and application of such research should be considered.

*Achievements in this area will be assessed by their impact within the School on its teaching and learning mission and outside the School by their impact on other educational practitioners.* In part this impact may be judged by the number of individuals or schools that make use of the pedagogic materials or techniques developed by the School.

At the same time pedagogical developments, particularly when they involve design matters, are context bound and furthermore it may be unlikely that business Schools report their applied knowledge contribution in this area in journals or books which typically discuss higher education matters. Schools can thus report on innovative course designs or programmes inasmuch as they provide the pedagogical rationale underpinning the innovations.

Table 1 at the end of this chapter sets out accordingly **a typology of research and development activity**, categorising the objectives of the intellectual activity, the audience for whom its relevance must be measured, and the dissemination vehicles (articles, books, online courses, case studies and so on). Whereas most accredited schools will have some production in all three areas, the main focus or the particular mix will depend very much on the type of school, the profile of its faculty, the funding available, the markets that it is serving and the strategic choices that have been made. A university business school will probably place greater emphasis on academic research, while an independent business school serving practitioner markets will most likely seek professional relevance in its research effort. Whatever the mix, EQUIS will be looking for evidence of productive intellectual activity with measurable outcomes. The key measures of quality, in all three types of R&D will be **the relevance, rigour and impact** of the production for the different audiences, constituencies or stakeholders that the School is serving, as well as its contribution to **teaching and learning quality**.

The expectation is that all schools that are accredited will be able to demonstrate that they are productive in some areas of the intellectual activity spectrum described above, that there are processes in place for the management and monitoring of the research agenda, and that they allocate time and resources to support faculty members. Whatever the chosen emphasis by different schools, involvement in some form of intellectual activity is seen as essential for each faculty member in order to keep abreast of current developments in his or her discipline. The purely vocational or the

exclusively practice oriented school with a sole emphasis on teaching will not qualify under the above definition.

Schools should have an explicit, publicly stated strategy and policy regarding research in this extended spectrum of activities and production. At one extreme, this may only be a commitment to the principle that research is an individual concern and that it cannot be managed centrally. Nonetheless, even in these cases, recruitment policy, time allocation, evaluation and reward processes provide a context in which research can prosper. In most schools, the research effort itself requires some planned guidance in the form of targeted specialisations, centrally managed research centres, an encouragement to pursue collaborative research, and so on. This is particularly true of the many schools around the world that are currently striving to upgrade their research potential, often from a situation in which research was not seen as a value and only given low priority. However, a word of caution is in order: the pursuit of accreditation should not lead schools to set unrealistic objectives as regards their research profile. Their resource base in terms of faculty and funding may not be sufficient to support the aspirations.

Ideally EQUIS is seeking a balance between the academic and the managerial dimensions, taking into account that the centre of gravity will vary according to the nature of the School. However, in all cases, the School must demonstrate a commitment to creating knowledge as a foundation of quality in education. The School must be able to demonstrate that there is a structured connection between research excellence and quality of learning, both in the talent of individual faculty members and in the impact of its programmes. The intellectual production of the faculty will ensure that the knowledge and skills taught on programmes are broad-based, relevant, up-to-date and forward-looking.

Furthermore, EQUIS considers that there is a continuum between relevant research and the innovative development of the School's range of activities. It should, therefore, be able to demonstrate a broad commitment to innovation and creative development in all aspects of its operation: research, programme design, learning methods, service to stakeholders and the society at large, interface with the world of practice, international relations, internal management.

The assessment of the School at the time of the Peer Review will embrace both research and development.

This assessment should include the analysis of policies, processes and practices in place for the assurance of integrity of the School's research and development activities.

Table 2 provides a suggested list of types of production that fall within the research and development spectrum and is intended to serve as a basis for reporting research activity.

## The Assessment Criteria

The key areas are:

- a) Research activities
- b) Development and Innovation
- c) International features of R&D
- d) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability
- e) Connections between R&D and the world of practice

### a) Research activities

- Describe the School's overall research strategy and policy. Explain how the research agenda contributes to the strategic objectives of the School.
  - ❖ What are the principal types of research carried out by the School?
  - ❖ How are priorities established within the strategy?
  - ❖ What is the current research potential of the core faculty?
  - ❖ How has this potential evolved over the last five years?
  - ❖ What methods have been used to attract key research staff to the School in recent years?
  - ❖ What are the plans for future development of the research capacity?
- Explain how research and development is interpreted within the national context. Describe any nationally organised research assessment schemes (e.g. the REF in the UK).
- Describe how research is organised within the School.
  - ❖ Is there a Dean or Director of Research?
  - ❖ Is there a Research or Scientific Committee?
  - ❖ Are there self-standing Research Centres or Institutes within the School?
  - ❖ To what extent is the research agenda managed?
- Describe how research activity is integrated into the workload of individual faculty members.
  - ❖ What priority level is accorded to research?
  - ❖ Is research a value within the culture of the School?
  - ❖ How much time is allowed for research within faculty members' workload?
  - ❖ What is the link between the faculty developmental budget and research policy?
- Explain how research is funded (internal budgetary allocations, government funding, research grants, company sponsorship).
  - ❖ How did the research grants obtained develop over the last five years?
- Describe the processes for monitoring and evaluating research.
  - ❖ Is research a requirement for promotion and retention?
  - ❖ What is the reward system for excellence in research?
  - ❖ Is the School able to assess its total intellectual property, in terms of research and expertise?



- Summarise the research carried out by the core faculty over the past five years (Please use the attached Table 2 or a similar reporting format to provide this data). The data in this Table should be critically analysed in the Self-Assessment Report.
  - ❖ What strengths and weaknesses emerge from this data?
  - ❖ What have been the significant trends during this five-year period? In what areas has progress been made? In what areas has output declined?
  - ❖ What proportion of the faculty can be considered active in the area of research and intellectual activity?
- Describe the research activities of the non-core faculty to the extent that they contribute to the quality of the School's programmes and to its ability to serve its chosen markets. Clearly specify which of this output is produced by academics that work primarily for another academic institution.
- Describe how the outcomes of research contribute to the quality of learning and programme innovation.
- Describe the ways in which research has contributed to the accumulation of distinctive expertise within the School.
- If applicable, describe how the doctoral programmes contribute to the School's research profile.

## **b) Development and Innovation**

- Describe the School's overall policy for promoting innovation and the mechanisms for determining priorities in this area.
- Explain how the School interprets innovation, including digital innovation, within the national and international context.
- Summarise the key achievements in the area of innovation, including the development of new courses, educational materials, and new learning and delivery methods that may or may not be based upon information and communication technologies.
- Describe any current and proposed activities designed to develop new tools, including digital tools, for management or to increase the impact of the School in its practitioner markets.
- Describe how the School engages in knowledge development with business and other stakeholders through collaborative enquiry and other methods.

## **c) International features of R&D**

- Summarise the contribution of the research agenda to the international dimension of the School.
- Describe how the School manages its R&D agenda in a way that contributes to global thought leadership.
- Give details of faculty involvement in joint research with schools or colleagues in other countries.

- Describe the contribution of international academic visitors to enhance R&D in the School.
- Identify in Table 2 the data relating to international publications or research activity of the core faculty.

#### **d) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability**

- Describe how the School integrates ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its research activities.
- Describe how the School integrates ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its development and innovation activities.
- Describe the fundamental principles of research integrity that underpin the research and development work of the School's faculty along with the mechanisms, policies and processes in place to provide assurances over good practices in research and development, publication and dissemination of results, as well as reviewing and evaluating work of another researcher.

#### **e) Connections between R&D and the world of practice**

- Describe how the School's overall R&D production can be considered relevant to its practitioner markets.
- Describe R&D activities that are sponsored by companies, policy organisations, not for profit organisations or entrepreneurs.
- Describe R&D (research projects, cases, etc.) initiatives run in collaboration with these groups.
- Describe how the School manages its R&D agenda in a way that contributes to thought leadership about the increasingly digital nature of business and society.
- Describe how the School engages with pedagogic research and innovations in teaching and learning methods, and the use of digital technologies. This may include research on or use of analytics, artificial intelligence and online teaching methods to improve student experience and learning.
- Is there any direct input into the work of research centres? To what extent do practitioners participate in the creation of research proposals, match funding, support doctoral work in the School or its research centres and groups? Are there any joint research centres?
- List consultancy missions that involve a R&D dimension.
- Are practitioners involved in the research outputs of the School (for example joint articles, reports, seminars, webinars, new taught/online programmes, commercialisations, start-ups, incubators & accelerators)?

## Supporting Information and Documents to be provided in the Self-Assessment Report

- Numerical data on output using the format in Table 2 of the EQUIS Standards and Criteria document. Explain on the basis of what criteria research production numbers are placed into a particular category.
- It should be noted that Table 2 is intended as a guide to help schools in reporting the data that EQUIS is looking for. Schools may use their own reporting format provided that it covers the same information.
- A table listing funds received from research grants, commissioned research or company sponsorship over the past five years.

## Information and Documents to be provided in the Base Room during the Peer Review

- Materials published during the past year as reported in Table 2 (Articles, Books, Theses, Reports, Case Studies, Educational materials, etc). These can be made available in hard copy or electronically.
- Any written statements regarding research strategy, policy and processes.
- Brochures or other materials describing research centres or institutes.
- Membership of the Research Committee.

### Notes

Data on research and publication should only be reported for the core faculty, defined as those members of the faculty for whom the School is the principal employer. The publications of part-time staff from other schools, adjunct faculty, visiting professors, or business practitioners should not be included in Table 2.

It must be underlined, however, that non-core teaching resources can contribute substantially to innovation and development. Their contributions should be described separately.

### Key indicators in this chapter are:

- A coherent strategy and policy in the field of research, aligned with the overall strategy of the School.
- Effective processes for implementing the research effort.
- The volume of intellectual production within the School as a whole.
- The quality of the production as measured by its impact: academic recognition, faculty qualification, programme quality, relevance to the School's markets and stakeholders, contribution to management practice, etc.
- The percentage of research active faculty.

- Distinctive expertise in some areas.
- Adequate funding to support the research effort.
- Evidence of a culture of innovation within the School.

**Table 1: Research/Publication/Production**

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Target Production</b>	<b>Target Outlets</b>	<b>Characteristics Key Words</b>
<b>Academic Production</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance theory</li> <li>• Create new knowledge</li> <li>• Devise new methodologies</li> <li>• Sustain a doctoral programme</li> <li>• Underpin up-to-date and innovative teaching programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other academics</li> <li>• Graduate students</li> <li>• International market (necessarily in English)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles</li> <li>• Conference presentations</li> <li>• Papers</li> <li>• Research monographs</li> <li>• Scholarly theses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholarly journals</li> <li>• Conferences</li> <li>• Text books</li> <li>• University presses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline-based</li> <li>• Academic</li> <li>• Scholarly</li> <li>• Refereed</li> <li>• Rigorous</li> </ul>
<b>Practice-Oriented Production</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform practitioners</li> <li>• Educate students</li> <li>• Targeted research for specific companies or organisations</li> <li>• Improve management practice</li> <li>• Understanding of the environment</li> <li>• Updating of course content</li> <li>• Faculty development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive education participants</li> <li>• Companies/organisations</li> <li>• Practitioners</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• National &amp; international markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Studies</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text books</li> <li>• Specialised publications</li> <li>• Practitioner journals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance</li> <li>• Useful knowledge</li> <li>• Applied practice-oriented</li> <li>• Field work</li> </ul>
<b>Pedagogical Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create new course materials</li> <li>• Create new programmes</li> <li>• Define new learning methodologies</li> <li>• Create new learning tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Programme directors</li> <li>• Other teachers</li> <li>• Executive education directors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Software</li> <li>• Innovative programmes</li> <li>• Online courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case clearing houses</li> <li>• Commercial software outlets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferable</li> <li>• Innovative</li> <li>• Tailor-made</li> <li>• New learning</li> </ul>

**Table 2: RESEARCH OUTPUT OF THE CORE FACULTY in the last five years**

Types of Publication	Total Number of items in the category for the five-year period	Total Number of contributing core faculty members from within the School.***	Number of items jointly produced by two or more core faculty members from within the School	Number of items jointly produced in collaboration with other institutions	Research Activity Ratio: Number of items/ Total Number of core faculty members currently in the School
Scholarly articles in int'l refereed journals					
Scholarly articles in national journals					
Papers in int'l academic conferences					
Books (e.g. research monographs)					
Chapters in books					
Textbooks					
Chapters in textbooks					
Articles in professional journals					
Papers in professional conferences					
Studies and Reports commissioned by companies and gov't agencies					
Studies and Reports produced as part of an int'l network					
Published Case Studies					
Published Learning and Teaching Materials, including online formats					
Technology-Enhanced Learning Materials					
Doctoral theses completed					
Doctoral theses supervised					
Other (please describe)					
<b>TOTALS</b>					

\*\*\* Only include authors who were faculty members at the time of production

Note: It should be noted that Table 2 is intended as a guide to help schools in reporting the data that EQUIS is looking for. Schools may use their own reporting format provided that it covers the same information.

## Chapter 6: Executive Education

### The EQUIS Standard

*The School's programme offering in the field of Executive Education, if it exists, should be appropriately integrated into its overall strategy and into its central management systems. Whatever its organisational or legal structure, Executive Education should be seen as central to the strengthening of the School's connections with companies and organisations within the markets that it is serving. It should contribute to the development of the faculty in maintaining relevance in their teaching and research. It should contribute to the improvement of business practice by putting the School's distinctive expertise at the disposal of practising managers in support of their lifelong learning needs and of organisations in support of their development goals.*

### Introduction

In this chapter EQUIS is primarily concerned with the design and delivery of short courses and nondegree programmes in form of open and customised programmes, to working professionals in companies and organisations. Some of the longer programmes may lead to the award of a certificate, but this is essentially a non-degree activity within business schools. Some schools choose to include part-time Executive MBAs in their executive education division since these programmes are also aimed at people in work, but they should be presented in Chapter 2 in which degree programmes are described.

It is understood that some schools applying for EQUIS accreditation may not be active in the field of executive education or may only have a marginal presence in this market. A portfolio of executive education programmes is not a formal requirement for EQUIS accreditation. However, to the extent that a school does have a significant offering in this area or considers it to be strategic, its executive education operations will be an integral part of the assessment, based on the criteria set out in this chapter.

The chapter covers the principal areas of the EQUIS framework from the specific perspective of executive education: strategic positioning, the programme portfolio, programme design, marketing and corporate relations, services to participants, programme quality, digital integration such as online and blended learning as well as content on digitalisation, faculty and staff, on-campus and digital resources, ethics, responsibility and sustainability. The criteria take into account the fact that the education of working adults is very different from that of full-time students. The faculty require an additional set of skills geared to the expectations of a very demanding audience. Programmes, particularly customised programmes, have to be designed to integrate both the organisational development objectives of the company and the personal development needs of the individual participants. This process requires an ability to understand the company's organisation and strategy and to propose appropriate education solutions to the expressed learning objectives. A strong customer orientation is essential.

Schools active in executive education should explain how this activity is integrated into their overall strategy and into their management systems. From the EQUIS perspective, executive education should be more than just an add-on or a commercial operation. It should be seen as a central, mainstream activity broadening the qualification of the faculty and involving the School meaningfully in the development of management practice in companies and in the fulfilment of lifelong learning and organisational development requirements. Executive education should support the relevance of the School's teaching in all its programmes and serve as a platform for its research agenda. It can, therefore, be a major dimension of the interface between the School, the world of practice and society at large. Through Executive Education programmes, the School can make itself better known regarding its distinctive knowledge base expertise.

It is particularly important to describe how the executive education provision is organised, resourced and managed within the School: as a centre, business unit, division or subsidiary.

Note on the potential exclusion of Executive Education:

If a School has Executive Education activities (even of negligible size) it should always describe them in the Self-Assessment Report using the assessment criteria below.

If the School believes that its executive education activities do not currently contribute to its strategic objectives, the School should provide here an explicit argument for the exclusion of these activities from the assessment. The questions below can be used to substantiate its case, for consideration by the Peer Review Team. The Peer Review Team will decide on the basis of this description whether to assess or exclude it from the assessment.

- If the EQUIS Committee excluded Executive Education assessment for schools going through an initial accreditation cycle, the School should still summarise the current state of Executive Education activities.
- Schools going through a re-accreditation cycle should indicate whether or not there have been significant changes in their Executive Education activities. In the case of a significant change, the School should summarise the state of Executive Education.

## The Assessment Criteria

The key areas are:

- a) Positioning within the School
- b) Product Portfolio
- c) Programme Design
- d) Marketing, Sales and Corporate Relations
- e) Digital Integration
- f) Participant Management
- g) Programme Quality and Impact
- h) Faculty
- i) Research and Development
- j) Internationalisation
- k) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability



## a) Positioning within the School

- Explain how executive education fits into the School's overall strategy.
  - ❖ Can the School show that its executive education contributes to its strategic objectives beyond mere income generation?
  - ❖ How is executive education integrated into management systems?
- Describe the positioning of the executive education provision within the School's organisation chart (Department responsibility or dedicated Centre, Division, Business Unit, Subsidiary, etc).
- Indicate the faculty and staff allocated specifically to the running of this activity.
- Describe the on site facilities and digital tools available for executive education programme delivery.
  - ❖ Does the School offer a well-designed learning environment with sufficient dedicated facilities to support high quality executive education?
  - ❖ Does the School dispose of adequate digital tools and skills to deliver effective online or blended programmes?

## b) Product Portfolio

- Describe the portfolio of programmes and services offered in the area of executive education.
  - ❖ type of programmes: open/customised
  - ❖ face-to-face/online/blended
  - ❖ duration: short/long/modular
  - ❖ content (functional, general management, issue-based such as digital transformation, skills workshops, action oriented, etc.)
    - In the case of open programmes, how is the range of offerings determined? What process does the School follow to introduce new programmes and remove existing programmes?
    - How often is the programme portfolio renewed?

## c) Programme Design

- Describe the design process for open programmes.
- Describe the design process for customised programmes.
  - ❖ Does the School have faculty and staff skilled in designing customised programmes?
  - ❖ How are customer requirements and the respective individual and organisational context diagnosed as part of the design phase?
  - ❖ How is the School co-creating customised solutions with their client organisations?
  - ❖ Is the School teaming up with other departments or outside partners to broaden its design and delivery capacity?

- Describe the delivery methods used in the School's executive education programmes.
  - ❖ What is the overall portfolio of learning methodologies and how are these selected and combined to form an impactful programme?
  - ❖ How is the learning experience digitalised?
  - ❖ How is the School innovating and exploring especially the online learning space?

#### **d) Marketing, Sales and Corporate Relations**

- Describe the School's key areas of expertise in the area of executive education.
- Evaluate the School's positioning in the national and international market for executive education.
  - ❖ Who are its main competitors?
  - ❖ How strong is its brand image in the area of executive education?
- Describe the composition of the School's customer base for executive education.
  - ❖ nature of companies (market sector, size, etc.)
  - ❖ level of managers (senior executives/ middle managers/ specialists, technical staff and lower-level managers)
  - ❖ local/national/international
- Describe the School's approach to customer relationship management.
  - ❖ Does the School have a strong customer service orientation in all aspects of its work?
  - ❖ How qualified are the business development and sales staff?
- Describe the School's marketing, sales and corporate relations policy for its executive education activities.
  - ❖ To what extent are faculty members involved in the marketing and sales of the School's programmes?
  - ❖ Does the Executive Education organisation have a pricing policy that is consistent with its market positioning and strategic intent?
- Explain how the School distinguishes between customers as organisations and customers as individual participants in its programmes.
  - ❖ Is the School able to articulate the role of organisational development in its programmes?

#### **e) Digital Integration**

- Describe the digital integration in the portfolio of programmes and services.
  - ❖ To what extent is digitalisation a pillar of programme content?
  - ❖ Are digital delivery methods and the use of digital tools represented in programme design?

- ❖ To what extent are online learning modules offered on a stand-alone basis, to feature in corporate learning management systems?
- ❖ Is digitalisation stimulating research and consulting activities?
- ❖ Is digitalisation leveraged for learning analytics?

## **f) Participant Management**

- Describe the School's processes for selecting and managing the participants in its programmes.
  - ❖ What steps does the School take to ensure a close fit between participants and the aims of individual programmes?
  - ❖ Is the School selective regarding the participants it admits to its open programmes? Does it cooperate with its customers in the selection and nomination process?
  - ❖ How do staff deal with the occasionally conflicting demands made by companies and the individuals involved in programmes?
- Describe the support processes for participants before, during and after training.
  - ❖ Does the School leverage digital technologies in the support of its customers?
  - ❖ How do staff deal with customer complaints and service issues?
- Describe the processes for the longer-term personal development of executive education participants.
  - ❖ What provision is there for coaching, lifelong learning and networking?
  - ❖ Does the School follow up with former participants in its executive education programmes?
  - ❖ How does the School personalise the learning process for individuals?
  - ❖ Is the adult learning process clearly understood?

## **g) Programme Quality and Impact**

- Describe the School's approach to the management of quality in its executive education activities and the associated processes for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing programmes.
  - ❖ What processes are in place for the regular evaluation of programmes and the longer-term review of programmes?
  - ❖ Does the School have a keen eye for detail when it comes to the total image presented to customers?
  - ❖ How quick is the School in responding to any quality issues?
- Explain how the School measures the impact of its programmes on:
  - ❖ Individual participants
  - ❖ The participants' companies and their talent and organisational development goals.

## h) Faculty

- Describe the faculty resources available for deployment in executive education programmes (core faculty, adjunct faculty, part-time faculty, visiting faculty, etc.).
  - ❖ What proportion of the core faculty is significantly involved in executive education?
  - ❖ Does the School utilise Executive Education as a leverage for faculty development (e.g. refining the research agenda, improved connections with practice, informal knowledge dissemination etc.)
  - ❖ Does the faculty as a whole have a clear understanding of the strategic role of executive education within the School's range of activities?
- Evaluate the sufficiency of the current faculty and staff resources, both in number and profile to meet the requirements of executive education provision.
  - ❖ What proportion of the faculty has relevant professional and commercial experience? What limits to growth are set by the current composition of the faculty and its range of expertise?
  - ❖ Does the School extend its reach by teaming up with other departments or external partners?
- Describe the School's process for managing faculty deployment in executive education.
  - ❖ How is executive education integrated into faculty workloads? Is this activity considered on-load or off-load?
  - ❖ How is faculty getting prepared for its engagement in executive education?
  - ❖ Explain the processes for evaluating the contribution of individual faculty involved in executive education.
  - ❖ Is extra remuneration offered as an incentive to engage in executive education?
  - ❖ Where the School relies on the support of a high proportion of external partners, how is teamwork and a shared culture promoted in this 'virtual' faculty?
- Is Executive Education regarded as an opportunity to develop faculty in terms of their research agendas and teaching practice and in addition to ground degree programmes in the reality of business practice?

## i) Research and Development

- Describe the School's approach towards research, development and innovation relating to executive education.
  - ❖ How is the School's research capability transferred into its executive education offerings?
  - ❖ How do the School's executive education activities support its research agenda and improve the relevance of its research production?
  - ❖ How rapidly is the School able to transform basic knowledge into applied knowledge for the benefit of its customers?
  - ❖ How open are faculty to the application of new ideas and frameworks to their work? How is this reflected in its programmes?
  - ❖ What are the key areas of innovation?

## j) Internationalisation

- Describe the international outreach of the School's executive education activity.
  - ❖ Does the School market its programmes beyond its borders?
  - ❖ How many international clients does it have?
  - ❖ Do language skills and international experience figure among the criteria for acceptance onto international programmes?
  - ❖ What percentage of the core faculty is competent to work with an international audience?
  - ❖ Is online learning understood as a way to internationalise the learning experience without having to travel abroad?

## k) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability

- Describe how the School integrates ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its executive education activities.
  - ❖ Are there activities that specifically address questions of ethics, responsibility and sustainability? Describe their orientation and content.
  - ❖ How does the School measure the impact of its activities in the area of ethics, responsibility and sustainability?

## Supporting Information and Documents to be provided in the Self-Assessment Report

- Budgetary information with the breakdown of revenues by open and customised programmes for the past three years.
- Data concerning the number and type of programmes offered, the number of participants, the number of training days, etc. This information should be presented in the form of a table for the past three years.
- A list of the School's key clients in the field of executive education in the past three years.
- A list of academic and non-academic partners with an indication of the type of cooperation (course or programme delivery, digital tool provision, skills development, geographic expansion etc.)

## Information and Documents to be provided in the Base Room during the Peer Review

- Documents on Executive Education strategy, policy and processes.
- Brochures describing the various programmes on offer.
- The Catalogue of public, open courses offered.
- Examples of customised programme syllabi.

- Examples of course material delivered to participants, either electronically or in hard copy.

## Notes

- EQUIS has chosen to use the term “executive education” to describe this segment of a business school’s programme portfolio, but it is understood that many other terms may be used: management development, executive development, continuing education and so on.

## Chapter 7: Resources and Administration

### The EQUIS Standard

*The School should be able to demonstrate financial viability and institutional continuity, with resources and facilities to provide a high quality learning environment and with sufficient high quality administrative staff and processes to support the School's range of activities.*

### Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to evaluate the adequacy of the School's on-campus, digital and financial resources together with the associated management systems and staff.

The campus facilities should provide an adequate learning environment for the students and participants in the School's various programmes. The EQUIS assessment of adequacy will take into account the fact that the requirements for undergraduate students are very different from those for an MBA cohort or for executive education participants. The basic principle is that both the campus and digital facilities in terms of auditoriums, classrooms, breakout rooms, social space, etc. should be sufficient to support the particular pedagogical approach in each programme. It is usually the case that MBA programmes and executive education activities will require dedicated facilities.

The School should be adequately equipped with documentation services providing access to books, periodicals and electronic databases backed up by the appropriate information systems. It is expected that the School will have installed a computer based Intranet platform for digital learning and internal and external communication and will provide a help service for students and faculty.

Appropriate office space and research facilities should be provided for the faculty in support of their various roles within the School.

In the context of this Chapter, EQUIS will also review the sufficiency of the School's financial performance and the supporting budgetary and financial management systems. An essential criterion here is the financial viability of the School and the adequacy of its resources in line with its strategic ambitions. In this context, the School should also demonstrate that its management accounting and reporting processes contribute to operational effectiveness by providing transparent information about revenues, costs and contribution of each programme or activity.

Viable business school operations require that financial as well as non-financial risks be adequately managed. The School should explain how it organises its risk management function and should further describe how it identifies, assesses and mitigates risks.

Another area that falls within the scope of this Chapter is the overall sufficiency and quality of the School's administrative services and staff. This will include its ability to market its activities.

Finally, the School should describe how it integrates ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its infrastructure planning and management, its operations, administration and staff training and development.

## The Assessment Criteria

The key areas are:

- a) On-Campus Facilities and the Learning Environment
- b) Financial Performance
- c) Financial Management
- d) Risk Management
- e) Information and Documentation Facilities
- f) Computing Facilities
- g) Marketing and Public Relations
- h) Administrative Services and Staff
- i) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability
- j) Connections with Practice

### a) On-Campus Facilities and the Learning Environment

- Provide a summary of premises, including the identification of any premises shared with other parts of the host Institution (if appropriate).
- Describe the educational facilities: auditoriums, classrooms, breakout rooms, individual work stations, social areas for students.
  - ❖ Are these facilities adequately equipped with educational support material: computer access, projectors, microphone systems, etc.?
  - ❖ How are these facilities shared between the different programmes?
- Describe the virtual learning environment as well as digital tools used for learning.
- Evaluate the overall adequacy of the above facilities to meet the demands of the School's portfolio of activities.
  - ❖ What shortfalls in resources are foreseen in response to the School's future strategy? What steps are being taken to address these?
- How is the potential contribution of facilities to the personal experience and development of students evaluated?

### b) Financial Performance

- Describe the School's financial performance for the past five years as well as the financial plan for the next three years (including the current budgeting year). The



information should be sufficiently disaggregated so that the impact of the School's key activities on financial outcomes and projections can be understood.

- ❖ Present a summary of the consolidated income statement and consolidated cash flow statement for the School (if available) for the past five years as well as projections for the next three years.
  - ❖ Present a summary of the School's financial assets and liabilities for the past five years as well as projections for the next three years (if applicable).
  - ❖ Are any agreements (e.g. endowments, debts) in place which may affect the availability of financial resources.
  - ❖ Present corresponding data for the parent institution if its financial performance may significantly impact the School's financial viability during the next three years.
- Describe the School's investment plan for the next three years (including the current budgeting year).
    - ❖ What are the School's main investment activities and how are they aligned with its strategic plan?
    - ❖ Summarise the projected funding needs as well as the targeted funding resources.
  - Describe the other key assumptions underpinning the School's financial plan for the next three years.
  - Describe to what extent the School is able to cope with financial performance shortfalls (e.g. liquidity reserves, funding commitment by parent institution).

### **c) Financial Management**

- Describe the School's financial autonomy.
  - ❖ What types of autonomy does the School have with respect to the use of funds?
  - ❖ What autonomy does the School have for generating additional sources of funding? How are they currently utilised?
  - ❖ What are the rules and regulations limiting the School's financial autonomy?
- Describe the financial budgeting process applied by the School.
  - ❖ Explain the process of compiling the annual budget as well as its approval
  - ❖ How does the School monitor its budget and how does it manage budget over-runs?
  - ❖ How does the School ensure that the budget is internally consistent between revenue and cost projections?
  - ❖ How is the budgeting system linked to the School's strategic plan?
  - ❖ How is the School's budget integrated into the budgeting system of the wider university or parent institution (if applicable)?
- Describe the School's internal financial control and reporting systems.
  - ❖ What key performance indicators does the School use to track financial performance? Present appropriate evidence for the past five years as well as projections for the next three years (including the current year).
  - ❖ How is financial performance reported to the School's stakeholders?

- ❖ How much budgetary responsibility is devolved to the School's sub-units (e.g. programme management teams, departments)?

#### **d) Risk Management**

- Describe how the School's risk management is organised and how it is integrated into internal as well as external governance.
  - ❖ What is the risk management system? Who is responsible and to whom do they report?
- Describe the process of risk management applied by the School.
  - ❖ How does the School identify and assess risk?
  - ❖ What are the principal financial and non-financial risks facing the School? What is their potential impact on academic and financial performance?
  - ❖ How does the School mitigate risk?

#### **e) Information and Documentation Facilities**

- Describe the documentation services provided on site (documentation centre, library, databases, research facilities, etc.).
- Identify any special relationships with external libraries (including that of the parent institution/university) and research Institutions.
  - ❖ Are the library and research facilities adequate and are participants provided with adequate access outside normal working hours?
  - ❖ What special provision demanded by the international dimension of the School's activities is provided by the library and research facilities? What are the requirements for the future?
  - ❖ How does the School evaluate the support provided to individuals by these facilities? What evidence is there that student feedback has been used to develop facilities for the benefit of individuals?
- Describe the contribution of the documentation services to the internationalisation of the School (books and periodicals in other languages, international databases, etc.).

#### **f) Computing Facilities**

- Describe the facilities available: hardware, software, intranet, learning management systems, open-access computer rooms, help services, etc.
  - ❖ Are the computing facilities (on campus, outsourced or virtual) adequate and are participants provided with adequate access outside normal working hours?
  - ❖ What is the contribution of computing facilities and associated software to individual programme objectives? What specific knowledge, skills and qualities are developed through the use of information technology and how do these match programme objectives?

- ❖ What learning management systems are available and how are they used by faculty members in programme delivery?

### **g) Marketing and Public Relations**

- Describe the organisation for the marketing and promotion of the School's activities.
- Explain the nature of the Marketing and PR strategy and operations.
  - ❖ How are Marketing and PR operations staffed and financed?
  - ❖ How are the Marketing and PR resources allocated to different aspects of the School's activities?
  - ❖ What communication channels are used?
  - ❖ How is the effectiveness of Marketing and PR evaluated? With what result?

### **h) Administrative Services and Staff**

- Describe the organisation of the support services (finance and accounting, human resource management, buildings and grounds, documentation centre, computer service, etc.).
  - ❖ Does the School have an HR strategy and accompanying policies for all staff?
  - ❖ Does the School have sufficient staff to provide adequate service to participants and customers?
  - ❖ How is the effectiveness of general support and administration facilities evaluated? What improvements to the quality of support have been achieved or are proposed in the near future?

### **i) Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability**

- Describe how the School integrates ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its infrastructure planning and management (e.g. waste management, energy management).
- Describe how the School integrates ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its operations (e.g. purchasing, transportation).
- Describe how the School integrates ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its administration (e.g. general HR policies, workforce diversity).
- Describe how the School integrates ethics, responsibility and sustainability into staff training and development.

### **j) Connections with Practice**

- Describe the nature and extent of staff (academic and professional) that support the School's strategy for engagement with practice; what have been changes since the last PRV, or, in the case of an initial accreditation, in the last three years?

- Describe the extent and nature of non-staff expenditure that support the School's strategy for engagement with practice; what have been the changes since the last PRV, or, in the case of an initial accreditation, in the last three years?

### **Supporting Information and Documents to be provided in the Self-Assessment Report**

- The School's financial accounts (income statements, statement of financial assets and liabilities) for the last five years broken down by main activity area, as well as the financial plan for the next three years. Financial data should be expressed in Euro (please provide the currency rate used for conversion from local currency).
- Marketing strategy/plan

### **Information and Documents to be provided in the Base Room during the Peer Review**

- Information distributed to students explaining the documentation facilities and services available (in the language of the country or in English)
- HR strategy and policies (e.g. Staff Handbook, New Employees' Induction Pack)
- The School's risk management guidelines (if available)

### **Notes**

- Confidentiality regarding financial information

The Peer Reviewers are informed that all information to which they have access in the documents provided by the School is confidential and must not be revealed to anyone external to the assessment process. The School is free, however, to withhold information that it considers strategic. In this case, it is expected that a verbal response to key questions will be provided.

## Chapter 8: Internationalisation

### The EQUIS Standard

*The School should have a clearly articulated strategy and policies for internationalisation. It should demonstrate its commitment to educating and preparing students and participants for management in an international environment. This should be underpinned by active collaboration or alliances with international partner institutions in fields such as on-campus or virtual student exchanges, joint programmes, research activity and connections with practice. The School should be able to attract students and faculty from other countries and with professional and study experience of other countries. It should carry out and disseminate research of international relevance and scope.*

### Introduction

Alongside connections with practice and ethics, responsibility and sustainability, the international dimension of a school is one of the overarching transversal dimensions in the EQUIS framework. The challenge here is to describe exactly what is meant by the term “internationalisation” and to indicate how best to assess it. This chapter requires the School to synthesise the international aspects that are presented in each part of the framework. It is important to explain the School’s strategy and policies as regards internationalisation, as well as the face-to-face or digitalised processes and resources available for the implementation of the strategy.

EQUIS has been designed as an international accreditation system, recognising schools and university faculties that are more than just high standard national institutions. It is expected that they will have qualities that make them credible in a wider international market. This supposes that they can attract students and faculty from other countries, deliver programmes up to internationally accepted standards, effectively prepare their graduates for international management and maintain connections with academia and practice outside their home country. In all cases, it is expected that schools can demonstrate a sufficient degree of internationalisation as measured through a broad series of indicators, examples of which are listed below.

A deeper understanding of internationalisation can result from an assessment of how a school has adapted its education and research to an increasingly globalised and digitalised managerial world. Research that explores international challenges, education that incorporates an international curriculum and exposure that encourages international mobility and employment, all provide further evidence of the degree of internationalisation. The growth of joint programmes, increasing collaboration and partnerships, the emergence of mergers and other forms of restructuring and technology for online learning and collaboration, all need to be taken into account. Digitalisation opens up a wealth of opportunities with various approaches appropriate for different Schools and different student cohorts. EQUIS encourages schools to innovate and recognises that approaches – be they of a face-to-face or virtual nature – will be legitimate as long as they are part of the School’s strategy. The School should

demonstrate the rationale behind their approaches, the impact they have and the quality of the experience and interaction they create.

Schools pursue different strategic objectives in the area of internationalisation. In some cases, the aim is to position the School's programmes in the international market rather than the national market.

In the recent past, this has only been a feasible objective in the case of the MBA and other postgraduate programmes. Currently, there is also room for Bachelor and pre-experience Master programmes aimed at international students. Programmes of this type have to be specifically designed for an international group of students and require a very different marketing effort. In the case of schools in non-English-speaking countries, this often means that the programmes have to be offered in English. In all cases, a different faculty profile will be required and the administrative staff must be able to adapt to the intercultural challenge.

For many schools, the main objective in the Bachelor and pre-experience Master programmes is to ensure that the knowledge and skills imparted by their programmes are in line with the realities of management in an internationally inter-dependent world. Programme content must be designed from this perspective. Giving home students international exposure is usually achieved by study abroad opportunities and by internationalising the classroom through the influx of visiting exchange students. Digitalisation offers the opportunity to complement the former with new forms of international exposure. Those programmes are positioned to recruit students primarily on the national market, but the degree of internationalisation can be a competitive advantage. The threshold requirement for EQUIS accreditation is that a school must offer programmes that provide an internationally oriented education with sufficient outreach beyond its own borders. Such outreach can be achieved through a mix of physical or virtual mobility.

Some schools may set up operations abroad. These may be in the form of wholly owned satellite campuses on which a school offers its degree programmes, joint ventures with an international partner to offer its degrees. The objective may in some cases be primarily commercial, but these operations can also play a strategic role in internationalising a school by opening up new markets in strategic regions and by giving faculty the opportunity to teach and to manage projects in distant places. At the same time, operations abroad will have to maintain the quality standards of the home campus.

It is expected that a school's faculty members will have an overall profile that qualifies them to operate adequately in the international arena. This is not measured only by the nationality mix of the faculty, but also by the international qualifications and experience of the faculty members, by their intercultural and linguistic skills, and by their demonstrated ability to teach international audiences. The faculty's ability to engage in research in international research groups, possibly supported by international research grants and achieving an international impact will also be significant.

Furthermore, a school should be able to maintain connections with the world of practice beyond the frontiers of its home environment. These can take many forms, including

student recruitment channels, research partnerships, internship destinations, executive education provision, alumni relations, sources of funding, etc.

## The Assessment Criteria

- Describe the School's international strategy and policies.
  - ❖ Does the School have a formalised international strategy encompassing the different dimensions and activities?
  - ❖ How is the School positioned on internationally? Does the School manage its programme portfolio with an international strategic intent? How competitive are its programmes outside its home market?
  - ❖ Is digitalisation a significant part of the international strategy?
- Summarise the evidence that the international dimension is reflected in the School's mission, governance, strategy and current operations.
  - ❖ How does the School integrate the international dimension within the normal structures and processes governing the activities of the School?
  - ❖ Does the School have an international advisory board? What are the key processes used to manage the School's international policy and relationships? What resources are specifically allocated to the management of the School's international activities? Does the School have an adequately resourced international office?
- Describe and evaluate the key changes in the international operation of the School that have occurred in the past five years, including the development or expansion of online or digitalised operations.
  - ❖ How does the School leverage technologies for greater outreach?
  - ❖ If the School uses technologies to internationalise, what resources and facilities does it allocate to achieve the objectives?
- Describe the international perspective in the School's programmes and learning resources.
  - ❖ Does the School offer programmes (on site or online) which are specifically oriented to the international market?
  - ❖ Are courses available in different languages, with English widely used for teaching, learning and publication?
  - ❖ How does digital learning impart an international experience to participants (e.g. virtual student exchanges through online collaborative projects, online classes, joint online seminars, etc.)?
- Describe the international dimension in the School's research and development activity. As appropriate, cross-reference to Chapter 5 on Research and Development.
- Describe the current level of internationalisation as reflected in the profile of the faculty, the student body and the alumni.
  - ❖ To what extent has the School internationalised the classroom on its home campus as measured by the intercultural mix of students? To what extent

- does the School leverage the opportunities of virtual mobility for its students and faculty?
  - ❖ How does the School support and manage its Alumni internationally?
- Describe the School's connections to the international world of practice.
  - ❖ Does the School explicitly address connections and engagement with the world of practice that are based outside the primary geographic location of the School?
  - ❖ Does the School engage in executive education with clients outside its home country and with international clients headquartered domestically?
  - ❖ To what extent are its graduates recruited by international organisations to work outside the School's home country?
  - ❖ How does digitalisation contribute to connections with practice outside the School's home country?
  - ❖
- Describe the School's network of international academic relations.
  - ❖ Which of these can be considered high quality strategic partnerships?
  - ❖ How are international alliances and partnerships established? What are the criteria for the selection of organisations targeted for special relationships?
- List key relationships with international organisations.
  - ❖ How does the School use membership of international organisations to support its own quality improvement processes? What commitment is given by Deans and Directors to involvement with international associations?
- Summarise the School's international activities outside its home country (exchange students abroad, faculty mobility, joint programmes, off-campus operations, etc.).

### **Supporting Information and Documents to be provided in the Self-Assessment Report**

- List of international academic or non-academic partners showing the nature of relationship (e.g. student exchanges, research collaboration, joint programmes, course or programme delivery, etc.).
- The Chapter on Internationalisation should include cross-references to statistical tables included in other chapters, notably as regards students, faculty and research.

### **Information and Documents to be provided in the Base Room during the Peer Review**

- International strategy and policy documents
- Documents relating to provision abroad and multi-campus operations
- Documents relating to online provision that specifically targets foreign markets, if applicable.



## Notes

In preparing this Chapter, schools will find it helpful to refer to two documents available in the guidelines and position papers, namely Annex G and Annex H. They can be found in EFMD Guidelines & Position Papers: Supporting Material for the EQUIS & EPAS Accreditation Systems. Annex G is entitled “EFMD Quality Services: Guidelines for Defining the International Dimension of Higher Education Institutions in Management and Business Administration”. Annex H is entitled “Assessing the Degree of Internationalisation of a Business School”.

## Key Indicators

### ■ Internationalisation of the student body

Evidence of this can include:

- The recruitment of students from and with experience of other countries.
- The existence of face-to-face or virtual exchange programmes to provide a two-way flow of students.
- A portfolio of face-to-face and virtual experiences in the classroom that bring together students from different countries.
- The provision of internships or project work across borders (including online collaborative projects).
- The international placement of graduates.
- The language ability of graduates.

### ■ Internationalisation of the faculty

Evidence of this can include:

- The recruitment of non-nationals to the faculty.
- The international qualifications and professional experience of faculty.
- The ability of faculty to teach in English.
- The foreign language skills of faculty.
- The involvement of international visiting professors, on-campus or virtually.
- The opportunities for faculty to serve as visiting professors abroad, on-campus or virtually
- The involvement of faculty in international networks.
- Participation in international conferences.
- Research and publication of an international nature.

### ■ Internationalisation of programmes

Evidence of this can include:

- Teaching which focuses on global business environments.
- International case studies and learning materials.
- Courses taught in English in non-English speaking countries, including online courses.
- An international perspective in all the main functional areas.
- Courses jointly designed and taught with partner schools abroad, including online courses.
- Internships and study abroad as an integral part of programmes, encompassing both face-to-face and virtual options.

## Further Guidance on Assessing Internationalisation

Understanding and assessing internationalisation is a complex and multi-faceted process. In order to assist academic leaders and peer reviewers alike in assessing the degree of internationalisation of a school, EQUIS has developed a model (see the diagram at the end of this chapter) which encourages thinking beyond nationality mix to incorporate the wider range of international measures as outlined above. These are grouped into four categories:

- **Policy** issues influencing the whole School
- **Content** aspects of the learning and development process
- **Context** issues resulting from the experience of the various stakeholders
- And elements of the wider **Network** to which the School belongs

Each category encompasses three dimensions (all included within the EQUIS Quality Profile) which when assessed on a simple low/medium/high scale will produce an overall profile of the extent of internationalisation of a school, together with its relative strengths and areas for further development. This model also enables a school to demonstrate its international quality improvement journey over time with past vs present profiles, or to illustrate its future international strategic objectives with present vs planned future profiles.

### Policy

1. **Strategy** – does the School have a well-defined strategy for internationalisation, including a digitalisation component if relevant? Does the School have the plans and resources for the strategy's implementation?
2. **Recognition/Reputation** – what is the level of competitiveness and recognition of the School in international markets?
3. **Governance/Advisory Board** – How is there an international dimension manifested in the School's governance and advisory system? Is digitalisation used to increase the involvement or the mix of international advisory members?

### Content

4. **Curriculum/Exec Ed/Learning Resources** – what is the international perspective in the School's degree and executive education programmes? If the School offers online executive programmes targeting international markets, what resources are provided?
5. **Research & Development** – what is the international scope and recognition of the School's R&D? Does digitalisation contribute to expanding the international scope and recognition of the School's R&D?
6. **Competencies** – are global-mindedness and cultural sensitivity developed, is language learning provided and is English widely used for learning materials, teaching and publication?

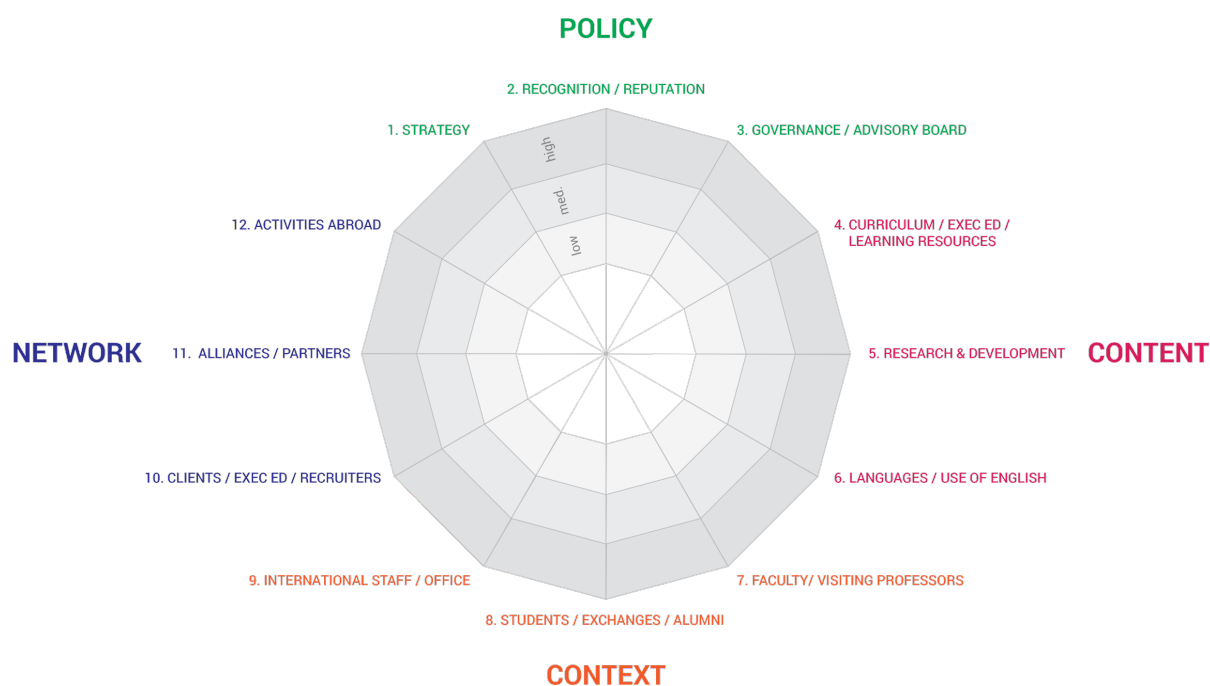
### Context

7. **Faculty/Visiting Professors** – what is the intercultural mix of core, adjunct and visiting faculty? Is digitalisation used to bring international adjunct / visiting faculty to the School?

8. **Students/Exchanges/Alumni** – what is the intercultural mix of degree-seeking and exchange students, and the international spread of alumni? Is digitalisation used to increase the diversity, and the engagement of remote international students and alumni?
9. **Professional Staff** – is there an international/partnerships/exchanges office with an intercultural mix of professional staff?

### Network

10. **Exec Ed/Clients/Recruiters** – what is the level of the School's international corporate links with clients/employers, including international companies with domestic offices? Does the School use digitalisation to connect and engage with international organisations?
11. **Alliances/Partners** – what is the quality of the School's international academic partners, strategic alliances and professional networks?
12. **Activities Abroad** – what is the School's level and quality of internationalisation outside its home country, such as satellite campuses, joint programmes and franchised provisioning (where applicable)? Is the School leveraging digitalisation for internationalisation outside its home country?



### Note

A school should feel free to incorporate a completed version of this model in its Self-Assessment Report or to use the model simply to assist in determining and assessing the information which it wishes to include within Chapter 8: Internationalisation.

## Chapter 9: Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability

### The EQUIS Standard

*The School should have a clear understanding of its role as a “globally responsible citizen” and its contribution to ethics and sustainability in an increasingly global world. This understanding should be reflected in the School’s mission, strategy and activities. There should be evidence that the School’s contribution to ERS is reflected in its regular activities, covering education, research, interactions with businesses and managers, community outreach and its own operations many of which will be digitally enabled.*

### Introduction

The purpose of this section is to assess the School’s role as an ethical and globally responsible citizen and its contribution to sustainability in an increasingly digitalised world.

**Ethics** refer to the School’s behaviour that should be based on the values of honesty, equity and integrity. These values imply a concern for people, society and the environment and the commitment to encourage and promote ethical behaviour of its faculty, staff and students by identifying, stating and applying standards of ethical behaviour in the School’s decisions and activities.

The essential characteristic of **responsibility** is the willingness to incorporate broader social and environmental considerations into its decision-making and to be accountable for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment. Responsibility is closely linked to sustainability.

**Sustainability** is about the social, environmental and economic challenges and the School’s related goals. It refers to issues such as sustainable resource use, sustainable consumption and developing a sustainable society and an economy.

This implies that responsible and ethical behaviour should be an integral part of the School’s values and strategy and should be reflected in its regular activities. In particular, it should act as a catalyst for the development of business communities, as a forum for debate, and as a source of dissemination of new ideas and solutions. The School should be actively engaged in promoting business ideas and solutions to sustainability challenges. This implies that faculty, staff and students are encouraged and supported to participate in these activities as an integral part of their professional engagement.

An important dimension within this chapter is the attention paid to the issue of responsibility and sustainability in the business world, as a matter of both policy and practice. The concern for responsibility and sustainability will be evidenced not only in the School’s approach to management education, but also in its research, its public outreach and its own behaviour. Evidence of this commitment to responsible and

sustainable business practice is requested in other chapters, but should be summarised in this section of the report.

## The Assessment Criteria

- Describe the School's strategy for ethics, responsibility and sustainability.
- Summarize the evidence that ethics, responsibility and sustainability are reflected in the School's mission, governance, strategy and current operations.
- List the School's formal commitments to ethics, responsibility and sustainability
- Provide a short summary describing the School's integration of ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its educational offerings. As appropriate, cross-reference to other chapters of the report.
- Describe how the School protects the academic integrity of its online learning offerings.
- Provide a short summary describing the School's integration of ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its research and development activities. As appropriate, cross-reference to other chapters of the report.
- Provide a short summary of the ethical framework applied when using information about students, staff and other stakeholders. This may be in the form of a comprehensive ethical code of conduct for the School (governing privacy, use of data for commercial reasons and academic integrity in research for example). Any national/international regulatory or legal requirements in this regard the School needs to meet should also be described.
- Describe the School's overall contribution to the local and global communities in the area of ethics, responsibility and sustainability and its role in serving as a catalyst for fostering the responsible and sustainable development of business and society.
  - ❖ How does the School integrate ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its contributions to the business community and the wider society?
  - ❖ What services does the School provide concerning ethics, responsibility and sustainability to the management profession?
  - ❖ How does the School integrate ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its contributions to the academic community?
  - ❖ What is the School's policy for faculty and staff involvement in ethics, responsibility and sustainability?
  - ❖ How does the School integrate ethics, responsibility and sustainability into its communications?
- Describe the nature and extent of organisations' contribution to the School's ERS priorities. As appropriate cross-reference to the criteria in Chapter 10, with respect to community outreach and public engagement.
  - ❖ What role do connections and engagement with the world of practice play in the ERS agenda of the School?
  - ❖ To what extent does the School engage with ERS-related policy and practitioner bodies to support and progress its ERS agenda?

- ❖ To what extent does the School embrace an open eco-system and participate in co-creation of knowledge taking advantage of possibilities offered by digitalised work environments in academia and business?
- Evaluate the key changes in the School's activities regarding ethics, responsibility and sustainability that have occurred in the past five years.
- Describe the role of the School in community outreach and public service.
  - ❖ What is the School's strategy on the development and management of community relations and public engagement?
  - ❖ How does the School manage and coordinate community relations and public engagement activities?
  - ❖ What is the School's policy towards faculty and staff involvement in these activities?
  - ❖ How does the School monitor, evaluate and communicate its community outreach and public engagement activities?
- Summarise the School's overall contribution to the local, national and international environment, its role in developing the community and in acting as a catalyst for debate and dissemination of knowledge of business practices that support sustainability and protection of the environment.
- Summarise the School's commitment to the global environmental protection agenda and any steps the School takes to monitor its carbon footprint and to de-carbonise, including the use of digital technologies.

## **Supporting Information and Documents to be provided in the Self-Assessment Report**

- Brief description of policies and projects in these areas
- Brief description of student-led projects in these areas
- Approaches to the assessment of ethics, responsibility and sustainability
- Examples of community outreach and public service activities

## **Information and Documents to be provided in the Base Room during the Peer Review**

- Representative selection of educational materials (syllabi, teaching materials, assessments, etc.)
- Representative selection of research outcomes (published articles, research project reports, etc.)
- Copies of School policies and reports relating to ethics, responsibility and sustainability
- Minutes of committee meetings dealing with ethics, responsibility and sustainability issues

## Chapter 10: Connections with Practice

### The EQUIS Standard

*The School should have a clearly articulated strategy and policy with regard to how it engages with and encourages impact from, and on, a range of stakeholders. These may include an appropriate mix from among the following: entrepreneurs, government, third sector, alumni, SMEs, larger corporations, trade unions, associations and policy-making or influencing bodies. The flows of influence are two-way: from stakeholders to the School and from the School to the stakeholders.*

*The Strategy should articulate the following:*

- *How the School's work and activities develop student understanding of the practice and impact of business and management through interaction with a range of organisational and societal stakeholders*
- *How the School's work and activities impact organisational and societal stakeholders*
- *The ways in which the world of practice impacts on the School's academic activities, in both education and research*
- *The developments in work and activities that deliver engagement, connectivity and impact and future strategy to enhance these further*
- *The role of connections with practice in the School's efforts to internationalise and take forward its ERS agenda.*

### Introduction

The EQUIS approach foregrounds the importance of intellectually rigorous education, robust development of practical insight and skills and a School-wide commitment to engaging with commercial and social stakeholders such that the School, its staff and students, wider stakeholder groups and society are all positively influenced in a two-way process. Schools have a responsibility to ensure the professional relevance of their programmes in those areas where the School seeks to have an impact, whether that is the international corporate environment, the entrepreneurial eco-system where it is embedded, the third sector or government and public sector organisations. This can only be achieved if there is an interface between the School and the organisations, companies and professions in which its graduates will subsequently work.

As a 'transversal' element of the EQUIS system, along with internationalisation, and ERS, connections with practice are not only to be described in one separate chapter. It is important that throughout previous chapters, there is some integrated discussion of the way in which connectivity and engagement impacts on the School and its work, in addition to how the School's work impacts on its chosen connections. In each of the chapters in this document, items relating to these connections are included in the assessment criteria. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to place these different

perspectives (programmes, students, research etc.) into an organised, systematic consideration of how the School is connected to and engaged in the world of practice and to what effect.

Central to this systematic consideration will be an explicit strategy and policies for designing and delivering connections with practice and that the realms of this connectivity are strategically important for the School's vision and mission. The strategy will then be evidenced in systematic processes to manage connections and engagement, supported by the necessary resources to facilitate strategy implementation. Such processes include overall strategy development for the School, the governance system, articulation of programme outcomes, internship and placement activities, faculty profile, research agenda and, where appropriate, executive education. Although involvement in executive education is not a requirement for accreditation, the existence of strong institutional connections with the relevant worlds of practice for the School is considered essential.

Reflecting the commitment by EQUIS to diversity, the criteria take into account the considerable variation that exists among business Schools. It is acknowledged that public university faculties of management do not necessarily define their mission as being to serve a business constituency whilst a non-university School delivering postgraduate and executive education will tend to emphasise business sectors as primary target markets, with variable focus on international and national corporates, SMEs, the third sector, entrepreneurs and start-ups. Whatever the particular emphasis and context, in all cases, a structured and effective relationship with the world of practice is seen as a necessary service to students individually and to society collectively. An adequate balance between academic quality and managerial relevance is one of the fundamental principles of EQUIS.

## The Assessment Criteria

- Describe the School's strategy and policies regarding the connections and engagement with and impact on the world of practice.
- Define the major emphasis of this strategy in terms of sectors appropriate for the School, for example, corporates, SMEs, entrepreneurs, the third sector, professional, public and policy or government bodies.
- Do the overall strategic objectives make explicit reference to outcomes in these sectors?
- Describe the key processes used to manage the School's relationships with its primary strategic connections.
- How are the processes supported, for example, does the School have an 'external relations' office or department?
- How does the School ensure that its connections and engagement deliver into its programmes? Does the School ensure input from its connections into programme content, structure or delivery?



- ❖ Are future job requirements identified in a timely manner, to underpin programme design, delivery and evaluation?
  - ❖ Are digital tools and future skills integrated into programme design?
  - ❖ Are practitioners invited as visiting faculty to ground students in the reality of practice?
  - ❖ Are teaching materials kept fresh at any time through ongoing relations with practice?
- How do students interact with the School's connections? Describe how this is organised and managed.
  - How do faculty interact with the School's connections? Describe how this is organised and managed.
  - What is the relationship between research, development and the School's connections and engagement activity? Summarise how research output has an impact on the world of practice and how research agendas are influenced by the School's connections and engagement. Is there any output (articles, joint programmes, start-ups) that have resulted from such joint work?
    - ❖ Is the world of practice inspiring the research agendas within the School?
    - ❖ Are research findings communicated to practice beyond scientific journals, where relevant?
    - ❖ Does the School monitor the impact of its research on various stakeholders?
  - Summarise the flow of funding from the world of practice in the investment and operational budgets.
  - Describe the extent and nature of engagement with the major connections in the School.
  - To what extent does the School enter into partnership with targeted companies and organisations?
  - Summarise the international features of the School's engagement with the world of practice.
  - Evaluate the key changes in the engagement activities of the School that have occurred in the past five years.

## Supporting Information and Documents to be provided in the Self-Assessment Report

- List of the School's principal partners indicating the nature of their relationships (the information must be presented in a sufficiently detailed form so that the strength and quality of engagement and interactions can be evaluated).
- Provide details of funding from connections when applicable.

## **Information and Documents to be provided in the Base Room during the Peer Review**

- Strategy and policy documents relating to the School's connections with practice.
- Evidence, if appropriate of outputs from the School's work with its major connections.

## Further Information and Contacts

If you have any questions concerning the EQUIS Standards and Criteria, or would like to receive more information about the EQUIS accreditation system in general, please consult the EFMD website where all documentation is available to download:

<https://efmdglobal.org/accreditations/business-schools/equis/>

Alternatively you can contact the EFMD Quality Services Office:

[equis@efmdglobal.org](mailto:equis@efmdglobal.org)



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