

A3ES

Agência de Avaliação
e Acreditação
do Ensino Superior

AUDITING INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

GUIDELINES FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTIVE ITEMS

1. SCOPE OF THE AUDIT

1.1 The institution wishes the auditing of the internal quality assurance system for:

The overall institution:

A Basic Unit:

Which Unit?

2. BRIEF CHARACTERIZATION OF THE INSTITUTION

Note: If only a basic unit is to be audited, the information to be included in sections 2.1 to 2.9 will concern the basic unit and not the institution as a whole. In particular, section 2.2 will deal with the subunits of the basic unit.

2.1. Higher education institution:

2.2. Basic units/subunits

2.2.1 Number of units/subunits:

2.2.2 List and characterization of units/subunits:

| UNIT/SUBUNIT | STUDY CYCLES (nº) | | | | STUDENTS | | | | ACADEMIC STAFF (FTE) | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------|
| | 1 st Cycle | 2 nd Cycle | I.M. | 3 rd Cycle | 1 st Cycle | 2 nd Cycle | I.M. | 3 rd Cycle | Ph.D. | Specialists | Other |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |

2.3. Research Centres

2.3.1 Number of Research Centres:

2.3.2 List and characterization of Research Centres:

| RESEARCH CENTRES | Researchers (EFTE)* | | | Rating FCT |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------|------------|
| | Ph.D. | Ph.D. students | Other | |
| | | | | |

* EFTE – Eligible as Full Time Equivalent, in the terms defined by FCT.

2.4. Number of students:

CTeSP:

1st Cycle:

2nd Cycle:

Int. Master:

3rd Cycle:

Daytime working regime:

After working hours:

Distance learning:

2.5. Teaching staff (FTE):

With a Ph.D.:

Specialists: *(in the case of polytechnic education)*

Other:

2.6. Researchers *(with contract, post-doc, grant holders, ..., other than the teaching staff)*

With a Ph.D.:

Ph.D. students:

Other:

2.7. Non-teaching staff

With higher education qualifications:

With secondary education qualifications:

Other:

2.8. Support Services

| List of Support Services |
|--------------------------|
| |

2.9. Other elements that the institution (or basic unit, if applicable) wishes to point out:

(maximum 4 500 characters)

3. BRIEF HISTORICAL NOTE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MECHANISMS FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE WITHIN THE INSTITUTION

(maximum 4 500 characters)

4. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

The institution should include, as Annex I, the quality manual or an equivalent document on its institutional policy for quality.

(maximum 9 000 characters)

5. BRIEF CHARACTERISATION OF THE ORGANIC STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTION AND OF ITS INTERCONNECTION WITH THE SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

(maximum 4 500 characters)

ANALYTICAL ITEMS

1. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

In this section, the institution is invited to present a self-assessment of the degree of development of its internal quality assurance system for each of the target areas, making use of the 4-level scale defined in the Manual for the Audit Process.

In its analysis, the institution should take into consideration the criteria matrix and the reference points included in the Manual for the Auditing Process, as well as the provisions in Law 38/2007 (Juridical Regime for the Assessment of Higher Education), namely the parameters for quality assessment stated in article 4 of the aforementioned law.

The self-assessment should be based on evidence and examples, chosen by the institution, that substantiate the performance of the system.

The institution may include, as annexes, documents related to the evidence and examples.

1.1 Definition and documentation of the institutional policy for quality assurance (institutional strategy for quality and quality objectives; organization of the quality assurance system, actors and levels of responsibility; system documentation)

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 9 000 characters)

1.2 Scope and effectiveness of the procedures and structures for quality assurance

1.2.1 In teaching and learning

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 9 000 characters)

1.2.2 In research and development / targeted research and high level professional development

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 4 500 characters)

1.2.3 In the interaction with society

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 4 500 characters)

1.2.4 In the policies for staff management

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 4 500 characters)

1.2.5 In the Support Services

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 4 500 characters)

1.2.6 In internationalisation

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 4 500 characters)

1.3 The relationship between the quality assurance system and the governance and management bodies of the institution

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 4 500 characters)

1.4 The participation of internal and external stakeholders in the quality assurance processes

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 4 500 characters)

1.5 The information system (*mechanisms for the collection, analysis and internal dissemination of information; scope and relevance of gathered information*)

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 4 500 characters)

1.6 Publication of information relevant to external stakeholders

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient - Partial - Substantial - Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 4 500 characters)

1.7 Monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement of the internal quality assurance system

Perceived degree of development:

Insufficient -

Partial -

Substantial -

Very advanced -

Grounding (*evidence and examples*):

(maximum 4 500 characters)

2 – SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

In this section, the institution (or basic unit) is invited to present a brief critical analysis of the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of its internal quality assurance system.

2.1 Strengths

(maximum 3 000 characters)

2.2 Weaknesses

(maximum 3 000 characters)

2.3 Opportunities

(maximum 3 000 characters)

2.4 Threats

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3 – SYNTHESIS OF ASPECTS SIGNALLED FOR IMPROVEMENT

In this section, the institution is invited to present a synthesis of aspects that were identified for improvement of the internal quality assurance within each target area as a consequence of meta-assessment procedures, and the consequent improvement measures already implemented or under way.

3.1 Definition and documentation of the institutional policy for quality assurance (institutional strategy for quality and quality objectives; organization of the quality assurance system, actors and levels of responsibility; system documentation)

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.2 Scope and effectiveness of the procedures and structures for quality assurance

3.2.1 In teaching and learning

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.2.2 In research and development / targeted research and high level professional development

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.2.3 In the interaction with society

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.2.4 In the policies for staff management

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.2.5 In the Support Services

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.2.6 In internationalisation

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.3 The relationship between the quality assurance system and the governance and management bodies of the institution

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.4 Participation of internal and external stakeholders in the quality assurance processes

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.5 The information system (*mechanisms for the collection, analysis and internal dissemination of information; scope and relevance of gathered information*)

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.6 Publication of information relevant to external stakeholders

(maximum 3 000 characters)

3.7 Monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement of the internal quality assurance system

(maximum 3 000 characters)

4 – SUMMARY OF ASPECTS IDENTIFIED FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE INSTITUTION

In this section, the institution is invited to present a synthesis of aspects that, as a consequence of the internal quality assurance procedures, were identified for improvement of the institution's activities and results, and the corresponding improvement measures already implemented or under way.

(maximum 4500 characters)

5 – OBSERVATIONS (Comments, observations or clarifications on any item of the guidelines)

(maximum 9 000 characters)

6 – ANNEXES

In this section, the institution (or basic unit, if applicable) is invited to present any additional information it considers to be relevant to the audit process. The annex in 6.1 is compulsory.

6.1. Quality Manual or an equivalent document on the institutional policy for quality assurance, which clearly identifies the institutional strategy for quality and the way it develops into an internal quality assurance system (including the procedures involved).

Annex PDF file – Portuguese version

Annex PDF file – English version

6.2. Other annexes

The institution may include other PDF files with relevant information as annexes, up to 50 files of up to 4 Megabytes each. These documents may be presented in either Portuguese or English.

| Reference | Title | PDF |
|-----------|-------|-----|
| | | |

6.3. Links

The institution may include up to 50 links to documents in its Webpage. These documents may be available in either Portuguese or English.

| Reference | Title | Link |
|-----------|-------|------|
| | | |

APPENDIX – Instructions for filling in the report

A number of guidelines for the preparation of the self-assessment report are set out in this appendix, with a view to improving the clarification of the information.

Note: The maximum number of characters in the fields of these guidelines is generally quite large, in order to allow covering specific characteristics inherent in the diversity of solutions in implementing internal quality systems. Institutions should, however, be succinct in the analyses presented, using only the necessary space. It is reiterated that the number of characters allowed in each field is an upper limit and not the number of characters that institutions are expected to complete as a rule.

DESCRIPTIVE ITEMS

The first part of the guidelines consists of a set of descriptive items which are intended for a summary presentation of the institution in terms of its organizational structure and constituent units, its size in terms of number of students, teachers and researchers and non-teaching staff, and the historical evolution of the development of internal quality assurance mechanisms, with the sole objective of familiarizing the External Evaluation Team with the nature, size and development phase of the institution.

A summary characterisation of the quality assurance system is also requested, to understand the broad lines of the quality assurance strategy adopted in each of the nuclear processes covered by the system. This characterisation should be presented in a form easily understood by internal and external stakeholders and may desirably be transcribed from the document(s) that portray the quality assurance system on the institution's website.

The annexation of a quality manual or equivalent documentation on the institutional policy for quality assurance is required in Portuguese and English, where the strategies and procedures involved in the internal quality assurance system must be clearly identified.

ANALYTICAL ITEMS

The second part of the guidelines deals with items of an essentially analytical nature, where the institution should reflect critically on the degree of development of its internal quality assurance system, taking into account the criteria matrix and the reference points set out in the Manual for the Audit Process.

Below are some instructions on completing the section on self-assessment of the degree of development of the internal quality assurance system in each of the target areas covered by the audit exercise.

1. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

1.1 Definition and documentation of the institutional policy for quality assurance (*institutional strategy for quality and quality objectives; organization of the quality assurance system, actors and levels of responsibility; system documentation*)

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the institution prepared, formally approved and made public documentation that expresses the institutional policy and objectives for quality, including, namely (cf. *Reference point 1*):

- The institutional strategy for quality enhancement, translated into the pursuit of certain quality objectives;
- The organization of an effective quality assurance system, which functions as an articulated whole and covers the institution's core processes;
- Responsibilities of different actors (people, bodies and services) in the field of quality assurance;
- Ways of ensuring academic integrity and surveillance against academic fraud and against all forms of intolerance or discrimination against students or teaching and non-teaching staff;

1.2 Scope and effectiveness of the procedures and structures for quality assurance

1.2.1 In teaching and learning

Substantiation of the degree of conceptualization and implementation of the elements advocated in the following reference points, based on the presentation of evidence:

- *Reference point 2 – Design and approval of programmes.*
- *Reference point 3 – Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment.*
- *Reference point 4 – Student admission, progression, recognition and certification.*
- *Reference point 5 – On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes.*

1.2.2 In research and development / targeted research and high level professional development

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the institution adopts mechanisms to promote, assess and enhance the scientific, technological, artistic and high level professional development activity appropriate to its nature (university or polytechnic) and institutional mission, analysing the degree of implementation of the procedures indicated in *Reference point 6 – Research and development / targeted research and high level professional development*.

It should be noted that this item does not concern the presentation of R&D activities or results developed by the institution, but rather the way in which research policies address the aforementioned mechanisms and procedures.

1.2.3 In the interaction with society

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the institution adopts mechanisms to promote, assess and enhance collaboration with other institutions and with the community, namely regarding its contribution to regional and national development, analysing the degree of implementation of the procedures indicated in *Reference point 7 – External relations*.

Note that this item does not concern the presentation of activities or results developed by the institution in the scope of interaction with society, but rather the way in which external relations policies address the procedures to promote, assess and enhance the interface and external action activities.

1.2.4 In the policies for staff management

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the institution adopts fair and transparent mechanisms to ensure that the recruitment, management and training of its teaching and support staff is undertaken with the guarantee of the necessary qualifications and competence, in order that they may properly perform their functions, analysing the degree of implementation of the elements indicated in *Reference point 9 – Human resources*.

1.2.5 In the Support Services

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the institution adopts mechanisms which enable it to plan, manage and enhance the support services and material resources, with a view to the appropriate development of student learning and other scientific and pedagogic activities, analysing the degree of implementation of the elements indicated in *Reference point 9 – Human resources*.

1.2.6 In internationalisation

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the institution adopts mechanisms which allow it to promote, assess and enhance its international cooperation activities, analysing the degree of implementation of procedures indicated in *Reference point 8 – Internationalisation*.

Note that this item does not concern the presentation of activities or results developed by the institution in the scope of international cooperation, but rather the way in which internationalisation policies address the procedures to promote, assess and enhance activities of an international nature.

1.3 The relationship between the quality assurance system and the governance and management bodies of the institution

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the institutional strategy for continuous quality improvement is an integral part of the overall strategic management of the institution (*Reference point 1*) and consequently the quality assurance system is properly articulated with the governance and management bodies.

1.4 The participation of internal and external stakeholders in the quality assurance processes

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the system contemplates forms of involvement and responsibilities of students and other (internal and external) stakeholders in quality assurance processes (*Reference point 1*).

1.5 The information system (mechanisms for the collection, analysis and internal dissemination of information; scope and relevance of gathered information)

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the institution adopts mechanisms which allow it to guarantee the collection, analysis and use of the results and of other relevant information for the effective management of the study programmes and other activities, analysing the degree of implementation of mechanisms and procedures indicated in *Reference point 11 – Information management*.

1.6 Publication of information relevant to external stakeholders

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the institution adopts mechanisms which permit the publication of clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date, impartial and readily accessible information about the activities undertaken, analysing the degree of implementation of procedures indicated in *Reference point 12 – Public Information*.

1.7 Monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement of the internal quality assurance system

Proof, based on the presentation of evidence, that the system includes ways of monitoring, evaluating and continuously improving the internal quality assurance system (*Reference point 1*).