

A3ES

Agência de Avaliação
e Acreditação
do Ensino Superior

GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT/ACCREDITATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES IN OPERATION

AACEF 2018-2023

August 2018

CONTEXT OF THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

In accordance with the legal framework for the assessment of higher education (Law no. 38/2007, of 16 August), the external assessment of study programmes must be carried out periodically.

The assessment/accreditation of study programmes in operation (ACEF Process) has as fundamental element the self-assessment report prepared by the assessed institution, which should focus on the processes that are considered critical to guarantee the quality of teaching and on the methodologies to monitor/improve this quality, including how institutions monitor and evaluate the quality of their teaching and research programmes.

The assessment is carried out by an external assessment team (EAT), composed of experts selected by the Agency based on their curriculum and experience and supported by an Agency staff member, who acts as the case officer. The EAT analyses the self-assessment report and visits the institution to confirm the information in the report and to discuss it with representatives of the institution.

Before the end of the visit, the EAT meets to discuss the conclusions regarding the results of the assessment and to organize the items to be included in the external assessment report to be presented orally. This presentation is the responsibility of the EAT President and should be confined to discussing the results of the analysis in terms of positive aspects, shortcomings, improvement proposals and other aspects that are relevant in the context of the assessment.

The EAT, using the appropriate electronic form, prepares, under the supervision of its President, the provisional version of the external assessment report of the study programme. The Agency forwards the interim report to the higher education institution for examination and possible response, within the fixed time period. In case of a response, the team may review the interim report, if it so considers fit, approves its final version and submits it on the Agency's platform.

The final decision on accreditation is the responsibility of the Management Board. In the formulation of the decision, the Management Board will take into account the final report of the EAT and, if there are relevant professional bodies and associations, their opinion will also be considered. The Management Board may, however, take decisions that do not coincide with the EAT's recommendation, in order to ensure equity and balance of final decisions. Thus, the Management Board may reasonably disagree with the EAT, making a decision favourable to the institution (less demanding than the team) or unfavourable to the institution (more demanding than the team) contrary to the EAT's recommendation.

EAT Composition

The composition of the EAT which evaluated the current study programme is as follows (the CVs of the experts can be found on the Agency page under the [Accreditation and Audit / Experts](#) tab)

.....
.....
.....
.....
(automatically filled)

ASSESSMENT OF STUDY PROGRAMME

1. General characterisation of the study programme.

Note: Fields 1.1 to 1.14 in this section are automatically filled from the information in the self-assessment report.

1.1. Higher education institution.

(Automatically Filled)

1.1.a. Other higher education institution (in association).

(Automatically Filled)

1.2. Organic Unit (faculty, school, institute, etc.).

(Automatically Filled)

1.2.a. Other Organic Units (faculty, school, institute, etc.) (in association).

(Automatically Filled)

1.3. Study programme.

(Automatically Filled)

1.4. Degree.

(Automatically Filled)

1.5. Publication of the study plan in the Official Journal.

(Automatically Filled)

1.6. Main scientific area of the study programme.

(Automatically Filled)

1.7. CNAEF classification of the study programme fundamental areas (Ordinance no. 256/2005 of 16 March; 3 digits CNAEF).

1.7.1. CNAEF Classification– first fundamental area.

(Automatically Filled)

1.7.2. CNAEF Classification– second fundamental area, if applicable

(Automatically Filled)

1.7.3. CNAEF Classification– third fundamental area, if applicable

(Automatically Filled)

1.8. Number of ECTS credits necessary for obtaining the degree.

(Automatically Filled)

1.9. Duration of the study programme (article 3 of Decree-law 74/2006).

(Automatically Filled)

1.10. Maximum number of admissions (last year).

(Automatically Filled)

1.10.1. Intended maximum number of admissions (if different from last year) and respective justification.

(Automatically Filled)

1.11. Specific entry requirements.

(Automatically Filled)

1.12. Working regime (Day time / After working hours / Other).

(Automatically Filled)

1.12.1. If other specify.

(Automatically Filled)

1.13. Premises where the study programme is delivered.

(Automatically Filled)

1.14. Regulations for crediting academic education and professional experience.

(Automatically Filled)

1.15. Observations by the external assessment team.

Eventual observations of the external assessment team (EAT) about the elements which characterise the study programme, namely about the intended maximum number of admissions (field 1.10.1) if different from the authorised for last year.

2. Student-centred learning and teaching methodologies.

2.1. Adequacy of learning and teaching methodologies.

The institution has the means of ensuring that the learning and teaching methodologies are coherent with the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) to be achieved by students, favouring their active role in the creation of the learning process:

YES NO PARTLY

2.2. Adequacy of student workload.

The institution has the means of verifying that the required average student workload corresponds to the estimated in ECTS:

YES NO PARTLY

2.3. Adequacy of student assessment methodologies.

The institution has the means of ensuring that the student assessment methodologies are aligned with the intended learning outcomes:

YES NO PARTLY

2.4. Global appraisal of the means to ensure the adequacy of learning and teaching methodologies.

2.4.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the adequacy of the means the institution has adopted to ensure the adequacy of student-centred learning and teaching methodologies. (4,500 characters)

2.4.2. Strengths

Strengths of the means adopted to ensure the adequacy of student-centred learning and teaching methodologies. (3,000 characters)

2.4.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations for improving the quality assurance of student-centred learning and teaching methodologies. (3,000 characters)

3. Teaching staff.

3.1. Coordination of the study programme.

The profile of the teaching staff member(s) responsible for coordinating the study programme is adequate:

YES NO PARTLY

3.2. Fulfilment of legal requirements.

The teaching staff fulfils the legal requirements (qualification and specialisation):

YES NO PARTLY

3.3. Adequacy of workload.

The teaching loads attributed to the staff are balanced and compatible with the other functions proper to higher education teaching staff:

YES NO PARTLY

3.4. Stability of teaching staff.

Most of the teaching staff has a link to the study programme for a period over 3 years.

YES NO PARTLY

3.5. Teaching staff development.

The number of teaching staff members in doctoral programmes for over one year is adequate to the eventual needs of qualification and specialisation of the study programme teaching staff:

YES NO PARTLY

3.6. Global appraisal of the teaching staff.

3.6.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the adequacy of the teaching staff of the study programme. (4,500 characters)

3.6.2. Strengths

Strengths of the teaching staff of the study programme. (3,000 characters)

3.6.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations for improving the teaching staff. (3,000 characters)

4. Non-academic staff.

4.1. Technical and professional capacity.

The qualification of the non-academic staff, allocated to the study programme, is adequate.

YES NO PARTLY

4.2. Adequacy in number.

The number and employment regime of the non-academic staff, allocated to the study programme, is adequate.

YES NO PARTLY

4.3. Global appraisal of the non-academic staff.

4.3.1. Global assessment

Justified global appraisal of the adequacy of the non-academic staff allocated to the study programme. (4,500 characters)

4.3.2. Strengths

Strengths of the study programme non-academic staff. (3,000 characters)

4.3.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations for improving the non-academic staff. (3,000 characters)

5. Students.

5.1. Demand for the study programme.

There has been consistent demand of the study programme by prospective students over the last 3 years.

YES NO PARTLY

5.2. Global appraisal of the student body.

5.2.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the student body, the demand for the study programme and the adequacy of teaching and learning processes to the different working regimes, when they exist. (4,500 characters)

5.2.2. Strengths

Strengths of the study programme non-academic staff. (3,000 characters)

5.2.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations for improving the student body of the study programme. (3,000 characters)

6. Academic Results.

6.1. Academic success.

The academic success amongst students is effective and effectively monitored.

YES NO PARTLY

6.2. Employability.

There is no evidence of employment difficulties among the graduates.

YES NO PARTLY

6.3. Global appraisal of the academic results.

6.3.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the academic results of the study programme (4,500 characters)

6.3.2. Strengths

Strengths of the academic results of the study programme. (3,000 characters)

6.3.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations for improving the academic results of the study programme. (3,000 characters)

7. Results of scientific, technologic and artistic activities.

7.1. Research centres.

The institution has organisational and human resources allowing for the integration of their teaching staff and researchers in research activities, either by itself or through their participation in recognised scientific institutions:

YES

NO

PARTLY

7.2. Scientific or artistic production.

The teaching staff of the study programme have scientific publications, in the main area of the study programme, in international journals with peer review, books or book chapters, in the last five years.

YES

NO

PARTLY

7.3. Other publications.

The teaching staff of the study programme have other relevant scientific publications, namely pedagogic or from applied research or high-level professional development activities:

YES

NO

PARTLY

7.4. Activities of technologic or artistic development.

The activities of technological and artistic development, community service and advanced training in the fundamental area(s) of the study programme have a real contribution to the national, regional and local development, the scientific culture and the cultural, sports and artistic activity.

YES

NO

PARTLY

7.5. Integration in national and international projects and partnerships.

The scientific, technological and artistic activities are integrated in national and international projects and/or partnerships.

YES

NO

PARTLY

7.6. Global appraisal of the results of scientific, technologic and artistic activities.

7.6.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the results of scientific, technologic or artistic activities (4,500 characters)

7.6.2. Strengths

Strengths of the results of scientific, technologic or artistic activities. (3,000 characters)

7.6.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations for improving the results of scientific, technologic or artistic activities. (3,000 characters)

8. Internationalisation.

8.1. Mobility of students and teaching staff.

There is a significant mobility level of students and teaching staff of the study programme:

- YES NO PARTLY

8.2. Foreign students.

There are foreign students enrolled in the study programme (beyond those on mobility programmes):

- YES NO PARTLY

8.3. Participation in international networks.

The institution participates in international networks with relevance for the study programme:

- YES NO PARTLY

8.4. Global appraisal of the level of internationalisation.

8.4.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the level of internationalisation. (4,500 characters)

8.4.2. Strengths

Strengths of the level of internationalisation. (3,000 characters)

8.4.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations for improving the level of internationalisation. (3,000 characters)

9. Internal organisation and quality assurance mechanisms.

9.1. Internal quality assurance system

There is an internal quality assurance system at institutional or unit level, certified by A3ES:

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> YES (goes directly to 9.7) | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO | <input type="radio"/> PARTLY |
| <input type="radio"/> No (continue with 9.2) | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO | <input type="radio"/> PARTLY |

9.2. Quality assurance mechanisms.

There are quality assurance mechanisms of the study programme and of the activities promoted by the services or structures supporting the teaching and learning processes:

- YES NO PARTLY

9.3. Coordination and support structure(s).

There are a coordinator and structures responsible for the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms of the study programme.

YES NO PARTLY

9.4. Assessment of teaching staff.

There are procedures to assess the performance of the teaching staff of the study programme and there are measures for their continuous updating and professional development.

YES NO PARTLY

9.5. Assessment of non-academic staff.

There are procedures to assess the non-academic staff of the study programme and there are measures for their continuous updating and professional development.

YES NO PARTLY

9.6. Public information.

There are procedures for the regular provision of public information on the study programme.

YES NO PARTLY

9.7. Other ways of assessment.

There have been other assessments, in the last five years, of either the study programme or the institution, not performed by A3ES.

YES NO

9.7.1. Conclusions of other assessments (when applicable)

If the answer was positive, please indicate those assessment(s) and present a brief analysis of their conclusions. (3,000 characters)

9.8. Global appraisal of the results of quality assurance mechanisms.

9.8.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the results of the study programme quality assurance mechanisms.

If there is an internal quality assurance system certified by A3ES, the appraisal should focus on the efficacy of the study programme quality assurance mechanisms using the last self-evaluation report elaborated for the internal system (4,500 characters)

9.8.2. Strengths

Strengths of the quality assurance mechanisms. (3,000 characters)

9.8.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations for improving the quality assurance mechanisms. (3,000 characters)

10. Improvement of the study programme – Evolution since the previous assessment and future improvement actions.

10.1. Evolution of the study programme since the previous assessment.

Comments on the improvement measures of the study programme implemented since the previous assessment and on the changes of syllabus structure, facilities, partnerships and structures supporting the teaching and learning processes, if there have been any.

10.2. Appraisal and validation of the proposals for future improvement.

Comments on the grounds and relevance of the improvement proposals of the study programme presented by the institution and their respective validation/non validation (the improvement proposals validated by the external assessment team are mandatory). (4,500 characters)

11. Restructuring of the syllabus. (if applicable)

11.1. Appraisal and validation of the proposal of syllabus restructuring.

Appraisal of the opportunity, grounds and adequacy of the proposed restructuring of the syllabus (if there is one). Recommendation of acceptance (total or conditional) or non-acceptance. (9,000 characters).

12. Final observations.

12.1. Appraisal of the institution's response. (if applicable)

Appraisal of the institution's response to the preliminary report, if there is one. (4,500 characters)

12.2. Observations.

Additional observations that are considered relevant by the external assessment team. (9,000 characters)

12.3. PDF

Insert a PDF file (optional). (maximum 100 KB)

13. Conclusions.

13.1. Global appraisal of the study programme.

Synthesis of the appraisals made in the report, systematising the strengths and weaknesses of the study programme. (9,000 characters)

13.2. Final recommendation.

Grounded on the global appraisal of the study programme, the external assessment team recommends:

- The study programme should be **accredited**
- The study programme should be **accredited with conditions**
- The study programme should **not** be **accredited**

13.3. Period of conditional accreditation. (if applicable)

In the case of conditional accreditation, indicate the proposed accreditation period (in years).

13.4. Conditions to fulfil. (if applicable)

In the case of conditional accreditation, indicate the conditions to be fulfilled. (4,500 characters)

APPENDIX – Decision criteria and instructions for filling in the report

1. General characterisation of study programme.

All fields in this section of the report are automatically filled in from the self-assessment report, except field 1.15, where the EAT may, if it wishes, enter comments on the elements of the study programme characterisation, specifically if the institution requests an increase in the maximum number of places.

2. Student-centred learning and teaching methodologies.

Note: In the analysis to be carried out in points 2.1 to 2.4, the items included in reference point 3 of the "[Reference Framework for Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education Institutions](#)" shall be taken into account.

2.1 Adequacy of learning and teaching methodologies.

Criterion: The institution has the means of ensuring that the learning and teaching methodologies are coherent with the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) to be achieved by students, favouring their active role in the creation of the learning process.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the strategies / procedures used to ensure that teaching is delivered in such a way as to favour the active role of the student in the creation of the learning process, in particular as regards the alignment of learning and teaching methodologies with the intended learning outcomes (*i.e.* knowledge, skills and competences) defined for the study programme, including, where applicable, the forms of student participation in scientific activities.

2.2 Adequacy of student workload.

Criterion: The institution has the means of verifying that the required average student workload corresponds to the estimated in ECTS.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the mechanisms used by the institution to verify that the average workload that is requested of students corresponds effectively to the ECTS credits assigned to the curricular units.

2.3 Adequacy of student assessment methodologies.

Criterion: The institution has the means of ensuring that student assessment methodologies are adequate to the intended learning outcomes.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the strategies used to ensure the alignment of the student assessment methods with the intended learning outcomes.

2.4 Global appraisal of the means to ensure the adequacy of learning and teaching methodologies.

2.4.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the means the institution has adopted to ensure the adequacy of student-centred learning and teaching methodologies, having in mind the items included in reference point 3 of the "[Reference Framework for Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education Institutions](#)".

2.4.2. Strengths

Strengths regarding the means adopted to ensure the adequacy of student-centred learning and teaching methodologies.

2.4.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations of measures for improving the quality assurance of student-centred learning and teaching methodologies.

3. Teaching staff.

3.1 Coordination of the study programme.

Criterion: The staff members indicated to coordinate the study programme have an adequate academic and professional profile in the area of the study programme and have a full-time contractual relationship with the institution (see sections 1.1 (university) or 1.2 (polytechnic) of [Qualifications Criteria for Teaching Staff](#)).

Guidelines: Appraisal of the adequacy of the profile of the teaching staff responsible for the coordination of the study programme according to the legal requirements applicable to the qualification level and nature of the programme.

3.2 Fulfilment of legal requirements.

Criterion: Requirements stipulated in the document [Qualifications Criteria for Teaching Staff](#).

Guidelines: Appraisal of the fulfilment of the requirements stipulated in the document [Qualifications Criteria for Teaching Staff](#), concerning the institutions' own teaching staff, academically qualified staff and specialised staff, considering the university or polytechnic nature of the degree offered.

In the count of PhD holders specialized in the key area or areas of the study programme the following should be included: PhD holders in the area; teaching staff with basic training in the area and PhD in related area; and PhD holders in related area and scientific production in the area of the study programme.

3.3 Adequacy of workload.

Criterion: The teaching loads attributed to staff are balanced and compatible with the other functions proper to higher education teaching staff.

Guidelines: Verification that the workload is adequate, in particular as regards the balance of teaching loads assigned to teaching staff.

3.4 Stability of teaching staff.

Criterion: Most teaching staff have a stable employment in the institution.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the degree of stability of the study programme's teaching staff, in particular if the majority have been employed in the institution for over three years.

3.5 Teaching staff development.

Criterion: The institution promotes the professional development of its staff.

Guidelines: Assessment of the teaching staff training dynamics, namely whether the number of staff in doctoral programs for over a year is adequate to the current needs for the academic qualification and specialization of the teaching staff of the study programme.

3.6 Global appraisal of the teaching staff.

3.6.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the quality and adequacy of the teaching staff of the study programme, summarising the conclusions of the assessments made in the previous items.

Evidence should be presented to substantiate the assessments of non-compliance or partial compliance in the preceding items.

3.6.2. Strengths

Strengths regarding the quality and adequacy of teaching staff.

3.6.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations of measures for improving the quality of teaching staff.

4. Non-academic staff.

4.1 Technical and professional capacity.

Criterion: The institution has non-academic staff who are sufficiently qualified to ensure the proper functioning of the study programme.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the adequacy of the professional and technical capacity of non-academic staff who support the study programme.

4.2 Adequacy in number.

Criterion: The institution has sufficient non-academic staff to ensure the proper functioning of the study programme.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the adequacy of numbers and employment regime of non-academic staff, taking into account the support needs of the study programme.

4.3 Global appraisal of the non-academic staff.

4.3.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal on the quality and adequacy of the non-academic staff supporting the study programme, summarising the conclusions of the assessments made in the previous items.

Evidence should be presented to substantiate the assessments of non-compliance or partial compliance in the preceding items.

4.3.2. Strengths

Strengths regarding the quality and adequacy of non-academic staff supporting the study programme.

4.3.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations of measures for improving the quality of non-academic staff supporting the study programme.

5. Students.

5.1 Demand for the study programme.

Criterion: The number of students enrolled in the study programme in the last three years is adequate for its sustainable operation, and there is no significant downward trend.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the indicators for the demand for the study programme in the last three years, in terms of their consistency and sustainability.

5.2 Global appraisal of student body.

5.2.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the quality of the student body and the sustainability of the demand for the study programme.

Should the study programme have different modes of operation, include an analysis of the balance of the number of students in each mode and the suitability of the teaching and learning processes to these different modes of operation.

Evidence should be presented to substantiate the assessments of non-compliance or partial compliance in the preceding items.

5.2.2. Strengths

Strengths regarding the quality of the student body and the sustainability of the demand for the study programme.

5.2.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations of measures for improving the quality of the student body and the sustainability of the demand for the study programme.

6. Academic results.

6.1 Academic success.

Criterion: The percentages of students who obtain the degree in the regular duration of the study programme and of those who take 1, 2 or more than 2 years beyond this time are reasonable.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the degree of academic success in the study programme (time-to-completion, retention and dropout rates, comparison of academic success in the different disciplinary areas of the study programme) and the way in which it is monitored.

6.2 Employability.

Criterion: Employment data do not reveal the existence of significant unemployment in the sector, nor in particular among graduates of this study programme.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the employability levels of study programme graduates and their transition to the labour market.

6.3 Global appraisal of academic results.

6.3.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the academic results in the study programme, summarising the conclusions of the assessments made in the previous items.

Evidence should be presented to substantiate the assessments of non-compliance or partial compliance in the preceding items.

6.3.2. Strengths

Strengths regarding the academic results in the study programme.

6.3.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations of measures for improving the academic results in the study programme.

7. Results of scientific, technologic and artistic activities.

7.1 Research centres.

Criterion: The institution, by itself or through its participation or collaboration, or through that of its teaching staff and researchers, in recognized scientific institutions, meets the criteria established in section 2.1 of the document *Qualifications Criteria for Teaching Staff* related to the development of recognized research activity or high-level professional development in the scientific area of the study programme.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the organizational and human resources available to the institution for the integration of its teaching staff in research activities and the respective degree of integration. These activities can take place in the institution itself or through the participation or collaboration of its teaching staff and researchers in recognized scientific institutions, taking into account the criteria established in section 2 of the document [Qualifications Criteria for Teaching Staff](#) regarding the development of recognized activities of scientific research, or of applied research and high level

professional development, in the fundamental area or areas of the study programme, according to the university or polytechnic nature of the institution and the type of degree awarded (*licenciatura*, master or doctorate).

7.2 Scientific or artistic production.

Criterion: The institution's teaching staff play an active, relevant and internationally recognized role in scientific research, artistic production or applied research and high-level professional development in the scientific area of the study programme.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the scientific and artistic production or of the output of applied research activities or of high-level professional development of the teaching staff of the study programme in the last five years, as well as their degree of internationalisation, taking into consideration the university or polytechnic nature of the institution.

7.3 Other publications.

Criterion: The existence of pedagogical publications, or other publications relevant to the study programme, is considered as a positive factor.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the production of other publications by the teaching staff relevant to the area of the study programme, namely publications of a pedagogical nature.

7.4 Activities of technologic and artistic development.

Criterion: There are activities of technological and artistic development, provision of services to the community or advanced training of recognized value.

There is a significant contribution to national, regional and local development and promotion of actions for interaction with the community.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the existence and of the degree of economic valuation of technological and artistic development activities, provision of services to the community and advanced training in the fundamental area or areas of the study programme as well as of their impact on national, regional and local development, scientific culture and cultural, sports and artistic actions.

7.5 Integration in national and international projects and partnerships.

Criterion: The existence of partnerships with other institutions, national and/or foreign, and of collaborative actions inside and outside the institution, is evaluated positively.

Mechanisms exist to promote inter-institutional collaboration.

Relations with the surrounding environment are promoted, particularly with the business community and the public sector.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the degree of integration of scientific, technological and artistic activities into national and international projects and/or partnerships.

7.6 Global appraisal of the results of scientific, technological and artistic activities.

7.6.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the results of scientific, technological and artistic activities in the area of the study programme, summarising the conclusions of the assessments made in the previous items.

In case the institution has no research centre in the area of the study programme, the degree of integration of teaching staff in the research centres of other institutions as well as their level of scientific, technological and artistic production should be mentioned.

Evidence should be presented to substantiate the assessments of non-compliance or partial compliance in the preceding items.

7.6.2. Strengths

Strengths regarding the results of scientific, technological and artistic activities in the area of the study programme.

7.6.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations of measures for improving the results of scientific, technological and artistic activities in the area of the study programme.

8. Internationalisation.

8.1 Mobility of students and teaching staff.

Criterion: Mobility of students and of teaching staff is encouraged.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the level of participation of students and of teaching staff in mobility programmes.

8.2 Foreign students.

Criterion: The existence of foreign students enrolled in the study programme is considered positive.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the level of internationalisation of the student body of the study programme.

8.3 Participation in international networks.

Criterion: The institution promotes the participation in international networks in the disciplinary area of the study programme.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the institution's level of participation in international networks relevant for the study programme.

8.4 Global appraisal of the level of internationalisation.

8.4.1. Global appraisal

Justified global appraisal of the level of internationalisation of the study programme, summarising the conclusions of the assessments made in the previous items.

Evidence should be presented to substantiate the assessments of non-compliance or partial compliance in the preceding items.

8.4.2. Strengths

Strengths regarding the level of internationalisation of the study programme.

8.4.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations of measures for improving the level of internationalisation of the study programme.

9. Internal organisation and quality assurance mechanisms.

9.1 Internal quality assurance system.

Indicate whether or not there exists an internal quality assurance system, at the level of the institution or unit, certified by the A3ES.

If the answer is yes, move directly to field 8.7. It is not necessary to complete fields 8.2 to 8.6.

If the answer is no, complete all of the following fields.

9.2 Quality assurance mechanisms.

Criterion: There are mechanisms to guarantee the quality of the study programme and of the activities developed by the services or structures supporting the teaching and learning processes, in line with the "[Reference Framework for Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education Institutions](#)" (*inter alias*, reference points 4, 5, 10 and 11, and reference point 1 in what concerns the involvement of students and of other stakeholders).

Guidelines: Appraisal of the adequacy of the quality assurance mechanisms of the study programme and of the activities carried out by the services or structures supporting the teaching and learning processes, in particular as regards the procedures for collecting information (including the results of student surveys and the results of academic success monitoring), the periodic monitoring and review of study programmes, the discussion and use of the results of these reviews in the definition of improvement measures and the monitoring of the implementation of these measures.

In addition to the description of the quality system presented by the institution, the Quality Manual or equivalent document should be analysed, in which the institution defines its strategy for internal quality assurance and the processes and procedures implemented to make the system function.

9.3 Coordination and support structure(s).

Criterion: The institution has adequate structures for the strategic and operational coordination of procedures and mechanisms to guarantee the quality of the study programme.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the adequacy of the coordination and structure or structures responsible for implementing the quality assurance mechanisms of the study programme(s).

9.4 Assessment of teaching staff.

Criterion: There is a procedure for assessing the performance of teaching staff that promotes their scientific and pedagogical competence and their continuous development.

Guidelines: Verification of the existence of procedures for assessing the performance of teaching staff, of their effective implementation and of measures leading to their ongoing updating and professional development.

9.5 Assessment of non-academic staff.

Criterion: There is a system for assessing the performance of non-academic staff and periodic professional development initiatives are planned.

Guideline: Verification of the existence of procedures for assessing non-academic staff, of their effective implementation and of measures leading to their continuous updating and professional development.

9.6 Public information.

Criterion: There are procedures for the regular provision of public information on the study programme.

Guideline: Verification of the existence of procedures for the regular provision of public information about the study programme, in accordance with reference point 12 of the "[Reference Framework for Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education Institutions](#)", and appraisal of the adequacy of the ways in which this information is published.

9.7 Other ways of assessment.

9.7.1. Conclusions of other assessments

Criterion: If the study programme has undergone an assessment/accreditation process with a favourable result less than five years ago, the evaluating/accrediting entity must be recognized as suitable by the Agency for the result to be taken into account.

Guidelines: Assessment of the conclusions of other assessments of the study programme or of the institution in the last five years, if any.

9.8 Global appraisal of the quality assurance mechanisms.

9.8.1. Global appraisal

If there exists an internal quality assurance system certified by the A3ES: Appraisal of the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms, based on the appropriateness of the last self-assessment report of the study programme drafted within the system.

Otherwise: Justified global appraisal on the quality assurance mechanisms of the study programme, summarising the conclusions of the assessments made in the previous items.

Evidence should be presented to substantiate the assessments of non-compliance or partial compliance in the preceding items.

9.8.2. Strengths

Strengths regarding the quality assurance mechanisms in the study programme.

9.8.3. Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations of measures for improving the quality assurance mechanisms in the study programme.

10. Improvement of the study programme – Evolution since the previous assessment and future improvement actions.

Note: With the completion of the 1st cycle of assessment/accreditation of study programmes in operation, all the higher education provision leading to a degree was already subject to at least one assessment and accreditation decision by the A3ES. In turn, the fulfilment of conditions established in the previous accreditation, in the case this was a conditional accreditation, was already verified based on a detailed follow-up report.

For this reason, it was possible to simplify the self-assessment report (ACEF guidelines) in the items related to the organization and operation of the study programme, therefore it is now particularly important to monitor its evolution since the previous assessment and the recorded improvements.

In this same perspective of continuous improvement, the new guidelines establish that the institution should propose an improvement action for each weakness identified in the SWOT analysis, which, if validated by the EAT, becomes binding for the institution.

This section presents an assessment and validation of the proposed improvement actions, without prejudice to the comments deemed pertinent related to the changes registered since the previous assessment.

10.1 Evolution of the study programme since the previous assessment.

Criterion: The measures for improving the study programme and other changes signalled in part I of the self-assessment report, implemented since the previous assessment, were timely and relevant in the context of the continuous improvement of the study programme. An adequate response was given to the recommendations that had been made.

Guidelines: Comments that the EAT considers relevant about the measures for improving the study programme, implemented since the previous assessment, as well as about the changes that were made regarding the curricular structure and/or study plan, facilities, partnerships and structures supporting the teaching and learning processes, if they have been indicated by the institution in points 3 or 4 of part I of the self-assessment report.

10.2 Appraisal and validation of the proposals for future improvement.

Criterion: The proposals for future improvement presented by the institution are timely and relevant in the context of the continuous improvement of the study programme.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the rationale and relevance of the proposals for improvement of the study programme presented by the institution following the SWOT analysis exercise, with explicit indication of validation, partial validation or non-validation by the EAT.

11. Restructuring of the syllabus.

11.1 Appraisal and validation of the proposal of syllabus restructuring.

Criterion: The proposed changes to the syllabus and the study plan are timely, comply with applicable legal requirements (Decree-Law 74/2006, of March 24, amended by Decree-Law 63/2016, of September 13) and represent an improvement in the curricular organisation of the study programme.

Guidelines: Appraisal of the timeliness, rationale and adequacy of the presented proposal for curricular restructuring (when it exists).

The EAT should issue an explicit recommendation for acceptance, acceptance with conditions or non-acceptance of the proposal.

Note: The in-depth reflection carried out by the institution in the context of the preparation of the self-assessment report of the study programme is an appropriate moment to consider the possible need for scientific updating of the curricular structure, as foreseen in standard 1.9 of the *European Standards and Guidelines*. With this concern in mind, the following guidelines were transmitted to higher education institutions in the self-assessment guidelines:

This section of the guidelines, which is optional in nature, is intended to enable the institution to propose adjustments to the curricular structure of the study programme, as long as there is no change in the designation, duration and objectives of the study programme.

Exceptionally, a proposal for a change of designation may be accepted without changing the objectives, as long as the previous section appropriately justifies that the proposed designation is better aligned with the objectives of the study programme.

These adjustments should always follow from the SWOT analysis and the improvement actions presented in the previous section, where their convenience is highlighted and justified.

It should be noted that the changes proposed in this section are not subject to the limits defined by A3ES Resolution 2392/2013 on the elements that characterize a study programme, which has a different framework. The institution will propose here the changes that, in its view, correspond to a better way of organising the study programme in order to meet the objectives defined for it. It will be for the EAT to assess the timeliness and relevance of these changes, in the light of this report and the information gathered and the discussions during the visit, and it will be for the Management Board to decide whether or not to accept them.

The proposal should clearly state the changes intended to the curricular structure and the corresponding study plan, adding the descriptions corresponding to the new curricular units (and only to these) and the CVs of those academics that do not already appear in the section 3 of this self-assessment report.

If there are different curricular pathways (branches, areas of specialization), only those in which changes are proposed should be filled out, and the pathways that remain unchanged must be explicitly indicated in field 9.1.

12. Final observations.

12.1 Appraisal of the institution's response. (when applicable)

Appraisal of the institution's response to the preliminary report, if any.

The appraisal of the response does not invalidate the necessity (and compulsory nature) of the proper rectification of the preliminary report in the points where the EAT acknowledges that there are factual errors to be corrected.

12.2 Observations.

Additional comments that the EAT considers relevant. A PDF file up to 100 KB can also be attached.

13. Conclusions.

13.1 Global appraisal of the study programme.

General appraisal of the study programme, synthesising the assessments made throughout the report, summarising the strengths and weaknesses of the study programme, and the main recommendations made.

This synthesis, in addition to supporting the decision proposed in the next section, targets in particular the external stakeholders (potential applicants, families, employers, society in general), therefore a very technical language should be avoided.

Note: In case of a negative or conditional recommendation, the aspects of the accreditation criteria that are not complied with by the proposal should be explicitly mentioned in this section and quantified whenever relevant.

13.2 Final recommendation

Based on the global appraisal presented in the previous point, the EAT should recommend the decision to be taken on the accreditation of the study programme in terms of "accreditation", "accreditation with conditions" or "non-accreditation".

13.3. Period of conditional accreditation. (if applicable)

Should "accreditation with conditions" be recommended, the period proposed for the implementation of the recommendations (accreditation period, in years) must be indicated.

If conditions are to be fulfilled in different periods, the accreditation period to be indicated in this field is the lowest of the proposed periods (for example, if there are conditions to be fulfilled in 1 year and conditions to be fulfilled in 3 years, the conditional accreditation period will be 1 year).

13.4. Conditions to fulfil. (if applicable)

Should "accreditation with conditions" be recommended, the conditions to be met in the proposed implementation period(s) must be indicated.

Annexes:

- [Qualifications Criteria for Teaching Staff](#)
- [Simplified Assessment Handbook](#)
- [Reference Framework for Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education Institutions](#)