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2013/14 Quality Audit

Synthesis report on procedural matters | 01.09.2015

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1 Introduction

The Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ, formerly OAQ) has been conducting quality audits in Swiss public universities on behalf of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) since 2003[1]. The audit is a periodic review of the quality assurance system of a university and is designed to ascertain whether it meets the minimum requirements laid down in the Guidelines of the Swiss University Conference (SUC) for quality assurance in Swiss universities[2]. If this is the case, then the university fulfils the requirements laid down in the Federal Law on Financial Aid to Universities[3], which stipulates that financial aid can only be granted to those universities and institutions that provide services of a high quality.

The procedure takes place in line with international practice, with a phase of self-evaluation by the university followed by an external evaluation by a group of independent experts (cf. Appendix 5.1). The agency then forwards the file to the SERI, which decides whether the university can continue to claim federal subsidies.

According to the SUC Guidelines, the universities are responsible for introducing an internal quality assurance system in keeping with their mission and their objectives. The quality assurance system comprises the main functions of the university and, in particular, education and research, and the relevant services. The quality standards relate to strategy, the scope of the system, processes and responsibilities, evaluations, staff development, the use of information and decision-making, and communication.

The 2013/14 quality audits constitute, after 2003/04 and 2007/08, the third and final cycle of audits for Swiss universities. With the coming into force in 2015 of the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HEdA)[4], institutional accreditation now replaces the quality audit.

The present report takes stock of the third cycle of quality audits in the light of the institutional accreditation provided for by the HEdA. It deals with the procedure itself rather than the outcomes and is based on an initial internal progress report to the agency and on the feedback received from the universities, the experts, the Union of Students of Switzerland (UNES) and international observers. A transversal analysis of the audits and their findings is planned at a later date in order to draw on good practices in the field of quality assurance and flag up possible weaknesses in terms of the interpretation of the quality criteria, whether by the expert groups or by the universities, in order to underpin the preparation for institutional accreditation accordingly.

2 Preparation for the 2013/14 cycle

Preparation for the 2013/14 cycle of quality audits took account of the experience gained during the two preceding cycles and of exchanges of good practice within the context of the network of

[1] The cantonal universities of Basel, Berne, Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Neuchatel, St. Gallen, Italian-speaking Switzerland and Zurich, and by analogy the two federal institutes of technology in Lausanne (EPFL) and Zurich (ETHZ).

[2] Guidelines dated 7 December 2006 for quality assurance in Swiss universities (Quality Assurance Guidelines for Swiss Universities). Swiss University Conference. RS 414.205.2. See articles 3 and 4.

[3] Federal Law on Financial Aid to Universities dated 8 October 1999 (LAU/UFG). RS 414.20. See article 11, paragraph 3 (a).

[4] Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector dated 30 September 2011 (Higher Education Act HEdA). RS 414.20.

European quality assurance agencies working at institutional level (Quality Audit Network, QAN) and of the procedures conducted by the AAQ in Germany (*Systemakkreditierung* [system accreditation]) and in Austria (quality audit). The principal changes related to the following points:

2.1 Participatory preparation

In 2012, the management of the AAQ visited the leadership teams at the cantonal universities and the federal institutes of technology in order to prepare for the upcoming audits. These meetings provided a specific opportunity to discuss the purpose of the procedure and the profile of the institution so as to better determine the profile of the experts. In particular, they allowed the foundations of good communication to be laid.

In parallel, the AAQ kept the Q-Netzwerk – a network of those in charge of quality assurance strategy and operations at universities – informed on a regular basis of the progress of preparations for the cycle of procedures. The Q-Netzwerk was thus able to give its opinion on the guide to quality audits, including the fundamental values of quality audits.

The AAQ likewise reaffirmed its support for the Union of Students of Switzerland (UNES) in order to promote the involvement of students at the heart of each institution in the self-evaluation stage on the one hand and, on the other hand, to train the students in the role of expert within the context of the external evaluation. The support of the AAQ also contributed to a pool of potential experts for the procedures being established and filled by the UNES.

2.2 New instruments

2.2.1 Quality criteria

The quality audits for 2007/08 showed that the quality standards laid down in the SUC Guidelines would benefit from being more coherent in relation to the missions and activities of the universities. Without detracting from the meaning of these standards, which are obligatory for quality audits, and by adhering more closely to the terminology used by the CUS, the Q-Netzwerk and the AAQ have worked together to draw up a set of quality criteria whose structure is more suitable for the requirements of the universities and for the consistency of a self-evaluation report (cf. Appendix 5.2). The quality criteria have served as a working foundation for the universities and expert groups, with the AAQ providing the correlation between criteria and standards in the external evaluation report with the help of an equivalence table.

2.2.2 Experts

In contrast to the expert groups for the 2007/08 quality audits, which were often chaired by managers from quality assurance agencies, the groups for the 2013/14 edition were essentially made up of peers (members of the management team, department heads, etc.) (cf. Appendix 5.3). The potential candidates were contacted in writing and asked to be part of a pool on which the agency drew in order to create a list of names submitted for the approval of the university and then of the agency's scientific advisory board. The agency then used this list to compile the group of experts.

2.2.3 Related instruments

In addition to the guide on quality audits intended for the universities and expert groups, the agency has developed other instruments to ensure that the experts are as well prepared as possible. It sent them a questionnaire at the same time as the self-evaluation report from the university, in order to evaluate the need for supplementary documentation. They were also provided with a grid to make a note of questions to be asked in discussions during the on-site

visit. The synthesis of these two documents served as a basis for the preparation meeting of experts.

2.2.4 External evaluation report

In order to avoid any unhelpful duplication between the experts' report and that of the agency, the external evaluation report for the 2013/14 quality audits combines the information of relevance to the procedure itself, recorded by the agency, and the evaluation by the experts of the level of compliance by the university with the quality criteria. If the agency has provided editorial support to the expert groups, to varying degrees according to the procedures, then this part of the report is the work of expert groups who assume full responsibility for it.

2.3 A new procedural format

2.3.1 Preliminary visit

About a month before the on-site visit, the agency brought the experts together for a meeting in order to ensure that they are as well prepared as possible. The purpose of this meeting was to give them a better understanding of their role and field of activity and, most notably, a knowledge of the typical features of the Swiss university landscape, the specifics of the university, the details of the audit with its quality assurance system-based approach, and the extent and nature of their contribution. This meeting also enabled them to discuss the issues and questions to be addressed during the visit, any supplementary documentation that may be required and the programme for the visit.

Straight after this preparatory meeting, the chairperson of the group (peer leader) and another member of the expert group joined with the agency to take part in a meeting with the management and the persons responsible for the process of self-evaluation at the university in order to complete the preparations for the visit. The aim of this meeting was to clarify any unsettled questions and to discuss possible requirements for supplementary documentation and possible adjustments to be made to the schedule for the on-site visit. The primary aim, of course, was to ensure a common approach to the task.

2.3.2 Quality of study programmes

The SUC Guidelines lay down a requirement to review some examples of the implementation of quality standards to study programmes. In the preceding cycles of quality audits, therefore, two study programmes were submitted for an external evaluation by the expert group. This extra work for the universities has been judged, by all the parties involved, to be disproportionate in relation to the use that was made of it. During the 2013/14 cycle, the universities described in their self-evaluation report the processes and mechanisms that allowed the quality assurance measures to take effect at the level of study programmes, and the experts turned their attention to these questions in an ad hoc session during the on-site visit.

3 Outcomes of the 2013/14 cycle

3.1.1 Universities

After the quality audit each university received a questionnaire designed to evaluate the procedure (cf. Appendix 5.4). The points related to the collaboration with the agency and the expert groups, to the instruments and to the procedure itself. Each of the fifteen statements was evaluated according to a five-point scale (strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree; strongly disagree). Empty fields were provided so that the universities could make comments and suggestions for improvements to the agency, the expert group, the guide, the self-evaluation report, the quality criteria, the preliminary visit, the visit and the procedure as a whole. Ten of the twelve universities that underwent the audit replied to the questionnaire.

On the whole, the universities are satisfied with the procedure. They "agree" or "strongly agree" with the majority of the statements. It is worth noting that the agency guide was considered particularly useful. When asked whether the quality criteria are appropriate for appraising the quality assurance system of the institution, the universities were divided between "neither agree nor disagree" and "agree". The same applied to the workload in relation to expectations.

The comments and suggestions for improvement for the agency are very positive: "carry on as you are", "very good documents", "very professional collaboration". Some reservations were nevertheless expressed about the preliminary visit, i.e. certain aspects could have been better anticipated by the agency, and about the adherence to schedules by the experts.

At times, the expert groups could have reaped more benefit from the fields of expertise of the people they met and thus gathered a wider variety of information. The composition of the expert group could sometimes have more accurately reflected the profile of the university in terms of disciplines. One may also wonder whether it is pertinent for the vast majority of experts to be foreign, with the responsibility for knowing about the Swiss higher education system resting essentially with the student expert and with the agency. Whilst the experts were well prepared, it would be a bonus for the peer leader to be someone who has already done an audit.

The instructions and expectations associated with the self-evaluation report could and should be better communicated to everyone. It is also important to work out how to avoid unnecessary duplication in the structure of the report whilst preserving a general understanding.

The comments expressed on the quality criteria point towards a better alignment with international standards. There is also the question of the relevance of certain areas, some of which are perhaps less pertinent to the quality assurance system and others too generic to give a nuanced view of the specifics of a university. On top of this, the evaluation scale comprising three levels does not permit a nuanced evaluation of the quality criteria.

The preliminary visit is considered to be very useful, particularly for building trust between the different parties. However, it is important to preserve its preparatory character and not confuse it with the actual visit itself. The latter has a very packed schedule, with the interview sessions sometimes judged to be too short or the groups too big; it is important that everyone is able to contribute to the discussion.

The audit procedure is considered to be very useful for providing an overall perspective of the quality assurance system and its instruments, although some people think that the process puts pressure on the university. Some aspects of the process can certainly be improved, most notably the position statement by the university, whose objectives and handling by the expert groups could be better communicated, or the external evaluation report, which could be even more useful to the institution.

3.1.2 Experts

After the quality audit each expert received a questionnaire designed to evaluate the procedure (cf. Appendix 5.5). As was the case for the universities, the points related to the collaboration with the agency, to the instruments and to the procedure itself. Each of the fifteen statements was evaluated according to the same five-point scale. Empty fields were provided so that the experts could make comments and suggestions for improvements to the agency, the expert group, the guide and the instruments, the external evaluation report, the quality criteria, the

preliminary visit, the visit and the procedure as a whole. Thirty-three of the forty-three experts commissioned for the audit replied to the survey.[5]

On the whole, the experts are very satisfied with the collaboration with the agency and with the composition of their group.

The experts generally rate the quality criteria as comprehensible and appropriate for the purpose of appraising the quality assurance systems of universities. Some of them highlight unnecessary duplications, however, and are concerned about the relevance of more "political" criteria such as junior staff. Others flag up difficulties of interpretation and evaluation on the basis of a three-level scale that leaves little room for differentiation, even though the room for manoeuvre created by the generic nature of the criteria is appreciated. They found the instruments, including the guide and work grids, to be very useful, although the coherence between them could be improved.

The experts felt very well prepared for the on-site visit, but some regretted the fact that the preparatory meeting with the institution did not involve the whole group. Others would have liked a more detailed introduction to the particular features of the Swiss higher education system. For some people, the format of the visit was appropriate but packed. The proposals are moving towards an extension period, most notably with a tour of the infrastructures envisaged.

On the whole, the experts think that the procedure is useful for quality development.

3.1.3 UNES

The UNES has taken a very active role in preparing the 2013/14 cycle of quality audits by setting up, with the support of the AAQ and the SERI, a project designed to improve student participation and involvement in the procedures, at the level of self-evaluation by the universities and as experts in the external evaluation. A tour of the sections and the student associations of the universities, training workshops and the provision of information in the form of brochures and newsletters were part of the project. The UNES also put forward potential candidates for the expert groups assembled by the agency.

In its synthesis report, the UNES notes that the involvement of students in the self-evaluation phase – at the hub of the steering committee or via a consultation with the associations – has strengthened the voice of students in the process. As far as the external evaluation is concerned, the dialogue between the student experts and the people in charge of procedures at the agency was always positive and the students always felt well accepted in the expert groups. On the other hand, two people indicated that they had not been duly invited to take part in editing the external evaluation report.

Generally speaking, the active participation of the students in the quality audits enabled them to improve their knowledge of the quality measures taken within their university, made them more aware of the challenges of quality assurance and gave them a stronger voice at the heart of their institution.

3.1.4 Observers

Two female and two male observers were present at quality audits with the agreement of the institutions and the expert groups concerned. They looked only at the procedure itself and not at the university's quality assurance system.

[5] At the EPFL, the AAQ conducted a quality audit procedure in conjunction with the programme accreditations carried out by the Commission des Titres d'Ingénieurs (Cti, France). The thirteen people commissioned with this task received a questionnaire.

Céline Durand, the president of the commission for the evaluation of college education in Quebec (*Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial du Québec*) came to Switzerland for the quality audit at the University of Neuchâtel. In an observation report intended for the agency, she noted the importance both of quality and of the composition of the expert group – on whose shoulders the procedure essentially rests – and expressed surprise at the quality of the preparation of the student expert. She found the agency's documents to be clear, pertinent and very useful for guiding the experts through their tasks. The preliminary visit certainly helped to ensure a common understanding of the self-evaluation report and to prepare the expert group for a second reading of the document. The duration of the talks during the visit was sufficient and the debriefing sessions between experts were really useful for exchanging first impressions, identifying any missing elements and laying the building blocks of a progressive assessment. The selection of speakers was well attuned to requirements. As for the final debriefing, this gives everyone the opportunity to hear the same message, thus making sense of each person's actions for the benefit of quality assurance. On the other hand, Céline Durand is surprised that the decision to publish the experts' report is a matter for the university, an approach that seems to her to go against the transparency required by such an exercise.

Caty Duykaerts, the director of the executive unit of the agency for the evaluation of the quality of higher education in the French-speaking community in Belgium (*agence pour l'évaluation de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur en Belgique francophone*), tracked the quality audit at the University of Saint Gallen. In an edited report intended for the agency, she underlines the importance of the preliminary visit but warns against the risk of not placing a clear dividing line between the preliminary visit and the visit itself. It is incumbent on the agency to ensure that the scheduled meeting with the university during the preliminary visit retains its preparatory character. Caty Duykaerts goes on to emphasise that the structure of the external evaluation report lacks clarity. The report combines the contributions of the agency and the expert group, but it is difficult to know who is wielding the pen. In addition to this, she is astonished that the agency has no right to publish the experts' reports without the authorisation of the university, a practice that goes against European requirements. She concludes by saying: "The observed quality audit proves to be a good systemic approach and includes all the sectors of the institution, with an emphasis on governance and the strategy of the latter. By continuously questioning the quality system developed by the institution (fitness for purpose) and in the service of all these activities, the exercise enables existing links between the different components of the institution (and, as a result, its strategic coherence and its organisational efficiency) in particular to be scrutinised and the cohesion of "Research – Education" to be highlighted. The quality of the external process is largely dependent on the expertise of the expert groupe and, more especially, on the savoir-faire of the president. The guidelines given by the Agency underpin the quality of this work."

Jacques Schwartzentruber, the principal rapporteur for the Commission des titres d'ingénieurs (Cti), in France, was present at the quality audit for the University of Lausanne with a view to preparing a joint Cti-AAQ procedure at the EPFL. This procedure at the EPFL combined programme accreditations by the Cti and the quality audit by the AAQ in one and the same visit, with an enlarged group of experts. Jacques Schwartzentruber's participation in the quality audit for the University of Lausanne was part of intensive preparations between the two agencies to bring this joint procedure to fruition.

Christian Schneijderberg, of the University of Kassel, was present at the quality audit at the University of Basel within the scope of the major research project on "Qualitätssicherung von Studium und Lehre durch Akkreditierungsverfahren" (Quality Assurance of Study and Teaching by Accreditation Procedures" run by the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel). The findings of this study will not be known until 2017.

A team headed up by linguist Ulla Kleinberger of the Zurich University of Applied Sciences School of Applied Linguistics (ZHAW) participated in the quality audit at the University of Berne as part of a pilot project with a view to funding by the Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI). If it obtains the hoped-for backing, this project will analyse the discussions from the perspective of the linguistics of the language and the science of communication.

3.1.5 AAQ

All in all, the AAQ takes a positive view of the quality audits done in 2013/14. The participatory preparation, involving the universities at management level (via the visits by the AAQ) and those responsible for quality assurance (via the Q-Netzwerk), was conducive to a common understanding of the various instruments and allowed preparations to be individually attuned to each university.

The collaboration with the UNES has certainly contributed to the good preparation of the student experts, who were widely praised, although the merit for this is due primarily to the UNES itself. What is perhaps regrettable, however, is the way in which the commitment of the students dwindled at times during the editing phase of the reports.

The quality criteria drawn up with the Q-Netzwerk definitely proved to be more coherent, with a structure better adapted to the activities of the universities. However, the on-site visits showed that the understanding of these criteria was not always shared by everyone. The passing on of information at the heart of the universities, for the people in charge of quality assurance – who are very familiar with the instruments having helped to draw them up – remains difficult at times; their audience and the impact of their actions remain limited.

Their evaluation by the experts based on a scale with three levels – fulfilled, partially fulfilled, not fulfilled – has proved at times to be problematic, with the level "partially fulfilled " allowing no distinction between the different failings or weaknesses of the quality assurance system. This lack of nuance in the evaluation scheme has caused some frustration on the part of the universities and the experts.

The profile of "peers" for experts contributed to the acceptance of the groups by the universities, to the benevolent approach – albeit objective – of the experts and to the quality of the exchanges, with all of them ultimately being confronted by the same challenges, each in their own institution.

The use of a list of potential candidates, approved by the university and then the scientific advisory board, has given the agency a much-valued freedom and flexibility when it comes to assembling the expert groups. The universities' right of inspection – not to be confused with the right of veto or of imposition – helped the groups to be accepted and allowed any potential conflicts of interest to be avoided.

The preliminary visit, a month before the actual visit, and the additional instruments really did allow the experts to be well prepared, and they managed to absorb the information supplied by the university as well as the context in which the institution is evolving. This prior preparation certainly enhanced the quality of the exchanges during the visit and thus the quality of the external evaluation.

The visits by the expert groups lasted two and a half days. The programme was packed but comprehensive. Internal feedback sessions were scheduled at the end of each round of discussions, giving the experts an opportunity to compare their impressions, and at the end of every day in order to express some initial conclusions and prepare for the following day. On the final day, a long period of time was set aside to prepare for the verbal debriefing and to consolidate the evaluations of compliance with the criteria with a view to editing the report.

The experts groups were able to meet representatives of all the stakeholders in the university, i.e. the management, the student body, the persons responsible for quality assurance, the heads of faculties and departments, the teaching staff, the intermediary body, programme directors, the persons responsible for the promotion of junior staff and for equal opportunities, service managers and the persons responsible for communications. They were also able to hold talks with the members of the steering committee in charge of the self-evaluation process. Certain discussion sessions, such as those with the steering committee and with heads of services, would have benefited from being better exploited by the experts or better targeted at the requirements of the procedure.

The external evaluation report, combining the agency's contribution on the procedure itself and that of the experts on the evaluation of compliance with the quality criteria in one and the same document, was more coherent – by avoiding instances of duplication for example – but perhaps less clear. A quick scan of the document does not make it easy to tell who is the author of which section.

Without wanting to compare reports that describe different realities from one university to another, a more homogeneous approach by the expert groups could be expected. Quality assurance is certainly not an exact science and the expert groups, put together to best match the profile of each institution, are different every time. Their interpretation of the quality criteria can vary and thus give the impression to any university tempted to make a comparison that it has been judged more severely.

The agency obtained authorisation from the universities in order to be able to publish the twelve external evaluation reports. In agreement with the Q-Netzwerk, which was in favour of a global solution – the publication of all the reports or none – the AAQ has requested this authorisation to the chamber of universities of Swissuniversities.[6] The publication of the reports enables the AAQ to conform to European requirements in this matter.[7]

4 Perspectives for institutional accreditation under the HEdA

From now on, institutional accreditation under the HEdA concerns all public and private universities – and no longer just the public universities and federal institutes of technology – which wish to acquire, or indeed keep, the right to be called a "university", "university of applied sciences" or "university of teacher education" and, in the case of public universities, which wish to receive federal contributions. Like the quality audit, accreditation is centred on the university's system of quality assurance and the two procedures are quite similar.

For institutional accreditation under the HEdA, the AAQ continues with the positive elements put in place for the 2013/14 quality audits, starting with the participatory preparation. In fact, the agency coordinated a large working group on the instructions of the SERI to draw up a project for accreditation guidelines, including quality standards, intended for the Swiss Higher Education Council. The quality standards take account of the requirements stated in the HEdA and the European Standards and Guidelines. This group brought together representatives who came from public and private universities, the distance learning sector, student and intermediary bodies, teaching staff, the world of work and trade unions, and political authorities, as well as the defenders of specific interests such as equal opportunities, disability and sustainability. It was accompanied by an international observer. The working group also produced an

[6] Swissuniversities is the new Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities. It was established in the wake of the HEdA by bringing together the former rectors' conference of universities (CRUS), universities of applied sciences (KFH) and universities of teacher education (COHEP).

[7] Standard 2.6 of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). (http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/)

explanatory document on the quality standards in order to ensure that it was understood by everyone, universities and expert groups. In addition to this, it had the opportunity to discuss two versions of the guide to procedure.

The management of the AAQ did a "Tour de Suisse" at the same time, taking place in public universities of applied sciences and of teacher education which will be faced with their first external quality assurance procedure at institutional level in the form of accreditation under the HEdA. The aim of these meetings is to provide information and establish a base for communications with the different institutions.

The AAQ is also pursuing its collaboration with the UNES.

The format of the preliminary visit proved its worth during the quality audits. It helps the expert groups to be better prepared, although it is advisable to specify its objective in order to preserve its preparatory character. As for the visit itself, it will be even better equipped to meet the requirements of the procedure by better targeting the discussion sessions, most notably with the services, and the groups of people encountered.

Essentially speaking, the expert groups will still be composed of peers and it is probable that the majority will still come from other countries. The experience of the quality audit showed that the majority of universities do not wish to be evaluated by peers belonging to the same Swiss landscape of higher education. It is up to the agency to ensure that they have adequate knowledge of the features specific to Switzerland. It is clear that those experts with experience of evaluation at institutional level will be particularly sought after. Each group will be assembled on the basis of the profile and specifics of the higher education institution.

The expert groups will evaluate the quality standards for institutional accreditation according to a scale with four levels (entirely fulfilled, largely fulfilled, partially fulfilled and not fulfilled), with each level being briefly explained in the guide for institutional accreditation. This scale with four levels will allow the expert groups to be more nuanced in their evaluation.

An explanation of the quality standards, drawn up by the working group in charge of developing the HEdA Accreditation Guidelines, will also facilitate a common understanding and a more consistent interpretation of the quality standards by the universities, the expert groups and the agency.

The quality of the external evaluation reports is always a central concern for the AAQ. The editorial support provided by the agency will be made more uniform and the preparation of the expert groups with a view to the production of the report will be improved. The distinction between contributions from the agency and the expert groups will be clarified. Having said this, the specific feature of external expertise by peers is to have a unique and targeted report for a higher education institution with all its particularities. Comparable reports must not therefore be expected. The question of equal treatment, which is of course at the heart of the AAQ procedures, plays out at the level of the procedure itself.

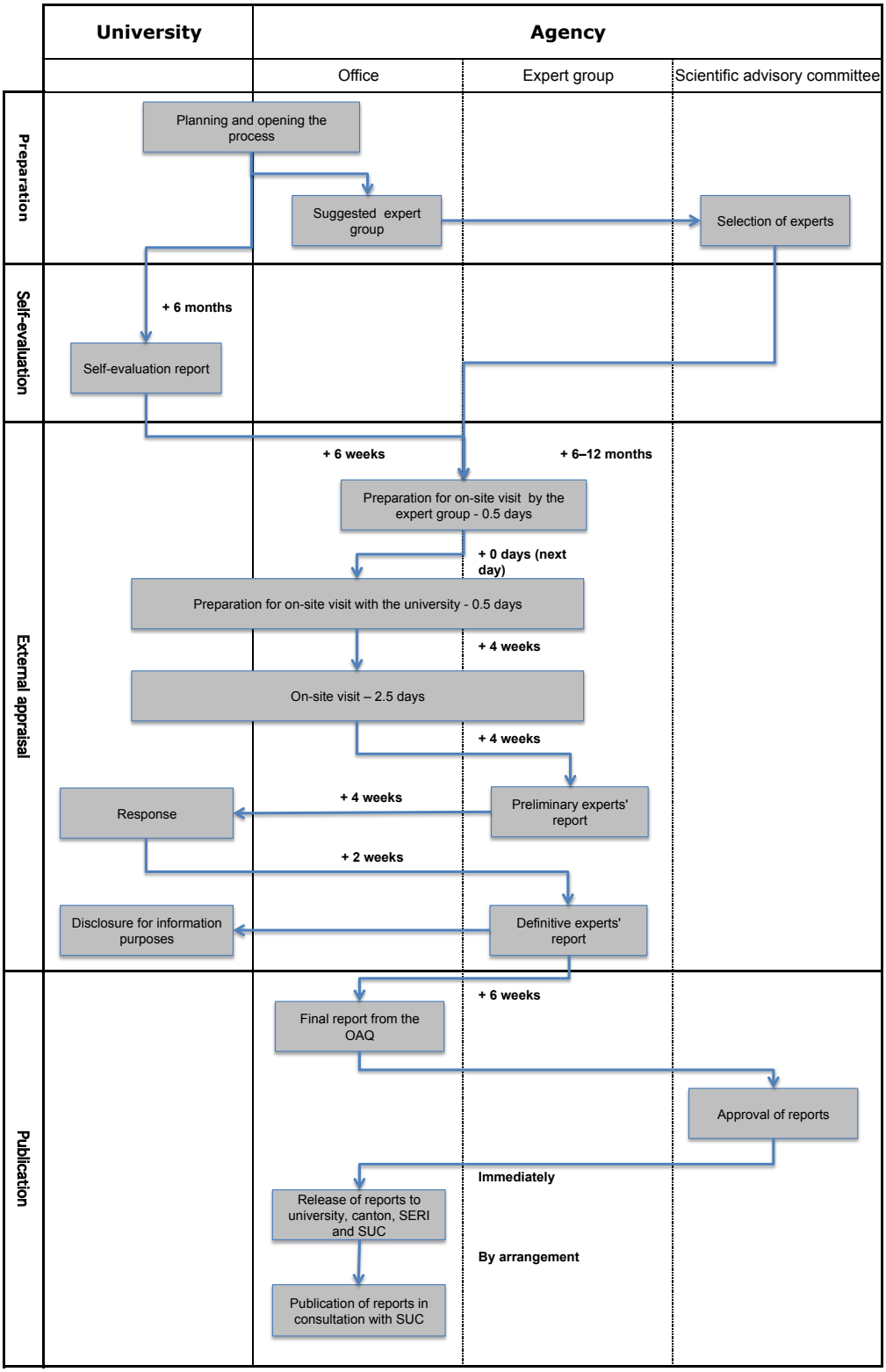
The external evaluation reports must help the higher education institutions to develop their quality assurance system, guide the authorities in their decisions and shape opinion among the parties involved. For the sake of communication and transparency, the AAQ aspires to publish the reports in their entirety and will try to obtain the consent of the higher education institutions by contractual means when the procedures are opened.

The AAQ makes every effort to ensure the success and general benefits of institutional accreditation which, with its evaluation of the quality assurance system in a higher education institution, constitutes a very pertinent approach to reconciling the gradual transfer of responsibilities to the higher education institutions arising from the greater autonomy required

by the laws on the one hand, and their ever-increasing duty to be accountable and transparent on the other hand. A focus on quality assurance provides reassurance that the higher education institution has at its disposal a full and coherent set of processes to guarantee the quality of its activities, in accordance with its profile, its mission statement and its strategic objectives, and that it continually strives to achieve its goals and improve its services.

5 Appendices

5.1 Steps of the procedure



5.2 Quality criteria

I. Quality assurance strategy

1.1 The university defines its quality assurance strategy and communicates it publicly. This strategy includes the guidelines to a quality assurance system whose objective is to ensure and continually improve the quality of university activities, as well as to promote the development of a quality culture.

1.2 The quality assurance system includes the following areas: Management, teaching and research as well as the related services and resources.

1.3 The quality assurance processes are defined and provide for the participation of all members of the university and especially the students. The responsibilities for quality and quality assurance are assigned clearly and transparently.

II. Governance

2.1 The quality assurance system is an integral part of the overall strategy of the university and supports its development.

2.2 The quality assurance system contributes in a systematic manner to the provision of relevant and current quantitative and qualitative information on which the university can base its strategic decisions (especially with respect to research, study programmes, the appointment and promotion of academic staff).

2.3 The university shall promote and evaluate equal opportunities and gender equality.

III. Teaching

3.1 The quality assurance system provides for the periodic evaluation of teaching and its related services. The quality assurance processes include the periodic review of courses, degree levels and study programmes, as well as to the results of teaching.

3.2 The methods used for assessing the performance of students are to be reviewed periodically.

3.3 The university has sufficient and suitable resources and infrastructures to support the learning process of students. It re-evaluates such resources and infrastructures periodically.

IV. Research

4.1 The university has quality assurance processes for its research activities and related services.

4.2 The quality assurance processes include the periodic evaluation of results in the field of research.

V. Recruitment and development of staff

5.1 The university has mechanisms which ensure the qualification of all employees in the areas of teaching and research (recruitment, promotion, training).

5.2 The quality assurance processes include the periodic evaluation of the teaching staff.

5.3 The university promotes the career planning of young academics.

VI. Internal and external communication

6.1 The university ensures that the regulations of the quality assurance processes are known to the staff and the students.

6.2 The university shall ensure transparent reporting on the processes and results of quality assurance measures to the groups concerned within the university.

6.3 Periodically, the university publishes objective information about its study programmes and conferred academic degrees.

5.3 List of procedures (institutions, expert groups and dates of visits)

HEI	Peer Leader	Expert	Expert	Expert	Expert	On-site visit
Basel	Prof. Dr. Karlheinz Sonntag, ehemaliger Prorektor für Qualitätsentwicklung, Universität Heidelberg	Clau Dermont, Student, Universität Bern	Prof. Dr. Stefanie Gropper, ehemalige Prorektorin Lehre, Universität Tübingen	Prof. Dr. Johannes Hellermann, Prorektor für Qualitätsentwicklung, Universität Bielefeld	Prof. Dr. Arnold van Zyl, Rektor, Technische Universität Chemnitz	13-15.05.2014
Bern	Prof. Dr. rer. nat Frank Giesselmann, ehemaliger Vizerektor Lehre, Universität Stuttgart	Prof. Dr. Martina Caroni LL.M, Rechtswissenschaftliche Fakultät, Universität Luzern	Dr. Tina Klug, Referat Qualitätsmanagement, Technische Universität Darmstadt	Prof. i. R. Dr. rer. pol. Rainer Künzel, Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät, Universität Osnabrück	Julian Moritz Renninger, Student, Universität Zürich	05-07.05.2014
EPFL	Prof. Dr. Hans Jürgen Prömel, Präsident, Technische Universität Darmstadt	Thomas Dewael, étudiant, ETHZ	Prof. Dr. François Fleury, École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Lyon	Prof. Dr. Guido Langouche, Former Vice Rector KU Leuven, Former Vice-president NVAO	Prof. Dr. Dominique Parreau, Directrice des études, École Centrale de Paris	24-27.11.2014
ETHZ	Prof. Dipl. Ing. Regine Keller, Vizepräsidentin, Technische Universität München	Prof. Dipl. Ing. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Martin Gerzabek, Rektor, Universität für Bodenkultur Wien	Prof. Dr. Sabina Jeschke, Prodekanin der Fakultät für Maschinenwesen, RWTH Aachen University	Clara Vuillemin, Studentin, EPF Lausanne	Prof. Dr. Peter A. Wieringa, Vizerektor, Technische Universität von Delft	18-20.11.2014
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Lausanne	Prof. Dr. Vincent Wertz, Vice Recteur enseignement, Université Catholique de Louvain	Tatiana Armuna, étudiante, Université de Fribourg	Prof. Dr. Isabelle Perroteau, vice directrice à l'enseignement et à la qualité du Département des Sciences Cliniques et Biologiques, Université de Turin	Prof. Dr. Patricia Pol, ancienne Vice Présidente, Université de Paris Est	Lewis Purser, Directeur des affaires académiques, Irish University Association	02-04.12.2013
Luzern	Prof. em. Dr. Hans Weder, ehemaliger Rektor, Universität Zürich	Dr. Christine Abele, Beauftragte für Qualitätsmanagement, Universität Konstanz	Ruth Langer, Studentin, Universität Freiburg	Prof. Dr. Evelies Mayer, Staatsministerin a.D., ehemals Professorin Soziologie, Technische Universität Darmstadt	Prof. Dr. Thomas Puhl, Prorektor für Studium und Lehre, Universität Mannheim	08-10.04.2014
Neuchâtel	Prof. Dr. Freddy Coignoul, Vice-Recteur Qualité, Université de Liège	Prof. Dr. Anne Heldenbergh, Conseillère qualité pour le rectorat, Université de Mons	Mme Tia Loukkola, Director of Institutional Developement, European University Association	Mr. Maxime Mellina, étudiant, Université de Berne	Prof. Dr. Michel Volovitch, Directeur adjoint du département de biologie, Ecole Normale Supérieure	13-15.05.2014
Saint Gall	Prof. Dr. Christoph Badelt, Rektor, Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien	Prof. Dr. Frank Bostyn, Directeur Général, NEOMA Business School	Philipp Mazenauer, Student, Universität Luzern	Prof. Dr. Örjan Sölvell, Director of the Center for Strategy and Competitiveness, Stockholm School of Economics	Prof. Dr. Eric Waarts, Dean of education, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University	24-26.03.2014
USI	Prof.ssa Rita Franceschini, già Rettore, Libera Università di Bolzano	Laura Calendo, Studente, Università di Lucerna	Prof. Paolo Collini, Prorettore Vicario, Delegato per la Didattica, Preside della Facoltà di Economia, Università di Trento	Prof. Nicolae Lascu, già Vice-Rettore, Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism di Bucharest	Prof.ssa Isabelle Perroteau, vice direttrice all'insegnamento e alla qualità del Dipartimento di Scienze Cliniche e Biologiche, Università degli Studi di Torino	08-10.04.2014
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5.4 Questionnaire for universities (HEI)

	HEI (19, or 10 responses, if one takes account of the responses aggregated by HEI)	Average[8]
	Collaboration	
1	The communication by the OAQ was clear.	4.48
2	The collaboration with the OAQ was professional.	4.58
3	The support provided by the OAQ was in line with expectations.	4.53
4	The composition of the expert group was well balanced.	4.29
5	The experts were competent and well prepared.	4.31
6	The communication by the experts was professional.	4.43
	Instruments	
1	The OAQ guide was useful.	4.71
2	The explanatory notes for the self-evaluation report were useful.	4.31
3	The quality criteria are comprehensible.	4.22
4	The quality criteria are appropriate for appraising the quality assurance system of the institution.	3.80
	Procedure	
1	The preparation for the on-site visit at the university (preliminary visit) was useful.	4.50
2	The format of the visit was appropriate.	4.53
3	There was sufficient time for...	
	the self-evaluation	4.52
	the preliminary visit	4.88
	the visit	4.32
4	The workload was in line with expectations.	3.90
5	On the whole, the procedure was useful for the development of quality.	4.23

[8] 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree.

5.5 Questionnaire for experts

	Experts (33 responses)	Average[9]
	Collaboration	
1	The communication by the OAQ was clear.	4.82
2	The collaboration with the OAQ was professional.	4.91
3	The support provided by the OAQ was in line with expectations.	4.75
4	The composition of the expert group was well balanced.	4.58
5	The communication in the expert group was professional.	4.76
	Instruments	
1	The guide and the various instruments (grids, etc.) provided by the OAQ were useful.	4.67
2	The model for the external evaluation report was useful.	4.69
3	The quality criteria are comprehensible.	4.36
4	The quality criteria are appropriate for appraising the quality assurance system of the institution.	4.27
	Procedure	
1	The preparation for the on-site visit by the expert group and at the university (preliminary visit) was useful.	4.79
2	The format of the visit was appropriate.	4.33
3	There was sufficient time for...	
	the preparation	4.97
	the preliminary visit	4.72
	the visit	4.27
	the external evaluation report	4.66
4	The workload was in line with expectations.	4.48
5	The preliminary visit and the visit were well organised.	4.91
6	On the whole, the procedure was useful for the development of quality.	4.61

[9] 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree.

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